

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 1886

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 16 November, 1886.

Petitions.—Crown Lands Act Amendment Bill—third reading.—Godsall Estate Enabling Bill—third reading.—Central Railway Extension.—British Companies Bill No. 2—committee.—Supply—resumption of committee.—Messages from the Legislative Council—Northern Railway Deviation into Hughenden—Deviation of Fassifern Branch Railway—Normanton to Cloncurry Railway.—Adjournment.

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

PETITIONS.

Mr. NORTON presented a petition from the residents of Winton and district, praying that the Central Railway may be continued from Lagoon Creek direct to Winton; and moved that it be read.

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

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

Mr. LUMLEY HILL, in the absence of the member for Barcoo (Mr. Murphy), presented a petition from the inhabitants of Blackall and the surrounding neighbourhood, praying for the construction of a branch railway from Jericho to Blackall; and moved that it be read.

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

On the motion of Mr. LUMLEY HILL, the petition was received.

CROWN LANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

GODSALL ESTATE ENABLING BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of Mr. ALAND, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

CENTRAL RAILWAY EXTENSION.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that you do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the following resolutions, namely:—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the Central Railway from 370 miles to 436 miles, in length 66 miles, as laid on the table of the House on Friday, the 12th day of November instant.

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

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the Central Railway from 370 miles to 436 miles, in length 66 miles, as laid on the table of the House on Friday, the 12th day of November instant.

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

—said he did not think it necessary to go into any very detailed statement in connection with the motion, seeing that it had recently been twice before the House on motions for adjournment.

It was very fully discussed then, and hon. members seemed to have come to the conclusion that the proposed line would be one that would pay. He therefore presumed he would not be asked for any lengthy information on the subject. The hon. member for Barcoo had dwelt very fully upon the paying capabilities of the proposed extension. There was one thing to be said of it, and that was that it was over level country and would be a very inexpensive line. The engineer reported that the line was almost straight, though it might require one or two slight deviations when the permanent line was adopted, in consequence of crossing creeks more often, which would be avoided when the permanent line was completed. The line was remarkably easy, being on the surface nearly all the way, and the amount of cutting was only 40,000 cubic yards in 66 miles, so that it could not be a very expensive line. The lineal feet of bridging would be under 4,000, and there would be 46 miles of forming, 100 box-drains and culverts, thirty level crossings, and probably about twelve marsupial and cattle pits would be required. The line trended a little north of the direct line to Forest Grove in consequence of the very large tract of country there was occasionally under flood on the direct line to Forest Grove. The country passed through was generally good grazing land, and in many places dams could be built if necessary. The line crossed the track to Saltern at about 377½ miles, and also at 378 miles 20 chains a track from Saltern to Barcaldine, and at 384 miles 40 chains the track from Beaconsfield was crossed. The estimated cost for the section, including permanent way material, was £184,800. He thought it was unnecessary to give much further information. He might point out that while hon. members opposite were always cavilling at lines proposed in the southern portion of the colony and expressing doubts as to whether they would pay, he was happy to say that hon. members who represented what hon. members opposite called the "Queen-street mob" were not likely to cavil at the passing of the extension proposed. It was usual, when it was proposed to construct a line in the South, for Northern members to say, "Will the line pay?" "We have not got sufficient information," and then they spoke of hon. members on the Government side as representing the "Queen-street mob." He was satisfied that not a single hon. member of the Committee, unless perhaps the hon. member for Cook, would cavil at the construction of the extension proposed. He moved the resolutions standing in his name.

Mr. NORTON said he was sorry the Minister for Works was so uneasy in his conscience because members on the Opposition side would not swallow every railway he had brought forward. There was no occasion for the remarks which fell from the hon. member a few minutes ago; they had nothing to do with the question before the Committee, and were rather ill-timed. With regard to the line under consideration, he did not suppose any objection would be made by any member of the Committee. He did not know who were the "Queen-street mob," though the Minister for Works referred to them; but he believed the gentlemen who represented the interests of Queen-street would recognise that it was to the advantage of the colony that all the main lines from the coast to the interior should be carried out in something like an equal proportion year by year. He congratulated the Minister for Works, even at that late period of the session, on having decided to bring down the plans to which the consent of hon. members was asked, and also on having run the straight course instead of the crooked course he had in contemplation some time ago.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he had not the slightest intention of opposing the line, because he was perfectly acquainted with the district it opened up, and the locality and surroundings generally. If he was one of the "Queen-street mob" referred to, he must say that he differed from the others in knowing something about the line. It was a trunk line, one of the great main lines of the colony, going in the right direction; and if it did not pay, the only reason would be because people might not be able to work to advantage under the present Land Act. However, he did not suppose that was going to last for ever. He had the utmost confidence that the line would be profitable, as well as necessary. It would have been an act of grace, however, on the part of the Minister for Works to have brought the plans forward before those of, say, the Laidley branch or the Warwick to St. George line. The line under consideration was of much more national importance than either of those, and should have taken precedence of many of the lines already laid on the table during the present session.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution to the House, and the resolution was adopted.

BRITISH COMPANIES BILL No. 2.

COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into committee to consider this Bill in detail.

Preamble postponed.

Clauses from 1 to 9, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 10, as follows:—

"From and after the first day of July, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, the following enactment shall have effect:—

"A British company is not, except by virtue of some Act of the Parliament of Queensland, or some Act or ordinance having the force of law in Queensland, or some royal charter extending to and having effect in Queensland, competent to take, hold, convey, or transfer land in Queensland, unless such company has been registered in Queensland under this Act."

The PREMIER said a verbal amendment was desirable in the clause. He proposed to insert, after the words "land in Queensland," the words "or any estate of freehold."

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 11 to 16 and preamble passed as printed.

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

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

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the Order of the Day being read, the COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the Speaker leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole further to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

VOLUNTEER LAND ORDERS.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—Before you leave the chair, I should like to get an explanation from the powers that be relative to the treatment of volunteer land-orders granted by a preceding Government, which have been tendered in payment for land in accordance with the law as laid down at that time, and which the

present Government have refused to acknowledge. Various reasons have been assigned; but I should like to know from the Chief Secretary or from the Attorney-General if the Government intend to persist in refusing to acknowledge the volunteer land-orders which were granted by a previous Government, which were transferable, and for which substantial sums of money were paid. In the event of their refusing to acknowledge them, it seems to me exceedingly like an act of repudiation on the part of the Government; and that is likely to have a deterrent effect upon any value which may attach to the land-orders which were recently authorised by the House to be granted to immigrants coming to the colony. I do not wish to make a long speech on the matter, but I should like to know what the facts of the case are.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge) said: Mr. Speaker,—A question with reference to certain volunteer land-orders was submitted to me by the Lands Department some time ago. The facts are not so fresh in my memory as I should like them to be, but as far as I remember they are something like these: Some years ago, certain volunteers who were entitled to land-orders had certificates of their being so entitled given to them by the Colonial Secretary, and land-orders were in due course issued. Those land-orders give certain rights to the holders of them, under regulations made, I think, under the Act of 1868—which were kept alive by the Act of 1876, and also by the Act of 1884. Some time ago there was a sale of land advertised in the neighbourhood of Brisbane, and a number of lots—I am not sure if it was not the whole of them—were withdrawn from sale. At all events, a number of them were. A somewhat high price was put upon this land—speaking from memory, I believe £60 an acre was the upset price put upon it—and it was withdrawn after having been submitted for sale by auction. After the land had been so withdrawn, certain holders of volunteer land-orders each claimed the right, by the regulations made under the Act of 1868, to take up, I think, ten acres of this land valued at £60 an acre. The Minister for Lands submitted the case for my opinion, and having gone very carefully into it, I arrived at the conclusion, and so advised the Minister, that the right to take up suburban land offered for sale during the preceding twelve months was not the right to take up land offered for sale and withdrawn during any preceding twelve months—that is to say, any twelve months preceding the time when the holder of the land-order might choose to exercise the right of selection. The terms of the regulation are not by any means so clear and distinct as to leave no room for doubt, but after carefully considering the whole question I came to the conclusion that the correct interpretation of the regulation was that in order to entitle the holder of a volunteer land-order to take up suburban land, that right must be exercised on land offered for sale within the twelve months next preceding the issue of the land-order.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Do you think none has been taken up otherwise?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not know what may have been done otherwise, but I can see that great inconvenience would arise from any other interpretation being put upon the regulation. For example, land-orders might be kept back by the holders of them for several years, until suburban lands worth hundreds of pounds per acre were put up for sale; and then, because that land failed to bring the upset price, and was withdrawn—if the interpretation sought to be put on the regulations by the persons claiming now is

correct—the holders of the land-orders would have the right to step in and secure land worth many thousands of pounds. A result of that kind would have so serious an effect on the finances of the colony that I think the Minister for Lands did perfectly right in acting on the advice that I tendered to him. If persons who differ think that their interpretation of the regulations is the correct one—that the holders of volunteer land-orders may keep them any number of years in order to wait for the chance of taking up valuable suburban lands which do not happen to be sold—I think it is preferable that it should be left to the Supreme Court to decide. But I cannot come to the conclusion that that is what the Government which drew up the regulations in 1868 intended. I cannot conceive such a thing possible, more particularly when what is stated with regard to country lands is taken into consideration. If the contention of the holders of the land-orders is correct, it does not matter what the intention of the framers of the regulations may have been, but I certainly fail to see, after careful scrutiny of the terms of the regulations, that that is what they really mean. There has been no repudiation whatever of the right of persons to select country lands under the regulation. Upon that point the terms of the regulations are quite clear. In that respect the holders of land-orders will not be subjected to any disadvantage whatever.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—It appears to me that the construction put on the regulations with regard to these land-orders is very illiberal. In some instances it will deprive them of the whole of their value, and in many instances of a large portion of their value. The intention of the framers of the regulations seems to me to have been that the holders of volunteer land-orders might select land which had been offered for sale and not withdrawn, and that they were not intended to apply to valuable land; and it would have been quite possible to obviate such proceedings as those lately taken at Toowong by making some special agreement to the effect that the land would be withdrawn if it was not sold by auction. One does not expect people to take advantage of these little points, such as taking up valuable suburban land with land-orders when the intention was to give only country lands. I certainly believe that these applicants for land at Toowong—if the applications were put in in the right way—have very much the best of it. Notwithstanding the opinion given by the Attorney-General, I think the decision should be in their favour. I should be very sorry indeed to see such a decision given, and, from what I have heard, I think the fault lies not with the application but with the regulation made under the Act.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—Hon. members will see that the question is entirely one of the interpretation of the regulation.

Mr. NORTON: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Whatever it means, that is what it means. It may mean that a man tendering a land-order may take up ten acres of suburban land worth £1,000 an acre. I do not think the Government are bound to struggle to put that interpretation on it. It was certainly never contemplated when the Act of 1868 was passed, and the Government which framed the regulations never meant them to bear that interpretation. If, however, that is the interpretation, and the applicants are entitled to have their pound of flesh, let them have it; but we are not going to give it if we can help it. I think that is a very proper view to take. If that is the law we cannot help it. We can only say we are very sorry for it. In any case the value of the land-order would not be destroyed, because the

holder may take up fifty acres of country land. That is what was intended—that he should be entitled to a free grant of fifty acres of country land, or its equivalent in suburban land. The intention may, perhaps, have not been carried out by the regulation, but the Attorney-General having given the opinion he did on the subject, I think the department has done quite right in adopting the course they have adopted.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: May I say a few words in reply by permission of the House?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has spoken.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I ask permission of the House.

The PREMIER: All right.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I certainly cannot say that I am satisfied with the explanation that has been given by the Attorney-General of this situation. The Act and the regulation plainly gave the holders of these land-orders, which were deliberately made transferable and negotiable, the option of taking up either country or suburban land, as they chose. For the Attorney-General to invite them to refer the matter to the Supreme Court for decision is, of course, all in the way of business. It is very good for the trade to which he belongs. I have no doubt he would like to see no business whatever got through without going to the Supreme Court, but my idea is that this Assembly is entitled to see that the laws are as easily understood and as properly administered as they possibly can be, so as to make as little law proceedings as possible. With regard to these lands being passed in at a very high price, the Government, knowing these land-orders to be in existence, have the remedy in their own hands. They need not put country or suburban land up at such a ridiculous upset price that they will not sell. They may make the upset price low; that will not affect the price ultimately realised, because the lands will bring their value when put up at a Government land sale. The Government may be perfectly certain of that. I think myself the defence set up to the action of the Government is simply a legal quibble. I think it is perfectly plain by the regulations that the application must be made within twelve months after the land has been offered for sale. That is my opinion. However, I am not a lawyer, I am sorry to say; and I should very much regret that the Government of which I am a supporter should be the first to initiate a policy of repudiation of the actions of their predecessors, however misguided or mistaken they may have been. If their predecessors made a bad bargain I think the present Government are bound to adhere to it, and carry out the letter of the law.

Question put and passed, and the House went into Committee of Supply.

BUILDINGS.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that there be granted, for the service of the year 1886-7, the sum of £27,650 for Public Buildings.

Mr. FERGUSON asked if any steps had been taken to complete the immigration depot at Rockhampton, so as to enable it to be made use of? The contractor had finished his work four or five months ago; but owing to fencing and other work to be done, the building was unoccupied.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had heard no complaint from the contractor in relation to the completion of the works.

Mr. FERGUSON said the hon. gentleman misunderstood his question. The contractor finished his work four or five months ago, and

was paid for it; but in consequence of fencing and other work not included in the contract not being carried out, the buildings were unoccupied, and the old dépôt was still in use. Had the Government taken any steps to complete the dépôt, so that it might be occupied?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he believed the buildings were finished but had not been handed over to the Government. He did not know why. He had heard no complaints from the contractor. It was possible that he might have been in communication with the Colonial Secretary's Department, to which the buildings belonged. However, he would inquire into the matter, and see that there was no delay.

Mr. FERGUSON said that was all he wanted. Another question he would like to ask was whether the Government had received any report respecting the state of the custom-house at Rockhampton? It was in a very dilapidated condition; in fact, it was in such a state that it was dangerous for the officers of the department to remain in their offices. Had any report been received by the Works Department or any other office in regard to the state of the Custom-house at Rockhampton?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the Colonial Architect was sent up a short time ago to report on the custom-house and some other public buildings in Rockhampton, but his report had not yet been received. He believed he was now preparing the report, and the matter would be attended to at once.

Mr. BLACK said there was an item of £5,000 for "other buildings"; last year it was £6,000. For what purpose was that very vague vote usually utilised?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that that vote appeared annually on the Estimates. It was for the purpose of providing for repairs to all public buildings caused by the ravages of white ants. The vote came in very handy, as it would be utterly impossible to make provision for all those small matters that cropped up from time to time.

Mr. BLACK said that the vote two lines lower down was "Repairs and incidentals, £5,000." The vote he referred to was for "other buildings." It could not be intended to apply to repairs, as there was a special vote to provide for the depredations of white ants. He wanted to know what "other buildings" that special vote of £5,000 was asked for?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said applications came in every day for furniture for public offices. It would be utterly impossible to provide for all the public requirements unless they had a vote for that purpose.

Mr. BLACK said he would point out that there was lower down a special vote for furniture, £3,000, and really the vote he referred to could not be intended to include either furniture or depredations by white ants. His reason for being somewhat critical about that vote was in consequence of the large sum of money voted last session beyond what was actually required by the department. Last year the estimates for the department amounted to £516,609, and the Minister for Works had only spent £467,338. It was quite evident that the House had voted last session considerably more than the hon. gentleman's department required. He thought that when economy was necessary the Committee should have full explanation of some of those items, and not vote really more than was required. It was quite evident that the vote of £5,000 was excessively vague, and possibly it would not be required.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not think the hon. member for Mackay should make any complaint about lapsed votes. He could only assure him that though the money was voted the very strictest economy was exercised. If there was any particular item the hon. member disapproved of his remedy was to move a reduction, and if the Committee did not vote the money the work could not be done. He dared say the hon. member for Mackay would be the first to cry out about it. There were a great many buildings about Mackay that required repairs, and a considerable sum expended upon them. At the same time the Government exercised the strictest economy in regard to those votes, and that was proved by the amount of the lapsed vote.

Mr. DONALDSON said he desired to know if the Government had taken into serious consideration the desirability of erecting places of residence for police magistrates in the country districts. Probably that £5,000 might be for some such purpose. It was hardly necessary to point out that in many of the country districts like Charleville, Cunnamulla, or Thargomindah, where there were no quarters at all for police magistrates, those gentlemen, who were frequently married men, were obliged to live in hotels. They had their food in hotels, and perhaps had to sleep in the court-houses. Several police magistrates had not been able to take their wives and families with them on that account. That was a great hardship, for they did not know how long they would be there. If some provision were made for them it would not only add to their comfort, but be an inducement to get good men to live in country districts; whereas at the present time they applied to be removed as quickly as possible.

The PREMIER said that the question of residences for police magistrates had been considered by the Government several times. Certainly if the finances of the colony were in a flourishing condition, he thought the Government might be justified in asking the Committee to vote a sum for that purpose. No doubt very great hardship was imposed on many of the police magistrates when removed from one place to another. Sometimes there was no suitable house to be got; and when houses could be got, very exorbitant rents were demanded for them. There was an inconvenience in another way; it made it difficult for the Government to make transfers when they were desirable in the public interest. Transfers were sometimes very desirable; at the same time, when made, it was necessary to take into consideration the hardship imposed on an officer when he had a comfortable house for himself and family by sending him to a place in which the public interest would be served by his removal, but where there was very poor accommodation. That was extremely embarrassing. He did not see why police magistrates should not have quarters the same as the Customs officers had. But the present was not a convenient time to ask for such a large expenditure. The cost of quarters for police magistrates would be something like £50,000, and he did not think the present was a time when the Government would be justified in making such an expenditure. It was, however, a matter that would receive the attention of the Government whenever the finances would justify it.

Mr. DONALDSON said that no doubt the answer of the Chief Secretary was satisfactory to a certain extent. But there were on the loan votes large sums provided for public buildings. Was it not possible that a part of those votes could be used for the purpose he referred to?

The question only required to be looked into to see how desirable it was, and he trusted it would not be regarded as spending that loan vote in a way not intended by the Committee when they agreed to that vote.

The PREMIER said money borrowed for the construction of buildings was appropriated to the construction of permanent buildings, and he did not think that in many cases it had been spent otherwise. Attention had been called to a few items where loan money had been spent on buildings of a temporary character; but he did not think that ought to be done. He did not think they ought to borrow money except for permanent buildings.

Mr. CHUBB said the question had been raised every session for a number of years past. There were over 100 police offices now in the colony, and it was no light matter to decide upon building residences for all police magistrates; but it would have to be done some day. As intimated by the Premier, and as he had before pointed out, several classes of Civil servants had residences built for them—custom-house officers, police officers, telegraph officers, and postmasters. They all had residences provided; so that there was no logical reason why residences should not be found for police magistrates. Then the question of furniture would arise. In India the residences of magistrates were provided for them, and, he believed, were furnished, so that when they were transferred from one district to another they left the furniture behind them. However, that question could be dealt with when the residences were built.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL asked the Minister for Works if it was his intention to put any sum on the Supplementary Estimates for the court-house, police quarters, and lockup at Tambo. According to a return furnished on the 20th October, to which was annexed a report from the police magistrate at Tambo, it appeared that the court-house was unfit for occupation, the roof being leaky and the floor thoroughly rotten, and there was no room for jurors. The court had to be adjourned whenever rain came on, and, besides that, the lockup was unsafe and unfit for human beings to be put in.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he might inform the hon. member that the plans for the court-house and lockup were now being prepared by the Colonial Architect; but he would point out to hon. members that not one single item on the vote could be charged to the Works Department. The buildings put down were requisitioned for by the various departments, and were put in that vote for the convenience of the Works Department. If hon. members would look at the vote, they would see that it was for court-houses, custom-houses, drill-sheds, and such like.

Mr. GOVETT asked if the Government had made any provision for the gaol at Muttaborra?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had explained that he was not responsible for such buildings. If a custom-house was wanted, the Colonial Treasurer sent in a requisition; if a police station was required, the requisition came from the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he wished to call attention to the vote of £2,000 for hospital buildings generally. He supposed that was for buildings all over the colony. During the last four years the Ipswich Hospital committee had expended £1,000 a year in buildings—an unheard-of thing in other towns of the colony—to make provision for the increase of patients. During four years they spent £3,348 in buildings, and they were now short of funds, and had an over-

draft at the bank. He thought it was not out of place to ask the Minister for Works if he could grant £500 to the committee, so as to meet the overdraft, and also give them compensation for the buildings they had erected? Out of the sum spent the Government provided £1,700, and the balance of £3,648 had been raised locally. He did not know whether the Minister for Works had power to give £500, but if he had, and would grant it, that sum would put the hospital in as good a position as the Government had placed some other hospitals in other parts of the colony.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he could assure the hon. member that he had nothing to do with hospitals, and he had no £500 to give away either. He would refer the hon. member to his hon. colleague the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. BLACK said it was usually the custom when Ministers went on a tour to evade a question in the intelligent manner in which the Minister for Works had just evaded a question by the member for Ipswich. When a deputation interviewed a Minister they were referred to his colleague; but that was the first time he (Mr. Black) had seen the same principle attempted to be carried out in that Committee. He thought the Minister for Works might be a little more explicit. He was sure he could tell the member for Ipswich that there was not the remotest chance of £500 being granted; but instead of doing that he referred the hon. member to another Minister. Perhaps the other Minister would give an answer.

Mr. NORTON said the Colonial Secretary did not seem at all desirous of responding. There was another matter that he wished for some information about, and that was with regard to the sergeant of police's quarters at Gladstone. Some months ago he wrote to the Colonial Secretary about it, and received a reply to the effect that a sum of £500 would be put on the Estimates for a new building. When the Estimates were tabled, and he noticed that the promise had not been kept, he put a question to the Colonial Secretary in regard to the building, and the answer was that the money would be taken from the vote for police buildings, and that the work would be proceeded with as soon as the plans were prepared. Now, he thought the Minister for Works or the Colonial Secretary ought to be in a position to tell him when the work would be gone on with. The present building was constructed from material taken from the old court-house, which had been in existence for seventeen years before being pulled down. The sergeant's buildings had been standing for a number of years, and his recollection of the old court-house extended back to 1860. He thought they were quite justified in asking that a new building should be put up, as the present one was so rotten that it could not be repaired. A Government officer who had visited the place had reported that it was in such bad order that it was impossible to repair it. He would like to know if the plans for the new quarters were ready, and when they would be gone on with?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had no information upon the subject; but he would inquire how the matter stood. It was usual for the Commissioner of Police to look after those matters, and if he stated that the building was required, and if the money was voted for it, it would be proceeded with at once.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. B. Moreton) said he could throw a little light on the subject. The reply he gave the hon. member for Port Curtis on the subject was not quite

in accord with the hon. member's statement. He thought he had stated that a sum of money would be applied to the purpose as soon as the vote passed the House, and that when the vote was passed the plans would be prepared.

Mr. NORTON said he did not refer to the hon. gentleman's reply, but to his own recollection of it. He thought it was probably as the hon. gentleman had stated. He understood the Works Department would be communicated with to have the plans prepared as soon as the vote passed. The vote would be passed in a few minutes, and he hoped arrangements had been made for the preparation of the plans already.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the plans could not be prepared a minute after the vote was passed, but they would be prepared as soon as possible.

Mr. CHUBB said he wished the Minister for Works would tell the Committee how the item of £6,000 for "other buildings" voted last year was spent. He wanted to know what had become of that vote.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he could not tell. It was spent in all shapes and forms, and the hon. gentleman ought to know something about it himself. How could the hon. member expect him to say how a sum of £6,000 was expended in small sums all over the colony?

Mr. CHUBB said that other parts of the Estimates had details given in them of the expenditure of sums as small as £50, and yet they had an item of £6,000 voted for "other buildings" last year, and £5,000 set down for the present year, and the Minister for Works could not say what he wanted the money for.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was available for any purposes in connection with public buildings. Day by day requisitions were being sent in for repairs and alterations. Alterations were already being made in connection with the Supreme and district court buildings, and all such repairs and alterations were provided for out of the vote named.

Mr. CHUBB: Then, if repairs came out of that vote, what was the reason for the vote of £5,000 for repairs and incidentals? That made £10,000 for repairs for the year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will all be required.

Mr. LISSNER said he noticed an amount of £600 down for "hospital fever ward" at Charters Towers, and he would like some information as to what it was proposed to do with that £600. When Ministers had visited the place and were asked for some money for the purpose, £3,000 was talked about and partly promised. He did not think £600 would be any good at all for the purpose of building male and female fever wards, and he would like some information as to what kind of a building it was proposed to construct. The present hospital was a large brick house, and he could not see how a fever ward to match the present building could be put up for £600. Perhaps the matter was in the Colonial Secretary's Department, but he did not care which hon. gentleman gave him the information, so long as he got it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that, so far as his knowledge of the matter went, he believed two designs for male and female wards were sent in, to cost £1,250 each. The plans were sent back to have the cost reduced to something like the amount placed on the Estimates—£600. The plans were not yet returned, but a ward of some sort would be constructed with about eight beds, he thought, for that sum.

Mr. NORTON said he noticed an item of £300 for rent of public offices. He did not know to what offices it referred, and would like some information on the subject. For instance, the Custom-house work was done at present in rented offices, and there was another building opposite the Registrar-General's Office which had been occupied for some time by the officers engaged upon the compilation of the census. He would like to know how the money was spent, and whether the amount set down would be sufficient?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the vote was to defray the rent of offices that had to be provided for the Official Assignee.

Mr. NORTON said perhaps the Colonial Treasurer could inform them as to where the money came from to pay for the rent of the offices at present used for the Custom-house work? He had heard it was a very large sum.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said he thought the sum was £1,250 a year.

Mr. NORTON: £1,250 a year!

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes. It was not a large amount for the accommodation given for three departments; in fact he thought the rent exceptionally moderate. It was at first intended that the amount should be divided between the three departments and charged to the contingencies vote for each; but upon subsequent consideration it was deemed advisable to deal with it as "rent of offices," and provision would be made for it on the Supplementary Estimates. At first the Government thought of paying the rent of the building out of the amounts set down for contingencies in connection with "Customs," "Defence Force," and "Excise," but on consideration it was thought advisable to charge it to one account, and place the necessary amount on the Supplementary Estimates.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the answer given by the Colonial Secretary was the strongest he had heard in connection with the Estimates. Plans were made for two fever wards to cost £1,250 each; and they had been cut down to one fever ward supposed to be built for £600—a ward containing eight beds. Was it to be a ward for males and females? Or which of the sexes was to be cut off—male or female? And what sort of a building was to be put up on Charters Towers for £600, where there was already an hospital of brick—a very nice building? If the money was intended for the erection of a little wooden shanty, it would disgrace the present building.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he could not say which of the sexes was to have the ward. The plans were still being prepared, but he did not know in what shape they would come from the Works Office. They were sent back before, because they exceeded the sum placed on the Estimates, and it was decided that one ward should be erected at the present time.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that was a strange answer. The sum on the Estimates was the sum the hon. gentleman asked for. He could have made it larger if he had liked, and yet he said the plans were condemned because the wards would cost more than the sum placed on the Estimates. If two wards were required, why did he not put a sufficient sum on the Estimates; and if two were not required, why did he ask that plans should be made?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the money was put on the Estimates before he knew that plans were being made.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The hon. gentleman must have put the money on the Estimates.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the hon. member for Townsville seemed very solicitous about the interests of the people of Charters Towers, but the matter engaged his attention before it came under the hon. member's notice. Everybody knew the difficulty there had been during the present year in finding money for all purposes for which money was required. He had most strongly represented the claims of his constituency to a share of what money could be spared for public buildings; and £600 was all the Government could find for the purpose of erecting an addition to the Charters Towers Hospital during the present year. How the Colonial Secretary proposed to spend the £600 he did not know—he had not yet ascertained—but he supposed that though the total amount necessary for enlarging the hospital to the proper extent was not forthcoming during the present year it might be next year. And he thought the Government could not have put a larger amount down without exciting undue jealousy. It would have been said that when a member of the Government represented a place money could be found for it but not for any other place; and under the circumstances, considering the pressure of the times, the amount of £600 was not to be cavilled at for the present year. He had sufficient confidence in his hon. colleague to believe that the money would be judiciously spent as far as it would go.

Mr. LISSNER said he did not know how £600 for a fever ward was to be spent judiciously; and the information he got from the Colonial Secretary had not enlightened him very much. That hon. gentleman hardly knew how it was going to be spent, and his colleague, the Attorney-General, did not know either. What could he expect £600 to attach to a building that cost £7,000 or £8,000 to represent two fever wards? There was no reason for jealousy among the constituencies on account of £600 being put down for Charters Towers; but he would like to know what kind of a building was to be put up—that was all. Was it to be a wooden building separated from the hospital? Or was it to be a wing, or a tail, or something else attached? He had been told in a foggy sort of way that there were to be eight beds. He would really like to know how the Government were going to spend the £600, and whether it was only an instalment which was expected to satisfy the people of Charters Towers for the time being.

Mr. FOXTON said the best thing would be for one of the members on the Government side to move that the item in question be omitted, as it did not seem to satisfy anybody. The people of other parts of the colony were scarcely satisfied to find their own hospitals neglected, and the people of Charters Towers were not satisfied with £600 for their hospital. Those who got a great deal grumbled most.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman was right in saying that the people of Charters Towers would not be satisfied; £600 to erect two fever wards, one for males and the other for females, in connection with a brick hospital, would be money thrown away, or the money would be kept over until next year or the following year, or until the Treasury was fuller than at present. He was afraid he had offended the Attorney-General by being rather too solicitous about the interests of that hon. gentleman's constituents. He was solicitous about their interests, because he knew something about them, probably a little more than the Attorney-General knew about them. He had lived there a long time, and he thought the people of Charters Towers deserved to have a much larger amount put down for a fever ward than £600, if any was required. There was no part of

Queensland with an equal population that produced as much revenue to the Government as Charters Towers, or even two-thirds as much, so that there need be no jealousy on the part of the hon. member for Carnarvon. The money was put down for a fever ward, but the Colonial Secretary told the Committee that there were to be two wards.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I said the plans for the two wards were sent back.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman informed the Committee that plans were prepared for two fever wards, one for males and the other for females. That would leave one of the wards to be cut off. He was not sure whether he understood the Attorney-General correctly or not, but he thought the hon. gentleman said he did not care how the money was spent.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that he was mistaken he had nothing more to say on that point. He thought that the addition of a building at a cost of £600 to the present hospital would be a disgrace to Charters Towers.

The PREMIER said there were only two items in the vote for hospital buildings, one at Cairns and the other at Charters Towers. There were many other hospitals that required additions if the Government could afford to make them.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Put them on.

The PREMIER: Yes; "put them on"—spend as much money as possible, get the colony into trouble, and then call on hon. members opposite to set things straight! Hon. members on the other side kept telling them that the Estimates were extravagant, and yet when there was the slightest attempt at economy they blamed it as parsimony. He believed £600 would be sufficient to build a very good fever ward.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Brick?

The PREMIER: No; a wooden one.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Attached to a brick building!

The PREMIER: No; a detached wooden one. What person in his senses would attach a wooden fever ward to a brick building? And what person in his senses would put up a brick fever ward in Charters Towers?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: It would be cooler.

The PREMIER said the fever ward in Brisbane was a wooden one. He did not think the people at Charters Towers were so unreasonable as some hon. members, affecting to represent them, would have the Committee believe.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member blamed hon. members on the Opposition side for complaining that the Estimates were extravagant. Now, they did not complain that the Government were extravagant in their Estimates. It was not the extravagance of the Government in their Estimates that had got the colony into trouble. The colony was in trouble; the hon. gentleman knew it now, though he did not believe it last year. The Colonial Treasurer had told them so; he had asked for more taxation, and had indicated still more for next year. It was not the Estimates that had caused the trouble—it was the hon. gentleman's general policy; and an additional £600 would not make much difference. If there were more hospitals in Queensland requiring attention, they ought to be attended to. If economy was to be practised,

it should not be practised on the hospitals; it should be practised on the people who were well, not upon those who were ill. He (Mr. Macrossan) would willingly vote any amount of money for hospitals all over Queensland without the slightest feeling of jealousy. There had never been any jealousy amongst members on either side of the Committee in regard to hospitals; the money had always been voted freely. That £600 was not sufficient; it was only a pretence to put it down, and he believed that, had the representative of Charters Towers sitting on the other side not been a Minister, there would have been probably more than £600 put on the Estimates.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that when they required a fever hospital last year at Ipswich they did not go to the Government for money. They put it up themselves, at a cost of £1,580, and they only wanted £500 in return. Let the people of Charters Towers take a leaf out of their book—build a hospital for £1,000 and then if they asked for £500 no doubt they would get it. If people would help themselves a little, the Government would help them in return.

Mr. NORTON said he thought that was a very bad principle, and it was one he hoped the Government would not acknowledge—that people should take upon themselves to go to a very large expenditure and then expect the Government to repay them afterwards. They would have people all over the colony spending money and then asking to be repaid, when the Government would never have put the money on the Estimates in the first instance. He thought the hon. gentleman's argument was a very weak one.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he thought it was a very strong one. The people of Ipswich only asked £1 for £3. If they had spent their money foolishly, and then come to the Government for additional wards, the Government would have had to pay the whole amount.

Mr. LISSNER said he was quite satisfied that the people of Ipswich were very modest in their demands; but if the Charters Towers people were to take a leaf out of the book of the people of Ipswich, the Government would find the Charters Towers constituency a good deal more expensive than it was at present. Charters Towers, considering the important position it held in the colony, had got very little out of either the present Government or the past Government. He (Mr. Lissner) had not raised the debate with the object of complaining of the amount which was put on the Estimates; he only wanted to know how the money was going to be spent. He could not get the information from the Colonial Secretary; but the Chief Secretary afterwards informed him that the Government were going to put up a detached wooden house. He was quite satisfied; if the Government thought that was good enough, he thought so too. He was satisfied that a detached building was better than nothing at all. At the same time he never wanted his constituency to take a leaf out of the Ipswich book; he did not think that would be acceptable to any Government.

Mr. PALMER said he would like to ask the Minister for Works, who was a very old colonist and understood the price of timber and building, what sort of police station he would get for £300 at a place called Cumberland, where timber was £3 10s. per 100 feet?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he found it better in those out-of-the-way places to let the police have the buildings put up themselves. They did it a great deal cheaper and better than was done by calling tenders in Brisbane. The police made the arrangements on the spot, and carried out some very good economical work.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that was no answer to the hon. member's question. The hon. member had told them that timber cost £3 10s. per 100 feet, and £300 at that rate would scarcely buy the timber. He was quite willing to admit that it was far better to leave those buildings to the inspector of police of the district than to have plans prepared in Brisbane, but it was the cost of the material the hon. member for Burke alluded to. The Minister for Works did not seem to understand that the place was a long way from port; and the timber, after being brought from the South, had to be carried a long distance overland.

The PREMIER: If they are going to build it in that way they could not do it for the money, of course.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The timber is not there.

The PREMIER said he was sure Inspector Douglas could put up a very good building for £300—quite as good as the buildings generally in that district—quite as useful as if it were sent up from Brisbane or anywhere else, and a great deal cheaper. It would be very great nonsense sending sawn timber from the South—simply waste of money. He forgot what the school at Georgetown had cost—he thought it was £1,200. That school could have been erected for £300 or £400, or £500 at the outside, in Brisbane; but the lowest tender was £1,200 or £1,300, and that was as cheap as they could get it done. At one place, between Burketown and the border—he forgot the name of it—police buildings had been put up for £150, which were as useful for every purpose as if they had cost £1,500.

Mr. NORTON: What were they built of?

The PREMIER: Material available on the spot and iron.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he agreed with the hon. gentleman that it was not desirable to send the material all the way from Brisbane; but the hon. member for Burke, when he asked the question, was under the impression that the cost of material on the spot was £3 10s. per 100 feet. The fact that the policemen were to put up the building would not get over that difficulty.

Question put and passed.

EXCEPTED ROADS AND BRIDGES.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £6,000 be granted for excepted roads and bridges under the Divisional Boards Act Amendment Act.

Mr. NORTON asked whether the whole of the £6,000 voted for the purpose last year was expended?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The whole of it.

Mr. NORTON: Will the hon. gentleman tell us in what divisions it was expended?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that, amongst other places, £1,500 was expended in the Burdekin Division, £1,000 in the Daintree Division, and £1,500 each in the Cairns and Burnett Divisions.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: That does not make £6,000.

Question put and passed.

GOLDFIELDS.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. W. Miles) moved that £24,211 be granted for expenses in connection with Goldfields. There was very little alteration in the vote from that of last year. Although only £5,000 was put down for loans in aid of deep sinking for gold and other minerals,

it was only an apparent decrease. Up to the end of last year only £5,000 had been expended out of the vote of £10,000 granted for that purpose; and the £5,000 now asked for would, with the addition of the unexpended balance, leave it at exactly the same sum as was authorised last year. So far, there had been no results from the expenditure—that was to say, no good reefs had been struck. The gold-mines to which loans had been granted were as follow:—Two at Charters Towers—the Dan O'Connell and the Papuan Block; two at Gympie—the London Gold-mining Company and the Great Monkland; one at Morinish—the Welcome claim; one at Cawarra—the Annie claim; and one at the Crocodile—the Hit or Miss United. According to the account certified by the warden, the mining surveyor, and the Government Geologist the cost would be as follows:—Dan O'Connell, 600 feet to 800 feet, £4 5s.; 800 feet to 1,000 feet, £5 10s.; Papuan Block, 600 feet to 800 feet, £4 5s.; 800 feet to 1,000 feet, £5 10s.; London Gold-mining Company, 600 feet to 800 feet, £4; 800 feet to 1,000 feet, £5 10s.; Great Monkland, 737 feet to 800 feet, £4; 800 feet to 1,000 feet, £5 10s.; 1,000 feet to 1,500 feet, £7 10s. On that mine they were now sinking below 1,000 feet, and it was considered desirable to increase the amount in order to see if gold was to be struck at a greater depth. The cost at the Welcome claim was £3 per foot from 280 feet; Annie claim, £2 per foot from 220 feet; and Hit or Miss United, £2 per foot from 200 feet. Those were the only mines the owners of which had availed themselves of the vote for deep sinking.

Mr. LISSNER: Do I understand the hon. gentleman to say that any mines on Charters Towers have been subsidised?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, two; the Dan O'Connell and the Papuan Block.

Mr. LISSNER: Are they receiving the subsidy?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Perhaps the hon. gentleman means that they have been recommended—he mentioned something about the certificate of the warden and the Government Geologist—to receive the subsidy?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They have actually received it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: On what principle has the subsidy been given?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the money was paid according to the work done, on the report of the mining surveyor, certified to by the warden. All the claims he had mentioned had received a portion of the subsidy. The sum of £5,000 had been expended.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would like to know upon what principle that money was loaned to mines. Was it loaned to mines that were now paying dividends and had been paying dividends for years, or was it loaned to mines that were struggling—searching for the reef at the proper level, expecting that it was going to pay? He should like an answer to his question, because he knew that some of the mines the hon. gentleman had mentioned had been paying dividends.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the principle adopted was that the Geological Surveyor—Mr. Jack—the warden, and the mining surveyor selected and recommended the mines which should be subsidised for deep sinking. All the mines he had mentioned had been recommended in that way.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he understood that, and he understood also that that money voted on the Estimates was intended for the purpose of assisting mines that were struggling into existence, not mines that had been paying dividends for years. Would any member of the committee think for a single moment of subsidising such mines as the Day Dawn or the Day Dawn Block at Charters Towers, or any other mines like them that were paying dividends? The vote was intended to assist mines that were struggling to obtain the reef at a certain depth; and if that principle had been departed from, the Minister for Works had certainly been led astray. He ought to have known whether the mines recommended came within that category or not. He would also like to ask the Minister for Works what security had been taken for the repayment of that money, because it was only a loan to be paid back? If they were lending money to mines that were now paying dividends, they should pay it back at once; in fact, they did not require it at all. The thing seemed to him to be absurd.

Mr. SMYTH said there were only two mines subsidised in the district he represented—the Aurelia or Great Monkland, and the London. The London was a very good mine fifteen or sixteen years ago. Two different parties had worked it, but ultimately they cleared out; the mine was practically abandoned, and he did not believe one of the original shareholders had now anything to do with it. However, other parties had taken it up, gone in for very expensive machinery, and were now down about 700 feet. After reaching 600 feet they received a subsidy, but they were now crosscutting for the reef, and were not receiving any assistance; but when they commenced to sink again, no doubt they would receive subsidy. The other mine was the Aurelia or Great Monkland, which was an amalgamated claim, including the St. Patrick and others. At one time it paid out small struggling dividends, but it never paid the shareholders, and it was looked upon by experts as a good mine to subsidise. It was down about 1,050 or 1,060 feet; it was a good shaft, and the locality looked promising for deep sinking. No dividend-paying mines had been subsidised or assisted by the Government on Gympie.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that was no doubt quite true as far as Gympie was concerned. He had no objection whatever to the Government lending money to assist such claims as the hon. member had mentioned; but he knew from personal knowledge that some of the mines the Minister for Mines had mentioned had been paying dividends for years and were paying dividends now. Why should they be subsidised?

Mr. LISSNER said he thought the subsidy was not spent in the right direction at all. He understood from the member for Gympie that there were three mines receiving subsidy on Gympie, although when the vote was passed on the Estimates it was understood that not more than two mines on every goldfield should get the subsidy.

Mr. SMYTH: There are only two subsidised on Gympie.

Mr. LISSNER said he understood the hon. member to say three. He was surprised to hear the Minister for Mines say that the Dan O'Connell mine at Charters Towers was subsidised. He could inform the hon. gentleman that that mine divided a large crushing a short time ago, and it was all very well for the shareholders to divide large crushings, and get the Government to subsidise them for anything they wanted to do in the way of prospecting below. If the Government had

really subsidised the Dan O'Connell he should recommend them to get the money back at once while they were in funds. As far as the Papuan Block was concerned, they had not paid a dividend for a considerable time. He did not think it was a good thing to subsidise mines that were worked on the principle of incorporated companies, and had a capital of about 24,000 shares, a large amount of which was never fully subscribed. A certain number of the shareholders held shares fully paid-up as a bonus for prior ownership in the concern, and those sleeping shareholders got the benefit of the Government subsidy for deep sinking. He had never liked the principle of the vote. In the return he called for to be laid upon the table of the House, he could find only two mines subsidised at Gympie, and none at Charters Towers, and he was inclined to think there must be something wrong about it.

Mr. SMYTH : They had not reported on Charters Towers then.

Mr. LISSNER : Yes ; the report was laid on the table after Mr. Jack had been there. He had been given to understand that the Dan O'Connell did not want the Government subsidy, and he would like to know why that mine had been subsidised. He thought it was a wrong principle to go upon. He would like to see assistance given to mines that really required it, and thought it would be better to follow the example of the Victorian Government, and vote £10,000 for prospecting for the benefit of the colony generally. There would then be some chance of getting the money recouped, and it would be far better than giving it to incorporated companies that could call up capital whenever they required it. As far as the Dan O'Connell was concerned, he was quite satisfied that they could do without the subsidy, and was surprised to hear that it had been subsidised. He thought there must be a mistake somewhere.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the Government in arranging for the payment of the subsidy went about it in the most rational way possible. They got the geological surveyor, the mining surveyor, and the warden to select and recommend to the Government those shafts that were most likely to be successful in deep sinking. He could not make any selection of any particular shaft. He knew nothing at all about it. What other course could the Government have adopted than the one they had ? He could quite understand the hon. member for Charters Towers. He presumed he would like to see that money paid to all the mines.

Mr. LISSNER : Yes.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he would not, and that was plain speaking. Two mines, in his opinion, were quite sufficient to subsidise on any goldfield. Now, two mines had been selected on Charters Towers and two on Gympie. He himself had not the slightest faith that one shilling would ever be recovered ; he did not care whether they struck gold or not, the Government would never see a shilling out of it. It was at the instigation of the hon. member for Townsville that the vote had been put down on the Estimates.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : No ; certainly not.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he did not know what they were going to come to. It was at the instance of the hon. member for Townsville that the vote was agreed to, and now that hon. gentleman was beginning to find fault with his own work. All he (the Minister for Mines) could say was that the Government were extremely anxious to carry out the vote in the most legitimate way possible of doing so. But

as to the expectation of being repaid the loans, the hon. gentleman knew perfectly well that not a sixpence would ever be got back. Had not the Government of Victoria spent thousands and thousands of pounds in the same way and not got it back ?

Mr. FOXTON : They got some back.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : £350 out of £70,000 or £80,000.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : Over £100,000.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the present vote would be something the same. The fact was, it was spoon-feeding the miners. He had not faith in it, but the Government was bound to carry out the decision of the Committee, and they were doing so to the best of their ability.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman said distinctly that he did not believe a shilling would ever be repaid. He (Mr. Macrossan) was very sorry to hear him say so. He was surprised to hear him say so when he lent money to mines that were actually paying dividends.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear !

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that was what he objected to. He did not approve of the principle. The hon. gentleman said it was at his instigation that the vote was put on the Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : Hear, hear !

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was not the principle he proposed at all, as the records of the House would show. His proposition was that a reward should be paid for finding gold at certain depths, the same as for finding a new goldfield. He never intended to lend money to miners for sinking. He intended that the miners should sink with their own money and their own energy, and that the Government should pay them a reward when they found gold, the same as they paid them for the discovery of tin or gold on a new field. But the Government had altered his proposition and adopted the Victorian system, which was a system he never believed in. What he objected to was the Minister for Mines giving money to dividend-paying mines—to mines that were paying dividends at present and had been paying dividends for years. The hon. member for Charters Towers told them that one of the mines referred to had been paying dividends for years, and yet the Minister said that mine had been subsidised. He was sorry to hear it. He could scarcely credit it. He could hardly think that the shareholders of the Dan O'Connell, knowing that they were paying dividends every crushing, would accept a loan from the Government with the intention of never paying it back. He wanted to know from the Minister for Mines what security he had taken for repayment of the loans to the different mines, or had he taken any security whatever ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : What security can we get ?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : Have you taken any security whatever ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he would like to ask the hon. member what security they could take. The Government had arranged to subsidise certain mines to endeavour to discover gold at certain depths. The miners themselves paid half the cost, and the Government subsidised them by paying the other half, with the view that if they struck gold they were to return the money. What guarantee could they get, or what would it be worth when got ?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The machinery.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said that would be all gone; they could not catch that. He was surprised to hear the hon. member talking about a guarantee over mines. What did the Government want with a mortgage over mines?

Mr. FOOTE: A mortgage over the shaft.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said, of course the miners had signed an agreement, but what was it worth? He believed the Government would never receive back a single shilling. He had seen the regulations under which the Victorian Government subsidised deep sinking, and after expending £60,000 or £70,000 on it all they got back was £350.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman asked what security the Government could take over a mine. There were different ways of getting security over a mine. The hon. gentleman had told them he had lent money to a mine which was paying dividends. Surely he could get security from a mine which was paying a few thousands every year, and had been paying dividends for the last six or seven years! Surely such a mine could give security for money borrowed from the Government. If it was a mine which ought to be subsidised, and which came within the category of the mines which were subsidised in Victoria—that was, mines sinking for a reef—it would have machinery. Surely the Government could take some security over the machinery! But the hon. gentleman would not get the money back. He had told the Committee he would not, and he (Mr. Macrossan) thought the miners would not pay it back after such a statement. The statement of the hon. gentleman was not, at any rate, encouraging to the miners to pay it back, but an encouragement to them to hold on to it. What he wanted to know was what security the Minister had taken for repayment.

Mr. MELLOR said he was certainly surprised to hear the Minister for Mines say that he would never get back anything again. He knew it was the intention of the miners at Gympie to repay the subsidy if successful. He himself thoroughly believed that they would pay it back.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. MELLOR said he was in hopes that they would strike gold in driving, if not in the shaft, and when they got it he had no doubt they would pay their debts. It had been said that the principle on which those loans were advanced was for the purpose of assisting prospectors when they had difficulty in sinking shafts. He did not think that was the principle. The principle was to endeavour to find gold at a greater depth, on Government land, of course; and the reason why the Government placed the matter in the hands of the Government Geologist was that that gentleman was supposed to know exactly the places where they were likely to strike gold at greater depths. He thought the Government were quite right in taking the suggestions of the Geologist in subsidising the shafts where gold was likely to be found at greater depths. He knew that the people of Gympie used no influence with the gentleman as to which mine should be subsidised. They left it entirely to the Government Geologist, and he thought it was quite proper that they should have done so. He believed Mr. Jack was the most likely man to know where gold could be found at a great depth.

Mr. ANNEAR asked if the contracts for sinking the shafts, especially those at Gympie, were submitted to the Government for their

approval, because he had been informed that the amount given by the Government to one company covered the whole contract?

Mr. MELLOR said he might state for the information of the hon. member that he was a shareholder in one mine that had been subsidised when the shaft had been sunk 700 feet; it then cost £10 a foot, and £7 10s. per foot is being paid by Government as subsidy. The cost now is greater, being 1,100 feet deep.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he was rather surprised to hear the Minister for Mines say that he did not expect the money to be paid back again, and if the hon. gentleman really believed that then he thought that the £10,000 already expended was quite enough for the Government to pay away. When the vote was going through he opposed it on the principle that private enterprise would always accomplish what the Government proposed to do by giving a subsidy, and he believed now that private enterprise would do the work far better if it was carried out by means of Government grants. But if the money voted was not to be paid back again, it would be better to omit the item of £5,000, and unless he received an assurance that the Government would see that it was paid back, he should move the omission of that amount.

Mr. SMYTH said the Government could not do too much for the mining industry. In Victoria it was fully recognised, and for the present year a sum of £80,000 had been voted to assist it. The mining industry was the industry of this colony.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Mr. SMYTH said hon. members might laugh, but he would repeat the statement, that it was the principal industry of the colony. Queensland was the richest colony of the whole group, and they were only now commencing to develop the mining industry, and he did not think the Government could spend £5,000 better than in the way proposed. If gold was struck on Government property that property was immediately increased in value. Government property lying idle alongside would be taken up, £1 per annum per acre would be paid for it, miners' licenses at the rate of 10s. each would be taken out, and the people attracted to the field would be large consumers of dutiable goods. There was no class that did more for the colony than the miners. What would be better for the colony now than a rush which would bring 10,000 or 15,000 persons? That would be infinitely better than sending immigration lecturers home to attract people out here. He considered it came with a very bad grace from the hon. member for Ipswich to cavil at that small amount.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he did not think the hon. member for Ipswich was really in earnest in regard to proposing the omission of the item. The hon. gentleman had the idea that the Government did not desire to get any of that money back again, but he did not think his hon. colleague, the Minister for Mines, had conveyed the impression that the Government did not desire to get it back, or were utterly regardless as to whether any means should be taken for securing the repayment of the money. It had been said already that an agreement was signed by the parties to whom the money was advanced before it was advanced, and they were liable in the ordinary way for the repayment of the money. He thought it was too late in the day for any hon. member to cavil at any expenditure, however large, which would be the means of developing the mineral wealth of the colony. They knew

very well that they were largely dependent for prosperity upon the development of the mines of the colony, and it was thought long ago that that was a suitable method of developing the mineral resources of many of the goldfields, and encouraging persons to sink deep. He was satisfied that if in the past there had been any error as to the way in which the money had been spent—and he did not admit that there had been—the effect of the discussion that afternoon would cause the Minister for Mines to make inquiries and remedy what error there might have been. The Minister for Mines could not know everything about mining, but in giving the local mining surveyor and local warden authority to make recommendations, the most intelligent method of distributing the money had been found. If there had been any mistakes as to the principle on which the recommendations had been made the Government would take care that they did not occur again.

Mr. FOOTE said there was no objection to the vote on the part of any member provided it was expended legitimately. He must express his surprise that the Government had not taken any security for the money, and that they were doing business on terms that no other person in creation would do it. The Minister for Mines had intimated that he was sure the miners would never pay the money back, and after that statement, they might be certain that the miners would take notice of that observation, and consider they were not expected to pay. All that hon. members wanted was that the money should be secured. It might happen in some cases that after laborious sinking the mine turned out a failure, and of course the Government would then be in the same position as anyone else—they could not get blood out of a stone; but as far as possible, as suggested by the hon. member for Townsville, they should take some security. He did not believe that the Government would take extreme measures in cases of hardship, but it was only reasonable that the country should be secured for the loan of money.

Mr. HAMILTON said he would ask the Minister for Mines how much of the amount placed on the Estimates last year for loans to deep sinking had been expended in the North?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said about £2,500 had been spent on deep sinking. The principal part of the money had been spent at Gympie.

Mr. HAMILTON said he knew that the principal part of the money had been expended in Gympie; but the question he had asked was how much had been expended in the northern portion of the colony?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he would endeavour to give the hon. member on the following day the exact amount that had been spent. The amounts had been recommended by the Geological Surveyor, the mining surveyors, and the gold wardens, and he would furnish the hon. member with the exact amount.

Mr. HAMILTON said he knew the exact amount that had been spent on the Northern fields from that subsidy. The exact amount was not one penny—not one single penny. Now, he would like to know, as the Ministry had said some time back that £5,000 had been already expended, if any portion of the £5,000 on the Estimates for the present year had yet been expended?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have just informed the hon. member of the amount expended out of the £10,000.

Mr. HAMILTON said there was an amount unexpended out of the £10,000 vote at the end of June, and what was not spent lapsed.

Mr. NORTON: No!

Mr. HAMILTON: It is on the Estimates again, and we are voting it again.

Mr. MACFARLANE: It amounts to £15,000 altogether.

Mr. HAMILTON: We have got £10,000; are we to get another £5,000?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Yes.

Mr. HAMILTON said the Minister for Mines had read out a list of various claims, which he understood the Government had agreed to subsidise. He would like to know if the Government intended to subsidise the mines included in the list, to sink to the depths mentioned in the list, provided they complied with their part of the contract. For instance, the Minister for Mines read out the "Daniel O'Connell claim, 600 feet to 800 feet, £4 5s. per foot; 800 feet to 1,000 feet, £5 10s. per foot;" and so on with other claims. He wished to know whether, if the claims specified were sunk to the various depths specified on the list, the Government would subsidise them to the extent of those depths?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said those amounts were recommended by Mr. Jack, the goldfields warden, and the mining surveyor. They had recommended that the miners should be subsidised to the amounts named—600 to 800 feet, £4 5s. per foot, and 800 feet to 1,000 feet, £5 10s. per foot, and so on. That was simply a recommendation of the geological surveyor, the goldfields wardens, and mining surveyors on the different goldfields. As they sank the mine, the warden and mining surveyor certified to the depth to which the shaft was sunk, and all moneys paid for subsidising deep sinking were paid on the certificate of the warden and the mining surveyor of the field.

Mr. HAMILTON said they had recommended the amounts stated; but what he wished to know was whether the Government would act upon the recommendation.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he could not be expected to carry all the amounts in his head.

Mr. HAMILTON said he did not want the different amounts, but he wanted to know whether the Government intended to act upon the recommendations given them. It was a most important thing to know, and he wished to know it in the interests of his constituents, and he was sure every mining member wished to know whether the Minister intended to act upon the recommendations given. It was a simple question, and he was sure the hon. gentleman could answer it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said they were the best recommendations the Government could get, and, as a matter of course, they would act upon them.

Mr. HAMILTON said that was all he wanted to know, as he could point out that if those recommendations were acted upon, the Government had already pledged themselves to spend £10,900 on claims in the southern portion of Queensland alone, leaving out Wilson's claim, the Annie, and the Hit or Miss United. That would be seen from the list. There were the Daniel O'Connell for sinking from 600 feet to 800 feet—200 feet, at £4 5s. a foot, £850; 800 to 1,000 feet—200 feet, at £5 10s., £1,100. Papuan Block: 600 to 800 feet, at £4 5s.—200 feet—£850; 800 to 1,000 feet, at £5 10s.—200 feet—£1,100. London Gold-mining Company: 600 to 800 feet, at £4—200 feet—£800;

800 to 1,000 at £5 10s.—200 feet—£1,100. Great Monkland: 737 to 800 feet, at £4—63 feet—£252; 800 to 1,000 feet, at £5 10s.—200 feet—£1,100; 1,000 to 1,500 feet, at £7 10s.—500 feet—£3,750. That would make a total of £10,902. In addition to that were the claims—Wilson's, Annie, and Hit or Miss United claim—which he had agreed to subsidise. If, as the Minister for Mines stated, he was going to act upon the recommendations given, it would be seen that it would involve an expenditure of £10,902, and that upon claims solely in the southern part of the colony. They had not spent a penny in the North, and yet the Government had actually pledged themselves to spend £10,902 on goldfields in the South. He might also mention that the vote was placed on the Estimates for deep sinking for gold and other minerals, and the Minister had not informed them that any portion of the vote had been spent for any other purpose. He knew, however, that a few months ago about £1,264 of the vote for deep sinking was spent for materials connected with diamond drills, tubes, etc., for one employed at Dalby sinking on Crown lands, and for one at Maryborough, sinking on private property.

Mr. SMYTH said before the vote passed he would like to draw the attention of the Minister for Mines to the vote for powder magazine keepers, and in connection with that to mention that the powder magazine keeper at Gympie was supposed to get £100 a year. Hon. members probably knew that it was Mr. James Nash, the discoverer of the goldfield, who looked after the magazines there. Mr. Nash got £100 a year, but out of that he had to pay £25 a year for the support of a deaf and dumb child at the institution in Sydney. The Government, he understood, contributed a certain sum of money every year to the Sydney institution, on account of the Queensland children there, but shortly after Mr. Nash got the appointment of magazine keeper at Gympie the Government took £25 a year off his salary for the support of his child at the Sydney institution. He had to look after two magazines, in which he (Mr. Smyth) had known as much as 2,000 cases of explosives to have been stored. He thought, under the circumstances, the Government might very well grant a slight increase of salary to Mr. Nash. He had been a benefactor to the colony, having discovered one of the principal goldfields; he was an unassuming, quiet, well-conducted man, and he looked after his work very well. There were magazine-keepers in other parts of the colony who got more money and had less to do. Before he sat down he might as well draw attention to a petition he presented from the Engine Drivers' Association of Gympie some time ago. Many engine-drivers on the field worked twelve hours a day, and it was not considered safe for those whose lives depended to a great extent on the care exercised by the engine-drivers. He hoped the Minister for Mines would look into the matter, and have a regulation framed to prevent drivers from working such long hours. Such a regulation should certainly be included in those for the prevention of injury to miners. Many drivers would leave £3 a week, working eight hours a day, to get £3 10s. a week, working twelve hours a day; and he thought the Government ought to step in and prevent them from working such long hours. If they did that there would soon be three men working for every two now employed, and three men working with an eight hours' shift was better than two men working with a twelve hours' shift.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he had heard no complaint with reference to the keeper of the powder magazine, who, in addition to

£100 a year, had a house rent free. With reference to the engine-drivers, he did not see how the Government could interfere between private individuals, so far as regulating the hours of labour was concerned.

Mr. HAMILTON said the hours were too long for persons holding such a responsible position, but it struck him that the men should take the matter into their own hands. He believed that the proposed miners' union would very soon round-up employers who wished men to work twelve hours a day.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Minister for Mines had stated that money had been paid by the Government for deep sinking on Charters Towers, and the member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, stated that not a penny had been expended by the Government in Northern Queensland; so that one of the two statements must be incorrect. He rose, however, to point out that the Government were going on a wrong principle in the matter. He did not think hon. members intended, when the vote was under consideration before, that the Government should lend money to a mine that was paying dividends and had been paying dividends for years; but that assistance should be given to miners who were prospecting in deep sinking. It was intended that they should be subsidised so much a foot after reaching a certain depth, and that the money should be returned to the Government when payable gold was struck. If that proposition had been adopted no one would have been paid until the desired result was actually attained; but as it was the Government were actually paying men who were receiving dividends, and had received them for years. Was that a right principle?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No!

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman admitted that it was not a right principle, and he hoped the hon. gentleman would issue instructions to the effect that the payment of the subsidy did not apply to dividend-paying mines, but simply to prospecting mines below a certain depth. He did not believe any money had yet been paid, but whether it had or not the recommendation had been made, and the Minister had said he would act on the best information he could get in carrying it out. He hoped, however, the hon. gentleman would see that no subsidy was paid to any mine but one that was prospecting, and also that a stipulation was made for the repayment of the money lent. That was a very simple proposition, and one that ought to be carried out.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said a contract had been entered into with a company of miners, and they were to refund the money advanced if they struck payable gold; but he was not aware of a single mine receiving a subsidy that had struck payable gold. The question as to what should be done was left pretty much to the opinions of hon. members who represented mining districts, and he believed the majority disapproved of the principle laid down by the hon. member for Townsville. The Government had endeavoured to carry out the wishes of the majority. He was not prepared to say—the hon. member for Townsville knew better than he did because he was a shareholder—whether the Dan O'Connell had received any subsidy. He did not believe the company had applied for any; but he would bring down to-morrow a memorandum showing exactly what had been done with reference to each mine. The desire of the Government was to assist people in the endeavour to strike gold at a greater depth; and he believed that even if the Government were not recouped, the country would be recouped on account of the amount of gold obtained.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not know whether the Dan O'Connell had received any subsidy or not; but whether or not, it should not receive any in his opinion. With regard to the Croydon Gold Field, he did not see any sum set down for a warden.

The PREMIER: It was put down since the Estimates were framed.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: What amount of salary is intended to be given?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He will be paid the same as other wardens, I presume.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: They are not all paid alike.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said that as Croydon was an out-of-the-way place, perhaps the warden there would be entitled to something extra.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Minister for Mines would see by the Estimates that the different wardens received very different salaries. The warden at Gladstone had only £100; probably he filled some other office as well.

The PREMIER: Yes.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then the warden at the Palmer received £500, and the warden on the Hodgkinson, £400; Etheridge and Ravenswood, £400; Charters Towers, £300—his salary as police magistrate made it up to £700; and then they came to Gympie—£500 again. He would like to know how much the warden appointed at Croydon would receive. It was an out-of-the-way place, very expensive, and not a very pleasant place to live at; and it would be a place of very great importance before six months—as soon as the machinery which was being erected began crushing. He thought from what he had heard about Croydon that it would astonish many people in Queensland who were accustomed to big returns. Looking at the importance of the field, the distance it was from civilisation, and the dearth of provisions, the warden there ought to receive a very fair salary—quite as much as the warden at Ravenswood and Hodgkinson.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he believed that in almost every instance the gold warden filled two offices, and received a salary as police magistrate as well as that paid to him as warden. It averaged, he thought, from £600 to £650, and some, he believed, were as high as £700. He was under the impression that the warden at Gympie received altogether £700, and at Charters Towers he believed it was the same. They were nearly all paid partly as gold wardens, and partly as police magistrates, and the salaries were nearly all equal. He was told by the Colonial Treasurer that the warden at Croydon received £450; he presumed he also received salary as police magistrate.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No; that is his total remuneration.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that by looking at the schedule to the Estimates they could see at once what each warden received; and they would find a very great difference in the amounts. The warden at Croydon only received £450. Well, the salary was not worth the position. At Gympie, which they might say was in the centre of civilisation, the warden received in all £750; at the Etheridge, £550; at Ravenswood, £500; at the Hodgkinson—and he was certain the warden at the Hodgkinson had not half as much work as the warden at Croydon—£535. Then the warden at the Palmer received £800—nearly double the salary of the warden at Croydon. He did not think £450 was a sufficient salary for a man in the position of warden.

The PREMIER: He was promoted from another position in the service.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would point out another thing in regard to the wardens. They had adopted the principle, and to a certain extent carried it out, of removing police magistrates from districts in which they had been for a number of years; and he thought the same principle ought to apply to the wardens. There were several wardens in the country who ought to be removed from the positions they occupied at present to other goldfields. He would not point them out; but if the Minister for Mines wished, he would tell him privately of some who ought to be removed for the benefit of the service, and for their own benefit as well.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Some of them have been removed.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he hoped the Minister for Mines would make up his mind to do the same with the wardens as the Colonial Secretary had done with the police magistrates. It would be better for the service and for the officers themselves.

Mr. HAMILTON said he quite agreed that there was just as great, if not greater, necessity for removing wardens than for removing magistrates. With regard to the subsidies, he hoped the Minister for Mines would have the vote differently apportioned next year, because it had not been at all fairly divided hitherto. Not one penny had been expended on the goldfields in his constituency, and the hon. member for Charters Towers, Mr. Lissner, told him that no money had been expended on the Towers. It had been recommended, but not expended. In August last £1,068 had been expended in Gympie by way of subsidy, and £1,264 in diamond drills, making a total of £2,332. He thought the Minister for Mines would find, when he produced his statement, that he was in error in saying that £5,000 had been expended. The amount would more likely be under £4,000.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he noticed an item of £50 for the goldfields warden at Rockhampton. The goldfields in that district had now assumed sufficient importance to warrant the appointment of an officer to administer them without having to do police magistrate's duty at Rockhampton as well. It was hardly possible for the police magistrate of Rockhampton to act efficiently as warden of the goldfields in the district and fulfil his duties as police magistrate as well. They might just as well expect Mr. Pinnock to do duty at Enoggera, supposing that goldfield was flourishing, as expect the police magistrate of Rockhampton to attend at Mount Morgan, Morinish, and the other fields in the district, and do his duty in both capacities efficiently. For the sake of the proper administration of the Mines Department, a warden ought to be appointed to that district. He did not wish to run the Government into any extravagance, but it would be far better to have the department properly and efficiently administered even if they had to expend a few hundreds more per annum. He believed the Minister for Mines would agree with him that ten times the amount of the warden's salary would have been saved to the country if such an officer had been appointed half-a-dozen years ago.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he had not heard any complaints on the subject from the warden at Rockhampton. It was only very recently—only during the last eighteen months or so—that Rockhampton had come into prominence as a goldfield centre. No complaints had been made that the warden there had not done

his duty; if he could not do it, arrangements would be made to relieve him. If the duties on the goldfield were such as to occupy the whole time of a warden, a warden would be appointed.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that when he was Minister for Mines he heard complaints, and the goldfields then near Rockhampton were not nearly so important as they were now. He heard complaints from miners that they could not get their work done, and that the warden, instead of attending personally, sent an orderly to do his duty for him, who, of course, could have no legal authority to do so. He also heard complaints from the inhabitants of Rockhampton that on account of the warden having to go on to the goldfield his police work in town was neglected. The Minister for Mines must remember that when certain documents were asked for by him at the beginning of the session, the answer he got was that such documents were not to be found. That was because the warden's duties had not been properly attended to; he could not properly do those duties and his own as well, the fact being that he had too much to do. Was it not a fact that the occupant of the office had lately been asked to be relieved of his duties as goldfields warden, so that he might devote the whole of his time to his duties as police magistrate?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said he could only repeat that he had heard no complaints from the goldfields warden at Rockhampton.

Mr. PALMER said that of the four mining surveyors provided for, two were set down for the whole of the Northern goldfields. Did the hon. gentleman think that two mining surveyors were sufficient for the whole of those extensive goldfields in the North, including the Etheridge, Croydon, Hodgkinson, Palmer, and others? There was work enough for both the men on the Etheridge alone. He wished to know whether the Minister for Mines had appointed a mining surveyor on the Etheridge in place of Mr. Sircom, lately deceased?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied that Mr. Sircom's place had not yet been filled, but arrangements were being made to find a successor to him.

Mr. LISSNER said there was at present not a single mining surveyor on the Northern goldfields. Of the four provided for on the Estimates, one was stationed at Gympie, another at Charters Towers, a third at Ravenswood, and the fourth was dead, and his successor had not yet been appointed. That was a cheerful way of fostering the mining industry. There was not one mining surveyor for the whole of the Northern goldfields, which included Croydon, the Etheridge, the Hodgkinson, the Palmer, and another which had lately been discovered not far from Geraldton.

Mr. W. BROOKES said that while they were on the subject of goldfields wardens it would be interesting to the Committee and to the public if he were to read a letter headed "The Etheridge Gold Field in Queensland," which appeared in the *London Times* of 1st October, 1886. It was pertinent to the subject under discussion, because some little dissatisfaction had been expressed with the action taken by the Government in warning people in England against "wild cat" mines in Queensland. After he had read the letter he believed that any unfavourable impression that was made by that telegram would no longer exist, because the letter would show the good feeling of the Government towards the mining interest. The letter was as follows:—

"To the Editor,

"Sir,
"I have read your leader of September 24th, referring to the answer of the Colonial Secretary to the question of Sir Richard Temple, whether a gold region

of extraordinary richness had been discovered near the Etheridge. It seems to me the information in an answer to such a question in the House of Commons, being of a limited character, is necessarily incomplete; allow me, therefore, to supplement it by official information. Mr. Gold Warden Samwell, in his report to the Government upon the Etheridge field under his charge, states that the estimated area is 9,760 square miles; that many of the known reefs on this field yield from 1 to 6 oz. of gold per ton of quartz, while some have yielded from 10 to 16 oz., and one, the 'Susan,' has actually yielded for the last two years, on an average, from 10 oz. to 25 oz. of gold to the ton of quartz. The average yield of the field for 1885 was 2 oz. 10 dwt. While it may be true that no official information has been received of the discovery of any new goldfield near the Etheridge, yet within its immense area constant discoveries are made of new reefs, and Mr. Warden Samwell reports 'There are thousands of miles of mineral wealth in this field yet untouched.'

"The Etheridge is only one of the many others of Queensland's well known goldfields, and if it has not been developed to the same extent as Charters Towers, Gympie, Ravenswood, and others, it is only because it has not yet been brought within our railway system.

"Mr. Samwell says the Etheridge country is suitable for Europeans; the climate is cool and healthy, and the valleys and alluvial flats are fertile. I send you a map of the district, which I shall be obliged by your publishing with this letter.

"Your article, besides dealing with the question of the Etheridge Gold Field, proceeds to make a comparison between the average yields of the De Koap goldfields in South Africa, and the Australian goldfields. I have already, I think, shown that the yield of the Etheridge field is greater than the Koap, while the average yield of all the goldfields of Queensland is known to be higher than that of any other country in the world. Queensland has willingly expended large sums in displaying to English capitalists and labourers her great universal resources, as can be seen by her mineral exhibits and the quartz mill at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition. To those who are desirous of investing in mining pursuits and to the operative miner, I can confidently recommend Queensland as a field for operations where all the essentials for profitable investment and remunerative labour are to be found, with the special advantage—so far as the De Koap goldfield is concerned—of being within Her Majesty's dominions.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"JAMES F. GARRICK,

"Agent-General for Queensland.

"Queensland Government Office,

"1, Westminster Chambers,

"Victoria Street, London, S.W."

Attached to the letter was a map, and he had been told by an hon. member that that map was really superior to the map in the Government office here. He did not know how that could be so, but he had been told by the hon. member for Burke that it was the best map he had seen. However, taking the matter from beginning to end, it was satisfactory to know that every hon. member of the Committee and of the public might rest assured that the Government were in no way hostile to the North, or to the promotion of the mining industry in Queensland. He thought they should all be pleased that that letter appeared, because no doubt there was a great deal of interest taken in those things in England. Hon. members were well aware that there were a great many "wild cat" mines that had received a good deal of support, and had swallowed up a lot of money in South Africa, India, and other places; and the effect of that letter would be to strengthen the good opinion of the investing public in England in Queensland mines. While he believed the letter would have that effect, he trusted the telegram sent would have the further effect of inducing investors to get good information before they put their money into such speculations.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not suppose any other member of the Committee would have had the audacity to introduce that subject except the hon. member who had done so.

Mr. W. BROOKES: No.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that had the action of the Government rested with the action taken by the Agent-General in writing that letter it would have been very well indeed, but they went very much further and did something that quite nullified, or at least tended to nullify, the good effect of that letter. They did well by directing attention to the great mineral wealth of Queensland, but they made a mistake in sending home a telegram cautioning investors in London against mines which had been called "wild cat" mines, although that was not a Queensland term. He believed it was a Yankee term. They cautioned them against those mines, and mentioned two which they believed to be "wild cats." But unfortunately for the Government and for the Agent-General, the map, which the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, said he believed was superior to the Government map to be found in the Mines Department, contained one of the very mines that they denounced a "wild cat." That was a very unfortunate circumstance. Here they had the Premier in ignorance—he admitted that it was done in ignorance—sending home a telegram mentioning a certain mine as not known in Queensland, and a week or two previous they found his colleague, the Agent-General, publishing a letter and map in the *London Times*, giving the name and position of that very mine in Queensland. He did not blame the Premier very much on that occasion, because he knew that he had acted in ignorance and hastily—that he ought to have made more inquiries. But the matter was made ten times worse afterwards by the action of the Agent-General himself. He (Mr. Macrossan) had pointed out, in the course of the discussion that had previously taken place in connection with the matter, that he was afraid the Agent-General, who knew so little about mining, would make matters worse than the telegram sent home by the Premier would. And what did the Agent-General do to verify his expectations? When asked by some person having, he supposed, a position on the London Stock Exchange, to verify his statement, or to mention the names of the "wild cat" mines to which he referred, his answer was that there were so many of them that it was impracticable to do so.

The PREMIER: No, no!

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Yes; that was the telegram that appeared in the *Courier* as having been said by the Agent-General.

The PREMIER: No!

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he even went further than the Premier. The Premier made the mistake of naming two mines—or, at any rate, one certainly—which did exist, and was not a "wild cat"; but his colleague at home went so far as to say that there were so many of them that he could not name them. In fact, he was afraid to name them. As a lawyer he was afraid of the consequences, as he knew that he could not go very far in naming mines in that way, the owners of which might sue him for having given false information damaging to their interests; but he should never have used the words he was reported to have used.

The PREMIER: He is not reported to have used them.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was so reported in the *Courier*.

The PREMIER: He is reported to have used them to me—not to the public.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was reported to have used them to some person named Nicholls. How could the Agent-General have reported such a thing to the Premier when

that hon. gentleman was in Queensland, and could know whether the statement was true or not? It could not have been the report of a telegram to the Premier; it was the report of an answer given by the Agent-General to a person named Nicholls, who asked him to name the mines to which he referred; because, no doubt, the owners of good mines on the London market were suffering as well as the owners of "wild cats," and they wished the "wild cats" to be specified, so that the good mines should be known, and therefore not suffer any longer. The answer given by the Agent-General, as reported in the *Courier*, was as he had stated. Whether it was a correct report of the answer or not he did not know. The Agent-General might have answered differently, because they knew that sometimes the mere skeleton of a telegram arrived here, and it was made up. At any rate, it would not be much to their profit to continue the discussion now. They could not make the matter any better; but that a mistake had been made he was perfectly convinced. It was a very good thing for individuals to warn other individuals who they knew were about to invest; but it was a dangerous thing for a Government to do unless it was possessed of all the information which it should possess; and when the Government undertook to send home the warning they did, they were not possessed of any information whatever on the subject. They had heard from some outside source that there was a mine called "West Mount Morgan," and they heard, as well as many others, that that mine was really not in practical existence. Whether they had heard the Elektron mine had no practical existence he did not know; but they should not have said so without having known it, more especially as that very letter and map showed that the Agent-General knew better, for he had the information in his office. The Minister for Mines had the information in his office, as he had the warden's reports, and the Premier might have informed himself by calling on the Minister for Mines to furnish him with those warden's reports.

The PREMIER said he was very glad his hon. colleague, Mr. Brookes, had called attention to the matter again. He had not the slightest sympathy with those people who wished to defraud the British public in connection with Queensland gold-mines—not the slightest. He was very glad indeed to have been the means, to a certain extent, of interfering with their nefarious schemes. He was not referring to the hon. member now, but he had seen with amazement and disgust the proceedings that had taken place in some parts of the colony protesting against those schemes being interfered with. He had thought better of the people of the colony, and he did not think that any *bond fide* promoters of mines would have felt any annoyance whatever at the British public being warned against those schemes. No greater injury could be done to the colony than that the British public should be defrauded by gold-mining adventures. He believed that if at the present time a mine like Mount Morgan were discovered in India, and vouched for by the most eminent and respectable scientists, there was not a man in England who would put a farthing into it. That was the result of the enormous frauds that had been perpetrated in connection with Indian gold-mines. The goldfields of Queensland could not be developed without foreign capital. It was one of the most important functions of the Government to assist in developing the goldfields of the colony. That could only be done by means of foreign capital, and when they saw attempts being made to secure a temporary advantage to a few individuals, at the risk of lasting

injury to their goldfields, it was the duty of the Government to send a warning. The following was the telegram which he sent to the Agent-General:—

"Press telegrams report that attempts are being made to float in England several Queensland gold-mining companies. There is reason to fear that some are not altogether *bonâ fide*. Nothing is known of West Mount Morgan or Elektron here. Care should be taken by investors."

That was strictly true. As to West Mount Morgan, all of them knew there was no such place, and yet £120,000—

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: £200,000.

The PREMIER: At any rate a very large sum of money had been extracted from the pockets of the British public by that undoubted fraud and swindle. As to the Elektron mine, he did not know where it was; he had never heard of it. Some people might have known of it, and it might exist, but a large sum of money had also been procured on it. There was an immense number of other mines on the British market. He did not think that any *bonâ fide* mines would suffer from the telegram. He had no sympathy either with persons who had good mines and put them off on the British public for £100,000 when they were not dividend-paying mines. He was certain that there was not one non-dividend-paying mine that could fairly be put off on the British public for £100,000. He asserted that. Would anybody in Queensland give £100,000 for a mine that had not paid a dividend? He would say not.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Yes.

The PREMIER said he was quite sure they would not; and why should they endeavour to delude the British public to do that sort of thing? The hon. gentleman said that the Agent-General had made a worse mistake than he (the Premier) had made. He did not make any mistake. If he had made any mistake at all it was in mentioning the Elektron; but he had made no mistake in mentioning the West Mount Morgan. But the Agent-General had not mentioned any names at all. Where had the harm been done? The hon. gentleman had got hold of the wrong end of the stick altogether. The hon. gentleman had seen in the Press a version of a telegram received by him (the Premier) from the Agent-General—not a telegram purporting to be what the Agent-General had said to the promoters in London. That telegram to him from the Agent-General stated what he proposed to do. It stated that he had been asked to name the mines he did not consider *bonâ fide*, and he told him (the Premier) that there were so many mines advertised in the Press that he did not consider it desirable or practicable to specify any. That was showing a great deal of discretion. He might have been tempted to have mentioned the name of one, at any rate, which was a nefarious fraud, but he had specified no names, and if he had assigned any reason for that it was that there were so many mines advertised that he declined to give any more definite information, and had left people to find out for themselves. Why was all that indignation wasted, not only in the House, but outside? Where did the injury come in? What honest man had suffered to the extent of a farthing? Not one. Some dishonest men might have suffered, but no honest man. He confessed, when he found such a lot of violent indignation reported to have been expressed in some quarters, he had been ashamed of the people, of whom he had thought better. Most certainly if a similar occasion arose he would do as he had done, and he was glad to know that the action of the Government had met with commendation from the most respectable and influential portions of the Press in Great Britain.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said there was no honest man inside or outside that Committee who sympathised in the least with those who wished to deceive the British public in investing in mines. Not one. They knew that in every trade and profession there were men who took advantage of those who were ignorant. But it was not the duty of the Government to warn those people. It was the duty of the Government to punish people for doing wrong, but not to warn tradesmen—

The PREMIER: Not to prevent a serious injury being done to the colony?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Not to warn tradesmen, for tradesmen were very well instructed by experience as to the disposition of others to take them in. Had not the squatters done it, and sold their properties for three or four times their value? Had they not been told in the House that that had been done—that squatters had taken advantage of the ignorance of others, and sold them their properties? He particularised squatters—for they were just the same as others—because they had been mentioned in the House as willing to take advantage of people who did not know as much as themselves. That was really the principle of the people on the Stock Exchange. If the Government could prevent fraud from being committed without making any mistakes, he thought it would be quite right to do so, although he questioned whether it was their duty. But when the Government undertook to warn, without knowing, he said they were culpable and ought to be blamed. And that was what they did in the first instance. They acted impulsively. He did not know who set them in motion. Some other person than the Premier did so; but he would have thought that the Premier, with his legal training and logical knowledge, would have taken more care than he did in ascertaining the *bona fides* of the mines which he named. Now, as to the telegram about the Agent-General, he believed he was perfectly right in saying that a person named Nicholls asked the Agent-General to specify the names of the mines that were "wild cats." The answer, according to the telegram, was that it was impracticable to do so, for there were so many of them.

The PREMIER: No, no!

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he saw it, and he was very indignant at it, and showed it to several hon. members. It was not more than a week ago. And he said to the members to whom he showed it, "That just exactly verifies what I said about Garrick, that he would make a worse blunder than the Premier." He did not think there was anyone in Queensland who would give £100,000 for a non-dividend-paying mine, unless it was a mine alongside such a mine as the Day Dawn. He knew that £100,000 would not buy out the Day Dawn freehold, and it was not likely to pay dividends for the next eighteen months, or probably for two years. The hon. gentleman, therefore, in making such a statement, should qualify it. From the information which had come to the colony from London, they learned that the shares in the Day Dawn mine, which were sold for £460,000, were actually at a premium of £1 fifteen days after the company was floated. They also knew that those very same shares were bringing £15 in Queensland before they were sold in Great Britain at £17, some odd shillings, or £17, he did not know which. What greater sum, then, did the English money-lender pay than was paid by the people of Charters Towers?

The PREMIER: That was a *bonâ fide* transaction.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Yes, that was a *bona fide* transaction, and it was one of the transactions which had caused the great demand for mines in Queensland. The hon. gentleman had spoken of the indignation expressed about his action elsewhere. He knew the hon. gentleman referred to Charters Towers, but he had not the courage to say so. It was because the people there believed that they were included in the wholesale condemnation contained in the Premier's telegrams that they had expressed indignation at his action. Had there been a single "wild-cat" mine ever floated at Charters Towers? He had never heard of one.

The PREMIER: No more have I.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said all the mines floated on Charters Towers were *bona fide* dividend-paying mines. That too much might have been given for some of them he would not dispute. But if there was, it was the fault of the people of the Stock Exchange, not of the people of Charters Towers. Whoever reaped any benefit from that it would not be the people of Charters Towers; it would be some of the "wild-cat" brokers who would make money out of it.

The PREMIER: That will not benefit Charters Towers.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said it would not benefit them, nor would it injure the reputation of the miners of Charters Towers.

The PREMIER: Yes, it will.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not think it would injure them, because the ventures they put on the market were *bona fide*, and if they offered them at a reasonable figure, and the people at home afterwards doubled or trebled that figure, the miners could not be held responsible for that. It was well known that most of the mines had a fair value placed upon them. The highest price paid for any Queensland mine was the price paid for the Day Dawn, and the people who subscribed the capital of that company got full value for their money.

Mr. HAMILTON said that if the telegram of the Premier had had the effect of warning the British public against being swindled, they would have approved of it. He believed that the Premier sent the telegram in the interest of the colony, but also thought he had made a mistake in the way he did it. The hon. gentleman stated in the telegram that nothing was known of the Elektron and West Mount Morgan mines. In that he was incorrect. Had the hon. gentleman exercised any care in the matter he would have found from the records of the Mines Department that the Elektron mine was known. The result would be that when the public at home ascertained, as they would from reliable evidence obtained from documents in the Mines Department, that the warning sent by the Premier regarding the Elektron mine was not reliable, they would not attach any weight to his warning with respect to the West Mount Morgan mine. He (Mr. Hamilton) did not know anything about West Mount Morgan, but he had been informed by people in Rockhampton that it was not worth one-hundredth part of what it was floated for—that, in fact, no gold had been obtained from it. He contended, however, that when people found that the warning with regard to the Elektron was not reliable, they would not attach any importance to the warning respecting the West Mount Morgan and other mines.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The Elektron mine has been quoted already.

Mr. HAMILTON: As the hon. member for Townsville remarked, the Premier's wire regarding the Elektron mine had been quoted already to show that his warning was not

reliable regarding the West Mount Morgan mine. The Premier had asserted that no one would give £100,000 for a non-dividend paying mine. Very likely not; he (Mr. Hamilton) would be very sorry to do so. At the same time he knew that the Elektron mine had paid dividends, that there were five reefs on that ground, and that one reef crushed 3 oz. As to the Premier being perfectly disgusted at the opinions expressed by the public, he (Mr. Hamilton) believed that the only place where people expressed indignation was at Charters Towers, and they did so because they considered he was wrong about the Elektron mine. As to the West Mount Morgan mine, he thought the hon. gentleman had done the colony a service in warning the public against investing in that, but he was afraid that that service was nullified by his including in his warning the Elektron mine.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he thought the hon. gentleman was not correct in stating that the indignation expressed the other night at Charters Towers was because the Premier had warned the British public against the Elektron mine. He (the Attorney-General) was satisfied that the meeting would not have been held if the people had not been under a misapprehension as to the facts. The persons constituting the meeting held at Charters Towers were under the impression that the Premier had referred to Charters Towers as a place in which mines were situated against which it was his duty to warn the British public. Somehow or other—he did not know by what means—the idea was conveyed to them that the Premier had warned the public of Great Britain against companies formed for working mines at Charters Towers. The people were under a misapprehension, and he was perfectly satisfied that if the miners of Charters Towers knew that the Premier had simply, in the few words sent by way of cablegram to the Agent-General, asked that gentleman to put the British public on their guard to ascertain what mines they were going into before investing their money, they would never have held that indignation meeting. He was sure they must have been rushed into that meeting by persons misinformed as to the facts. It was amusing to hear hon. members talking about the necessity of preserving the good name of Queensland and putting the public of Great Britain on their guard against investing in valueless mines. When the Government did anything to bring that about they were found fault with; nothing they did seemed to be done right, according to the ideas of some hon. members. If they stood up with their eyes open and allowed the British public to be swindled in a way that would inflict damage to the colony, hon. members said, "You are not to do that"; but—if they did the reverse, if they took steps by which that was prevented—then they were doing a bad thing altogether. Now, the hon. member for Townsville had shown that there had been a wrong meaning attached to the statement made by the Agent-General. In the message sent to him, only two mines were mentioned. Then how could he have fabricated such a misstatement that there were so many doubtful mines that it would be invidious to name any of them? The very fact that only two names were mentioned to the Agent-General was proof enough that he could not have used the words attributed to him in the Press cablegram. But that was just the kind of thing that was always done. Something was got hold of by interested persons by which they could fabricate statements which they thought would damage the Government; and if that was done—if the Government were damaged—their object was gained. So far, therefore, from being condemned

for the action taken, the hon. the Premier deserved the greatest credit, and the people of Queensland would in the end reap the beneficial results of his sagacity in sending that cablegram. How could any mines on Charters Towers be damaged? Were not the facts provable that mines such as the Day Dawn were genuine mines? Was that not a matter of fact of which every independent person could certify himself; and he said, simply to induce people in the old country to exercise caution in investing in Queensland mines was only fair, and was in the best interests of the colony. They all wanted to see the mining industry flourish, but they also wanted to protect investors from being hoodwinked by unscrupulous persons. The warning had been understood, and the result would be that unscrupulous persons would not be to the fore with mines of doubtful character. Not only that, but a further result would follow: the British public would have such an idea of the honesty which prevailed in Queensland amongst those who were placed in a position of authority that confidence would be restored, and people would be impressed with the tone which prevailed in the politics of this country.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman reminded him of the old saying, "Suspicion haunts the guilty mind." The hon. gentleman tried to make the Committee believe that those who had been saying that the Premier made a mistake were trying to damage the Government in what they had stated. The hon. gentleman said the people of Charters Towers made a serious mistake in passing those resolutions, and passed them for the purpose of damaging the Government.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They had not the message before them.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said if the hon. gentleman had less suspicion and less guilt surrounding himself, he would not suspect that people were always trying to damage the Government. Now, he (Mr. Macrossan) was not trying to damage the Government in the least. They had damaged themselves. He could not damage them any more, and he was not going to try, but he had a right to express his dissent from the hon. the Attorney-General when he said that hon. members were trying to damage the Government. They were doing no such thing, and he was sure the hon. gentleman was just as much astray about the want of information of the people of Charters Towers. The resolutions which they passed showed the information they had. What they were afraid of was, that the Premier's condemnation applied to the whole colony, and as the greater number of the gold-mines in the market were Charters Towers mines, they thought the Premier condemned some of them. Hence their indignation. Now, after all that discussion, and after the Premier had said that he made a mistake in mentioning a mine which was a dividend-paying mine, he would ask him if he had taken any steps to rectify in any way the mistake he made? Had he informed the Agent-General since he sent the cablegram that the Elektron mine was a mine known in Queensland?

The PREMIER said he had sent the Agent-General no further cablegram on the subject, nor after the information he received did he consider it necessary to do so.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that he was extremely sorry for the Premier's peace of mind. To think that he had made a mistake such as he did make in stating, as head of the Government, that a certain mine was not known in Queensland, the reports upon the mine being in a Government office, and then not to rectify the mistake afterwards, seemed to him almost

incredible. He thought that any man when he made a mistake was bound to try and rectify it. It was no use saying that he did not think it necessary. He should have thought it necessary. He thought it necessary to inform the Agent-General that the mine did not exist, and it was just as necessary to inform the Agent-General that it did exist when he found out his error, so that if the Agent-General had been asked for information about the Elektron mine he could have said what he knew. He must say that he (Mr. Macrossan) did not know of the Elektron mine, but he certainly would never have undertaken to send a cablegram of that kind on his own information. He should have tried to find out, and the Premier was bound to have found out what he could, and then to have corrected his mistake as soon after it was made as possible.

The PREMIER said if the Agent-General had published the names of those mines he should have corrected the mistake, but when the Agent-General refused to mention the names to anybody, he did not see the necessity of taking any further action.

Mr. LISSNER said the Attorney-General said the people of Charters Towers wished to damage the Government. He did not believe anything of the sort. They knew very well what they wanted; they knew they were damaged by the cablegram sent home, and they wanted to show by the meeting that there were no such things as bogus mines being floated from Charters Towers. There was not the slightest doubt that the cablegrams warning people against investing had a depressing effect on the market. Before the news went home, as the member for Townsville had said, the Day Dawn Block Company's shares were at a premium of 20s., but when the cablegram was sent they fell below par; so that the Queensland shareholders who had the option of allowing shares to go on the English market, or retaining them, were equally affected. The Charters Towers people knew their business very well, and were not such born fools as the Attorney-General wanted to make out.

Mr. ANNEN said he could not agree with the hon. member in his remarks as to the cablegram sent home by the Premier. A great number of those mines, as was well known, were utterly worthless, and how long would it take for the British public to know that they were no good, and how would it affect mines which they knew were good paying mines that were now being placed on the London market? Now, he would give one instance. No. 1 North Phoenix was a mine that had paid nearly £300,000 in dividends. That mine, he thought, was to be placed on the English market. They knew that it was a good mine and a proper one to be placed before English investors; but when it became known that such mines as the Mount Morgan West did not exist in the colony and that many of the mines in which the British public were asked to invest were utterly worthless, would it not seriously affect a property like that he had mentioned? It would put the British investor upon his guard, and might prevent him from investing a penny in Queensland mining. He also knew of another good property, though it was not so much spoken of, and that was at Reid's Creek, and he believed it was intended to put that property upon the market. That was also a valuable property, but when it became known that many of the mines put upon the market were utterly worthless it would suffer with the rest. The gentlemen going home in connection with those mines were good authorities, and were reliable men, and by the action of the Premier they would be able to put their mines before the public in a

proper manner. The action of the Government had not in any way injured any good mine in the colony, and every fair and right-minded man would applaud the Premier for what he had done. As to the indignation meeting held at Charters Towers, had the people there known the meaning, or even the words, of the telegram sent by the Premier, there would not have been any indignation meeting at all there. Who was Mr. James Nicholls who was mentioned—or Sir James Nicholls, he thought he was?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

Mr. ANNEAR said he believed he was a titled gentleman. There were many of them in England, where they sprung up like mushrooms in a morning. Mr. James Nicholls was probably a broker on the London Stock Exchange. Some of those men were very unscrupulous, and would just as soon make a few thousands out of a mine that had no existence as in other ways they had of making money.

Mr. MACFARLANE said there was no fear that the fair name of the colony or the Government would be affected by the action of the Government in that matter either at home or in the colony. He had had an opportunity of seeing the quartz crushing machinery at the Exhibition at home, and he knew the information given there upon Queensland mines, and that, put side by side with the warning of the Premier, would show that they were anxious to preserve their good name. There need be no fear that the action of the Government would have any deleterious effect either here or in the old country.

Mr. PALMER said he might state for the information of the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, and others that the gentleman named Nicholls was a *bona fide* owner in the Elektron mine, and worked in the mine for two years.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member, Mr. Annear, might just as well express the supposition that Mr. Nicholls was a ticket-of-leave man as the supposition that he was a London stockbroker trying to swindle people. If the hon. member did not know he should not make such statements. He was informed some time ago, before the idea of floating those mines in England was started, that that man had gone home from the Elektron to get machinery for the mine, and he asked Mr. Garrick to get and publish information as to the mines referred to in the cablegram.

Mr. SHERIDAN said that, having been cheated a great many times with regard to gold-mines in Queensland, he felt sore on the subject, and fully sympathised with the action the Government had taken in warning those people who might be induced to invest in worthless mining properties. They were more easily cheated than men on the spot, and if he in his innocence had been so easily cheated he could understand how easily the English people might be cheated. He held the opinion that the Premier was deserving of commendation from every man in the country for warning the English public to be on their guard in the matter of investing in mining companies.

Mr. HAMILTON said they could not get rid of the fact that the Premier warned the public against a particular mine, which he stated had no existence, and which was a well-known mine.

The PREMIER: I did nothing of the kind!

Mr. HAMILTON said the hon. gentleman sent a warning cablegram in which he included two mines—the Mount Morgan West and the Elektron—and in the cablegram he said there was nothing known of those two mines. That had been taken as a warning, and had been acted upon. The Elektron mine was a well-known

mine on the Etheridge Gold Field, and there were reports in the Mines Office from it. The hon. member for Kennedy, Mr. Lissner, had told him that the Elektron mine was well known on the Etheridge field, that it contained five reefs, and that one gave dividends, giving 3 oz. to the ton. The Premier's statement, therefore, was incorrect, because he warned the people against that mine as an unknown mine, when it was perfectly well known; and if he had taken the trouble to search the records of the Mines Office he would have known it. That was the objection they took; they did not take any objection to the Premier warning the public against swindles. No doubt the hon. gentleman's intentions were good in seeking to warn the British public; but he should have taken a little trouble to get information before sending the cablegram which he had sent. What they were afraid of now was that, if it was found out at home that the Premier's statement had been incorrect, they might not believe any information he sent in future.

The PREMIER said he was sorry to have to take notice of anything which the member who last sat down said. He had communicated nothing to the British public about either of those mines. He had sent a confidential telegram to the Agent-General, the contents of which telegram had not been made public so far as regarded the names of the mines.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that something very serious must have been stated by the Agent-General himself; for they found in the *Courier* of the 1st November a cablegram from London, dated 31st October, to the following effect:—"Owing to the warning forwarded by the Queensland Government, mining shares have generally declined in value;" so that it was not the Elektron or Mount Morgan West mines that were affected at all, but the good mines. Mining shares generally had declined in value owing to the warning sent by the Government. It was clear, therefore, that the Agent-General must certainly have made public the information the Premier had sent him. As to what had fallen from the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Sheridan, who said that the people in London were more easily taken in than the people of Queensland, he differed very much from the hon. member. The people of London were generally very well able to take care of themselves, especially those who would be likely to invest in Queensland claims. They were pretty well acquainted with the history of mining in England, and they did not require to leave England to gain experience of swindles in mining—Cornwall was full of them. The fact was that no man was so easily taken in as the man on the spot, who thought he knew all about it. No man was so easily taken in in mining as the miner himself. A man who did not understand it was cautious in investing; but the miner was always sanguine, and jumped at any mine that he thought gave only a chance of being a good mine; so that the hon. member for Maryborough was quite wrong. The London investor would take very good care how he invested his money, especially as he had Cornish experience to guide him.

Mr. HAMILTON said he was sorry to have to take the trouble to refer to the Premier's denial. He just stated that he had not mentioned the names of the mines in the cablegram he sent home; but he previously stated that he said nothing was known of the Elektron or of West Mount Morgan.

Mr. NORTON asked what was being done with regard to the survey of goldfields at the present time? Were any maps in course of preparation?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said that Mr. Jack was preparing a map of parts of several mining districts ; also a handbook of Queensland geology, and a very elaborate map of most of the Northern goldfields.

Mr. NORTON said that was a geological map. He wanted information regarding mining surveys similar to those of Gympie and Charters Towers, maps of which had already been prepared.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said that a map of the Palmer was in course of preparation, also one of Rosewood, and one of the Etheridge.

Mr. HAMILTON said the surveyors who prepared the maps in question were paid out of the £1,500 set down for the survey of goldfields. Mr. Rosser, who made the map of Gympie, was now on the Towers ; Mr. White, the geological surveyor, who was appointed on the recommendation of Mr. Jack, had resigned ; and he wished to know whether the Minister for Mines was going to put another on in his place ? There was work enough for more than two ; and their work not only assisted the miner but also saved a great deal of the time of the Government Geologist. Their duty was to take lines of the various reefs, the dips, the underlie, the strata through which they went, and all the particulars ; and when the Government Geologist came on the field he could do in two or three days what would otherwise take him two or three months.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said that Mr. Rosser had completed the survey of Gympie, and was now employed at Maytown surveying the goldfield there.

Mr. HAMILTON said that was not what he wanted to know. Mr. Rosser was paid out of the sum of £1,500 set down for the survey of goldfields. There was sufficient in that amount for two geological surveyors, but Mr. White had resigned. Was it the intention of the Minister for Mines to appoint another in his place ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : Mr. Rosser was appointed in place of Mr. White.

Mr. HAMILTON : No ; he was appointed before Mr. White.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : Yes. Mr. White was surveying the Palmer ; but he resigned, and Mr. Rosser was appointed in his place.

Mr. HAMILTON said he thought the Minister for Mines was in error. Mr. Rosser was appointed for Gympie by the hon. member for Port Curtis when Minister for Mines, long before Mr. White, who was appointed for the Palmer. Mr. White afterwards resigned ; and as soon as Mr. Rosser had finished his labours at Gympie he was sent to the Palmer where Mr. White had been. Mr. Rosser would not have finished his work on the Palmer for another year, and they were quite as much in want of a geological surveyor at Herberton as on the Palmer. He therefore wished to know whether the Minister for Mines intended to appoint another in the place of Mr. White ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said it was very difficult to understand what the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, wanted. He had already told the hon. member that after the resignation of Mr. White, the surveyor on the Palmer, Mr. Rosser, having completed the survey of Gympie, was sent to the Palmer to survey that field and make a map. Mr. Rosser was there now.

Mr. HAMILTON said he knew that perfectly well. What he stated was that two geological surveyors were appointed by the hon. member

for Port Curtis, when in office, to survey two different goldfields. One of them had resigned, but there was sufficient money on the Estimates for two. Was the Minister for Mines going to appoint another geological surveyor in addition to Mr. Rosser ?

Mr. NORTON said Mr. Rosser was not a geological surveyor.

Mr. HAMILTON : He calls himself one.

Mr. NORTON said he might have some knowledge of geology, but he was not a geological surveyor ; he was appointed to survey goldmines. Mr. Rosser was appointed to Gympie, and Mr. White to the Palmer. After a time Mr. White resigned, and it seemed from the statement of the Minister for Mines that Mr. Rosser, having completed his work at Gympie, had gone to the Palmer to take up the work which had been abandoned by Mr. White. The hon. member for Cook wished to know whether any other appointment had been made in place of Mr. White.

Mr. HAMILTON : None has been made. I want to know if they are going to make one.

Mr. NORTON said he, too, would like to know whether it was the intention of the Government to appoint another in place of Mr. Rosser ? Of course the work could be carried on much more quickly by two than by one, and he did not see the use of that £1,500 vote if there was only to be one. He thought a second ought to be appointed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said it was the intention of the Government to appoint a second surveyor as soon as they could find a suitable man.

Mr. PALMER said that for years the Minister for Mines had promised that a geological surveyor should visit Cloncurry, Croydon, and Etheridge. It just showed the enormous extent of territory that was being governed from the South. For three years a geological surveyor had been making tracks, as it were, for the northern part of the country, and had not reached it yet. Some few months ago the Minister for Mines told him that the surveyor was on his way, but since then he had heard nothing whatever about it. He would like to know if the geological surveyor was likely to visit that field in the immediate future ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the geological surveyor was now at Croydon.

Mr. ADAMS said he did not think the mischief done by the telegram which the Government had sent was of such magnitude as some hon. members had implied. The hon. member for Maryborough had said that he had been taken in most wonderfully, and that if he was taken in on the spot, others in London would be more likely to be taken in. He (Mr. Adams) was sorry that the hon. member did not know his own importance ; he did not appreciate the position he held. It was a fact that from the position the hon. member had held for many years in the colony, and from the high esteem in which he was held, people were anxious to get his name as provisional director, because that was sure to give a mine a start.

Mr. ANNEN : Which member for Maryborough are you speaking of ?

Mr. ADAMS : Mr. Sheridan. He presumed that when he spoke of the position the hon. member held, that was sufficient to make hon. members of the Committee understand which he meant. It was far more easy to take in an hon. gentleman of the standing of the hon. member for Maryborough than to take in gentlemen in London ; because at home they would know that when persons were sent home for the express

purpose of floating a mine, they must have some tangible standing before they were sent; and that it could not be a bogus mine or the people of Queensland would not allow it to go on.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he must say, with regard to the remarks of the hon. member who had just spoken, that he had never been a director in any mine, and probably never would be. He might mention that it was not by a miner he was taken in, but by a rascally speculator—an outsider. The miner he had always found a decent, hardworking, honest fellow, but a lot of scoundrels went round the mines with perhaps a bit of quartz in their pockets, and those were the fellows who took people in.

Mr. ADAMS said that if the hon. gentleman was not a director, he was perfectly well known to be a shareholder; and the consequence was that his name was quite sufficient to get a mine up.

Mr. NORTON said he understood a second mineralogical lecturer had been appointed—Mr. Hooker—and that he was lecturing at Dinmore. He would like to know when one would be sent up to his district?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said the second mineralogical lecturer would proceed to Gympie in a day or two, and after lecturing there would proceed to Gladstone. Mr. Clarke had been located at Herberton for some considerable time, and had given general satisfaction to the miners there. From all he (Mr. Miles) could learn, the miners were highly pleased with the information he had given them. He would next proceed to Georgetown.

Mr. BLACK said £3,000 had been spent in the purchase of diamond drills. Would the Minister inform the Committee what had been done with them?

The MINISTER FOR MINES said one of them was sent to Dalby to bore for coal on the Western line; but the man who was placed in charge did not understand its working, so the machinery was taken down and stored at the railway station for the present. The other one was at the Isis, boring for a company at so much a foot. The company made application for the use of the drill, for which they paid up to 500 feet at the rate of 10s. a foot.

Mr. ADAMS asked whether any other constituency could get the use of a drill at the same price?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Mr. ADAMS asked whether the Government would pay the freight?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Minister for Mines told them the use of the drill was given to a private company at the Isis on payment of 10s. a foot. He presumed that in addition to the 10s. a foot those who hired it had to pay the working expenses of the drill.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that in that case, then, the company had got a splendid bargain. If the hon. gentleman would refer to the regulations under which diamond drills were let out to mining companies by the Victorian Government, he would find that they made no such foolish bargains; and yet they got the credit of doing a great deal more for the mining industry than the Queensland Government.

Mr. ADAMS said he did not think the Government were making such a very foolish bargain, but one part of their conduct with regard to the diamond drills did not seem a very wise one. According to the Minister for Mines,

there was a diamond drill lying somewhere on the Western line, and if a private company wanted to hire it they would have to pay the cost of removing it from that place to where they wanted to work it. He would like to know distinctly from the hon. gentleman whether the cost of removing the drill would be paid by the Government or by the parties hiring it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES said that those who wanted the drills would have to pay the cost of their transit. Before the drill was sent to the Isis the man in charge of working it visited the locality, and reported that a bore could be put down 500 feet, at the rate of 10s. a foot. The Government were very desirous to see the drills in use; but if the hon. member for Mulgrave wanted them to be worked by private companies, at the cost of the Government, he would find himself mistaken.

Mr. ADAMS asked whether, if application were made by the people of Bundaberg or Mount Perry for the use of the drill after the Isis company had finished with it, they could secure it on the same terms?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied that that would depend on the nature of the material through which the bore would have to pass. In some localities a bore might be put down for 10s. a foot, while in others it could not be done for less than 15s. He might inform the hon. member that another company had made application for the machine at the Isis, so that the company at Bundaberg would have to wait until that company had done with it. The price charged by the Victorian Government for the use of their diamond drills was 10s. a foot for the first 500 feet, 15s. up to 750 feet, and 20s. up to 1,000 feet.

Mr. HAMILTON said it would be advisable to appoint at least one other mineralogical lecturer. The one first appointed—Mr. Clarke—had given great satisfaction to the miners at Herberton; his lectures had been well attended, and the information he had imparted had been of great service in assisting them to develop the riches of that field. The money paid for the services of such gentlemen was a mere fleabite compared with the benefit that accrued to the fields from the information they imparted to the miners. They were now about to send another mineralogical lecturer to Gympie, which showed that the Government realised the value of such officials; and now that Herberton and Gympie were supplied with mineralogical lecturers, he did not see why Charters Towers and other mining centres should be left out in the cold. He hoped the Minister for Mines would take the subject into consideration during the recess.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that before the debate on the goldfields closed there was another question on which something ought to be said. It was well known that there had been a great deal of agitation in the northern part of the colony—though not confined there—regarding the Chinese mining on the different goldfields. The question had been even taken up outside the goldfields, and in some of the towns—notably in Mackay—had been taken up very warmly. He believed most hon. members were impressed with the danger there was to Queensland of allowing the Chinese to get possession of its goldfields. What he would like to point out to the Premier was that the report which had been sent to the South Australian Government, by a gentleman of very great knowledge and experience on the subject, the Rev. J. Tenison-Woods—after having visited the eastern countries, where mining was carried on to a very large extent by Chinese miners, and having also visited China—

distinctly pointed out the great danger of allowing the Chinese to obtain possession of mining fields in the Northern Territory. Of course, the danger was not so great here, but, nevertheless, it was an evil with which they must grapple. Petitions had been sent to the House dealing with the subject, and one or two had been sent in from the Chinese themselves asking for justice and fair play, which of course they would all agree to give them. What he wanted to know from the Premier was if he had considered the question, and also if he had considered what policy he meant to pursue—he did not say that session—but what policy he would adopt to grapple with the Chinese question; because it was a serious one that must be grappled with either by the hon. gentleman himself very soon or by those who succeeded him.

The PREMIER said the Government had not failed to notice the agitation that had taken place with respect to the Chinese. So far as their goldfields were concerned, he thought the existing law was sufficient protection for the present, because the goldfields the Chinese were most likely to go to were new ones, and there they were not allowed to go. He did not believe they worked any quartz reefs in the colony. He had read the Rev. J. Tension-Woods's report on the mining industry in the Northern Territory of South Australia, with very much regret that the Government of that colony should have allowed such a state of things to arise. It was much easier to prevent an evil like that from arising than to remedy it afterwards. He was not prepared at that moment to say what policy the Government would be prepared to adopt with regard to the Chinese in future. It was a very large question. He supposed hon. members were aware that a commission had been appointed by the Chinese Imperial Government to visit the various parts of the world in which their countrymen were domiciled, to inquire into their treatment, and bring up a report on the subject. The commission had not arrived in Australia yet, but they had been formally commended to the colony, and no doubt, when they arrived here, they would give them all the information in their power; and if they could persuade them that Queensland was a very undesirable place for their countrymen to come to, they would be very glad to do so. However, the matter was one which could not be dealt with in a moment, and the Government had not fully considered what their future policy would be. It was a subject that could not be dealt with the present session, and it had not been considered necessary to enter upon it at the end of the session when a change of policy could not possibly be put into operation.

Question put and passed.

RAILWAYS.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving £11,285, salaries and contingencies for the general Department of Railways, said there was an apparent increase in each of the two first items; but, properly speaking, it was only restoring the salaries of the Commissioner and of the chief clerk to the amounts at which they had previously stood—£800 and £500 respectively. Hon. members would observe that the salary of the railway arbitrator, £450, was put down on the Estimates for the first time. That had been done in accordance with the promise the Government made when the Estimates were under discussion last year. There was also an item of £95, "additional retiring allowance to Mr. A. O. Herbert, late Under Secretary for Railways." When Mr. Herbert retired he was receiving a salary of £800 a year; but previous to that, for about two years and a half, he was in receipt of £1,000 a year as Commis-

sioner. When he retired he claimed a large allowance; but, according to the Civil Service Act, he could only obtain an allowance in proportion to the salary he was then receiving—£800 a year. Had he received an allowance according to the salary of £1,000 he was receiving for about two and a half years, he would have been entitled to £95 more than he had received. The Government had, therefore, come to the conclusion to place the amount on the Estimates. The matters he had mentioned were the only ones in which there was any alteration in the estimate—restoring the Commissioner for Railways to the original salary, £800; and the chief clerk's salary to £500.

Mr. NORTON said he could not say he was very much surprised that the office of Under Secretary for Railways had been abolished, but if he had placed any great reliance upon what was said by the Government last session, he should have felt surprised, because at the time the Estimates were before the Committee last year it was stated that the appointment of the Under Secretary was absolutely required. They now saw, however, that a very short time after the appointment was made, or soon after the salary was voted, that gentleman retired from the office and nobody had been appointed to his place since; so that it was evident that the contention of that side of the Committee last year was correct—that there was no reason for the appointment of an Under Secretary for Railways, except to relieve the Government of a difficulty which they had not quite made up their minds how to face. That was quite clear from the fact of the salary for that officer being no longer asked for. With regard to the salary of the Commissioner for Railways, the Minister for Works had pointed out very truly that the salary of £800 put down was merely the restoration of the sum formerly paid to the Commissioner. Of course that was quite correct, but at the same time it was a rise to the present Commissioner, and as long as the Commissioner did his work he (Mr. Norton) had no objection to his being paid a reasonable salary. The same remarks would apply to the chief clerk. At the same time, it should be thoroughly understood that the amounts set down were really increases to those officers, although it was not an increase on the amount paid formerly. He thought some information was required with regard to the vote of £200 compensation for injuries. Last year £295 was voted for the same purpose, and they were told in a footnote how the money was expended, but there was no information supplied as to whom the £200 was to be paid to.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The footnote applies to the estimate for this year.

Mr. NORTON said he thought it applied only to the vote for last year. With respect to the railway arbitrator, he thought it was quite right that the salary of that officer should be voted every year. He did not know how it had come to be omitted from the Estimates before, but it was certainly a very proper thing that the Committee should have an opportunity of voting the salary every year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had to ask the hon. member's pardon for not referring to the sum for compensation for injuries. The reason of the reduction was that six months' allowance had been put down in lieu of twelve to driver Welsh who had been injured some time ago by an accident. The man had been receiving £195, and was offered light employment in the Railway Department, but he declined to take it. Since that time it had come to the knowledge of the Government that he was a man

of considerable wealth; and that not only had he quite recovered from his injury, but was able to break in horses and to indulge in too much drink, and challenge people to fight. Under those circumstances he (the Minister for Works) did not think it was desirable that he should become a burden on the general taxpayer. He might mention that the hon. member for Stanley, Mr. Kellett, had furnished him with a doctor's certificate that the man was not able to do any work, but he did not know that very much value was to be put on that certificate. The man had been pointed out to him in the street, and he looked a strong healthy man almost in his prime, and able to do any sort of work.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he wished to have some information in reference to the railway arbitrator. He should like to know who he was. From some information he had received he did not think he could be well qualified for his position at all events. He had heard of the case of a person who had ground taken from him by severance of the railway, and who was offered £36 for the damage done his land. That person would not take the £36, and the arbitrator actually awarded him nothing, on the ground that the railway passing through his land was sufficient compensation. He was given to understand that that was not an isolated case. Had a station been formed on the land taken, he could have understood there was some reasonable excuse for the arbitrator's award, but when they found that the man's property had been severed by the railway, and that the arbitrator awarded nothing, it looked rather strange. If that had happened in Rockhampton it would not have been quite right, and a great noise would have been made about it. He (Mr. Macfarlane) was afraid he was not the man for the place if he went on in that way.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that he had known for a considerable time the gentleman who held the position of railway arbitrator, and he was perfectly satisfied that he knew the value of land. What was more, he devoted the whole of his time to the office for a salary of £450. He did not decide on a single claim without visiting and inspecting the line, which was very desirable. As to his awards he (Mr. Miles) did not know anything at all about them, for he had never interfered with them. When his appointment was made it was on the understanding that before adjudicating on a case he was to visit the locality and see whether the adjacent land had not been enhanced in value by the railway being built. He believed the railway arbitrator was thoroughly competent to discharge his duty, and that he was doing it faithfully and honestly. Every hon. member knew the monstrous claims sent in. He knew of one where £4,000 had been claimed and £80 accepted. He was perfectly sure that hitherto there had been a very great inducement to owners of land to get railways to pass through or near their property so as to enhance the value of their land, while at the same time they had endeavoured to extort large sums from the Government. He was perfectly certain the arbitrator was qualified to discharge his duty between the Government and owners of land.

Mr. ANNEAR said he quite agreed with the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, that it did look somewhat curious when the Railway Commissioner offered £94—as he did in a case he knew—for cutting a man's allotment in two by a railway—that the arbitrator, when appealed to, should decide that he was entitled to nothing. He did not think the arbitrator should go back on the Commissioner's award. They had heard a great deal of talk about railways being

constructed if the people would give the land, but, under the rule of that gentleman, they could do away with that altogether. There was one glaring case in Maryborough where a man's land, which was worth £40 a foot, was taken away to give ingress to other people's property, and make other people's property very valuable, and where that man would have been entitled, from any competent arbitrator, to £3,000 or £4,000; but the railway arbitrator had only awarded £250. He (Mr. Annear) did not think hon. gentlemen need trouble themselves very much whether land was to be given for the Cleveland railway or any other after that. He did not know the gentleman in question, but he had seen his awards, and the country would not be put to much expense as regarded resumption of land for railway purposes so long as he was arbitrator.

Mr. FOOTE said he had heard something of the matter, and considered that the parties concerned had just grounds for complaint. They were asked to send in their valuations of lands resumed by the Government for railway purposes, and they did so. The Commissioner for Railways appointed a person to go and value those lands, and in one case he awarded £36. But the owner declined to accept that valuation, and went to arbitration and got nothing. The land of a person in whose neighbourhood the line passed would be benefited as much by it as the man through whose land the railway ran; but the Government did not call upon him to pay anything, so that the present system seemed very arbitrary indeed. It certainly showed that the person who held the office of arbitrator—he did not know who he was—was not capable of adjusting matters in the interests of the person who held the land, or in the interests of the country. But the Minister for Works said he was the right man in the right place, and from his point of view he might be, and no doubt he was the sort of man he would like to retain in office. But he (Mr. Foote) maintained that it was not justice to the public. The Government, in the first place, sold the lands and received money for them, and when the lands were resumed the Government ought to pay compensation for them, whether higher or lower, as the case might be. But if, as the hon. member for Maryborough had stated, that was not to be done, the persons holding the land might as well give it up at once and not go to any further trouble. The Government could then dispense with their valuator altogether and the commissioner need only send in a nominal claim as a matter of form; the party would get nothing by going to arbitration. It was an utterly unjust and unreasonable course to pursue, and one of those things that the Government should rectify.

Mr. NORTON said the subject before the Committee was one which it was very hard to argue on any satisfactory ground, because the value of the land depended entirely upon circumstances. If a railway cut property in halves and left all the water upon one portion of it, in all probability the land would be deteriorated in value; but if a station were placed in the middle of a large property, and there was likely to be a large amount of traffic there, it was easy to see that in all chances the value of the property that was left would be increased beyond that which it was before the railway was taken there at all. Of course, in relation to some particular cases, it was very hard for the Committee to arrive at any conclusion as to whether a proper decision had been given or not. He knew properties that had been largely increased in value. He believed that on the Southern and Western line some properties were increased tenfold in value; that was to say,

the portion that was left. Within a year or two after the railway had been there it was ten times as valuable as before. Other properties of course were seriously injured by the subdivision.

Mr. FOOTE: The Government had to pay for them all when they resumed them.

Mr. NORTON said he did not think a man ought to be paid for the portion of his property taken when the portion left was increased in value by the railway being put there. He did not believe in that at all. If the land was increased in value the man ought to be satisfied. He did not know the gentleman who had been referred to, and did not know anything about his case.

Mr. KELLETT said he quite agreed with the remarks that fell from the last speaker—that where a man's property was considerably enhanced in value the railway arbitrator might fairly say that the enhancement was equal in value without any compensation. He (Mr. Kellett) happened to know intimately the case that had been mentioned by the hon. member for Ipswich, and had papers in his hand relating to the award. The matter stood in this way: The railway at the present time ran to Harrisville, and about a quarter of a mile beyond that was the property in question, and the second section of the Harrisville railway would run through it. When the railway came to Harrisville the land was of a certain value—it might be £50 or £100 per acre; it was close to the township; but now the railway ran through it. As was the case with all small towns, when the railway went past them, it instead of enhancing the value of the land deteriorated it very materially, and so it was in that instance. The Commissioner for Railways, after careful consideration and examination no doubt, had offered the sum of £32 5s. for the land to be resumed, and the railway arbitrator said he found there was an enhancement more than equal to the value of the land resumed, and he made no order as to costs. He could not have been in his right senses, or he did not know what he was writing about when he said there was an enhancement. He (Mr. Kellett) was perfectly certain they could get no three business men like himself in Brisbane who would say that the property, through the railway running past Harrisville and going up another section, was enhanced in value; but rather, instead of being enhanced it was deteriorated 50 per cent. at least. Harrisville now was like a good many other little thriving townships when the railway went beyond them. He had known the same thing to occur in cases of larger towns that that. Dalby, for instance, was a flourishing settlement when the railway first went there, but since it passed by, and went on to Chinchilla and Roma, Dalby had simply died out; and, as some hon. member said the other night, it was nearly dead. The same would be the case in regard to Harrisville, and instead of the land being enhanced in value it would deteriorate 50 per cent. He was perfectly satisfied from such a statement as that which he held in his hand that the arbitrator did not understand his business. That was not a solitary case, but he believed it was one of the worst. It was one he happened to know himself; he knew the locality where the land was situated, and he could fairly state that the case was the very reverse of what it was stated to be in those documents. He found that the arbitrator got witnesses before him, and then entirely ignored their evidence, and acted on his own opinion. The arbitrator saw the lands for himself, but as far as he (Mr. Kellett) could see that gentleman did not understand the value of agricultural lands; he did not know the price paid every day for agricultural lands. As for

scrub lands, he said that no land in the Fassifern Scrub was worth more than £2 per acre. The member for Bundamba knew that plenty of the selections there were mortgaged for £5 an acre.

Mr. FOOTE: Yes; and as high as £10.

Mr. KELLETT said that was so, and it was well known that people did not lend the full value on a mortgage. But the railway arbitrator considered that none of that land was worth more than £2 per acre; he did not seem to know that with toil and labour—to which he was probably not accustomed—those scrub lands could be made very valuable and highly productive. Evidently he did not understand his business; he was making ducks and drakes of the property of the people of that district. At the present time, in the straitened condition of public finances, it suited the Minister for Works to have things cut down.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I never interfere with the arbitrator.

Mr. KELLETT said he was quite satisfied the hon. gentleman would not interfere with the arbitrator as long as he cut down the amounts demanded for resumed lands in the way he was doing. But he (Mr. Kellett) gave the Minister a good deal of credit for fair play; the hon. gentleman liked it himself, and he (Mr. Kellett) believed he would like to give fair play to others. And when such treatment was meted out to people as that meted out to selectors in the Fassifern district—and he (Mr. Kellett) would make it his business to bring a great many more cases before the hon. gentleman—he would see that it was necessary that some alteration should be made in his department.

Mr. FOOTE said there was another point that was worthy of some consideration. If the arbitrator awarded nothing for the land, how was the Government going to get the deeds of it? Would any man be fool enough to sign a transfer any time the Government asked him without receiving anything for his land?

Mr. SHERIDAN said, in reference to the Maryborough case which his hon. colleague, Mr. Annear, had alluded to, he might mention that he was in possession of a great many facts concerning it. It was a case in which he would have a great deal to say were it not that the party concerned had applied, as it were, for a new trial, and the case was to be reheard. He did not consider it right or proper to discuss a case that was *sub judice*, but were it not for that, he felt so strongly on the matter that he would be tempted to occupy the time of the Committee longer, perhaps, than was necessary.

Mr. FOXTON said there were several phases of the case which were apt to strike one as rather peculiar. The arbitrator seemed to have gone upon the 18th section of the Railway Amendment Act of 1872, which was to the following effect:—

"In determining the compensation to be paid for lands taken from, or damage sustained by the owners of or parties interested in any lands taken, used, or temporarily occupied, for the purpose of any such railway or injuriously affected by the execution thereof, the enhancement by such works or undertakings of the value of other lands of such persons respectively, or as regards such land so injuriously affected, of the value thereof in any other respect than that in which such injury is sustained shall be taken into consideration in reduction of the amount which would otherwise be awarded."

He found that the railway arbitrator, in the award alluded to by the hon. member for Stanley, was of opinion that the land had been enhanced in value, more than the value of the land resumed.

Now, if he were logical, why should he not ask that the man should pay something for having his land resumed, if his land were enhanced in value?

The PREMIER: The law does not allow it.

Mr. FOXTON said he was aware the law did not allow it, but he thought the arbitrator was not doing his duty. That was the conclusion they were drawn to—that the award of the arbitrator was to the effect that that man ought legally or morally to pay something for having his land resumed. That was ridiculous. When the Commissioner offered to pay as compensation the sum of £32 5s.—a larger sum had, he presumed, been demanded by that owner of the land—when the Commissioner offered to pay him the reduced sum of £32 5s. the man refused it, and agreed to go to arbitration, because the Commissioner, in his offer, said, “Should you decline to accept the above offer, your claim will be submitted to arbitration in accordance with the provisions of the Railway Act.” That was the concluding sentence of the letter offering the £32 5s. The man refused that sum, and the case went to arbitration; and he (Mr. Foxton) said the arbitrator was to arbitrate between the minimum and maximum sums which were named by the two parties. He had no right whatever to go below the amount which had been offered by the Commissioner. The arbitration took place upon that understanding, and upon that understanding alone. The man had the opportunity of taking the £32 5s. which was offered, and all that the arbitrator had to do was to say whether the larger, the lesser, or any intermediate sum was the right amount to pay for the resumed land. That was the view he (Mr. Foxton) took of it, and he considered that under the circumstances, when instances of that sort were brought to light, the arbitrator's mistake should be rectified by the Government, and, at all events, the minimum sum offered by the Commissioner should be re-offered and paid to the claimant. He said that the Government was bound in honour by the offer made by the Commissioner for Railways. He understood that the railway arbitrator was in the habit, as had been stated previously that night, of going and visiting every place. The Minister for Works said he went and visited every place, and formed his own opinion of the value of the property. Now, he ventured to say there was no man in Queensland—he did not care how good a valuator he was—who could go and value land with any degree of certainty of fairness all over the colony. They might take a gentleman from Brisbane up to Cooktown and, after collecting all the evidence from local men with an intimate knowledge of the value of land, as they were selling land there from day to day, he might set aside the whole of the evidence, as he had gone up with Brisbane notions of value; and after his own personal examination, might give his award in accordance with his views of what the land was worth. He (Mr. Foxton) said that was improper; the duty of the arbitrator was to really arbitrate, take the evidence, weigh it, and give his award in favour of the balance of testimony. If it was not to be so, what was the use of taking any evidence at all? If he was simply to be a valuer and the arbitrary value he put on the land was to be the amount of the award, then let them wipe out those expensive proceedings altogether. A jury very frequently inspected property in order to better understand the evidence given in reference to property, but that was just what that gentleman apparently did not do. Was there any evidence produced that the man whose case was referred to should get nothing for his land? No. He would venture to say that not one of the Commissioner's

witnesses went below his offer of £32 5s. The award was the idea of the arbitrator alone, in defiance of all evidence. He would repeat again that where an egregious blunder had evidently been made, the Government were in duty bound to offer at least the amount offered by the Commissioner for Railways.

Mr. CAMPBELL said it appeared that charges made against the railway arbitrator were pretty general. There was a case in his district where the arbitrator had not acted fairly. On the Cabarlah line a Mr. Hartmann owned some property which the railway severed as nearly as possible in half, and he applied for an exchange with the Minister for Lands. That was held in abeyance for some time and eventually fell through. The Commissioner then offered either £32 or £36 for the land resumed. That was declined, and the railway arbitrator awarded £16 10s. Now, the land was all trenched, and he could assure hon. members that the amount awarded did not cover the cost of trenching. From all he had heard he had come to the conclusion that the arbitrator did not know what he was doing, and if he was going to continue to make such absurd awards the sooner he was removed the better.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he had had some expressions of opinion from his constituents, to the effect that not the slightest regard was paid by the arbitrator to the evidence given at the inquiries which were held before him. He did not watch who the witnesses were; the result was the same. He had himself given evidence as to the value of land in Cooktown, and afterwards had asked the arbitrator if he was going to decide the case; but he said he must go up and see the land himself. How much wiser he would be after seeing it he (Mr. Hill) did not exactly know. He was not personally interested in the case, but the evidence he gave was incontrovertible.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: According to your view.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Not from his point of view, but from a business point of view. The arbitrator seemed to think it necessary to investigate personally every bit of land intended to be resumed, and the fact of personally inspecting land at Cooktown, after having heard all available evidence in Brisbane, was simply absurd. However, he could easily understand that any arbitrator who was paid by the Government to value in a certain way, and who received instructions to carry out those kinds of awards, would give dissatisfaction in the neighbourhood where he was valuing. For his part he would be very glad to see that the necessity for such dissatisfaction should be rendered impossible.

Mr. BLACK: The land should be given for nothing.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the land should not be given for nothing, but a fair value should be given and compensation for disturbance. He had no sympathy with those people who claimed excessive damages for resumed land and for severance, but a fair value should be given by the Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he believed if the railway arbitrator was a saint sent from heaven he could not possibly please all those who had their land resumed. That was the very first occasion that hon. members had ever had an opportunity of airing their grievances about the iniquity of the railway arbitrator, because that was the first occasion on which the salary had appeared on the Estimates; but very possibly the awards made by the gentleman who previously occupied the office could be found

fault with. But there was no satisfying some people. There was one claim made for the resumption of 1 acre 32 perches of land at Toombul for £2,144. Now, in the name of common sense wherever the arbitrator came from or whoever he was, how was he to satisfy such claim?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Where was that?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: At Toombul. In that case the Commissioner offered £66; but the railway arbitrator awarded £70 8s. How was it possible to satisfy everyone? The Act clearly and distinctly said that in resuming land the enhanced value of adjacent land should be taken into consideration; and hon. members knew very well that they could at any time pick up a newspaper in which land was advertised for sale, and the chief attraction was that a railway passed through or near it. The hon. member for Cook chuckled at that, but he might have to wait some time before the railway would go through his land. He was perfectly satisfied that the gentleman who held the position of railway arbitrator thoroughly understood his business, and did his work conscientiously between man and man. He looked upon it that the best step a railway arbitrator could take was to go to the land to be resumed, and judge it for himself. Claimants were often careless as to what evidence was given so long as it was likely to benefit them. He had mentioned one case where the claim was £2,144; £66 was offered by the commissioner, and the arbitrator's award was £70 8s. There was another case where the area of land resumed was 19 perches, and the claim was for £3,900.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Where is that?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not care to disclose those things, but it was at Fassifern, and the amount of the award was £200. There were a lot more cases of the same kind, and all he could say was that the railway arbitrator endeavoured to do justice between man and man. But he (Mr. Miles) did not care who the arbitrator was, it was impossible for him to give satisfaction. He was showing by the absurd claims made and the actual awards given that it was impossible for any railway arbitrator to give universal satisfaction, and if he did he was afraid it would be found that the country would suffer very considerably for it. All he could say was that he never interfered with the arbitrator, and did not intend to.

MR. KELLETT: Oh, no!

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said he could not understand why the hon. member should say "No." He said he did not interfere with the arbitrator simply because he expected the arbitrator to do justice, and he believed he did it.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not think any Government officer occupied so unpleasant a position as the railway arbitrator, and he quite agreed with the Minister for Works that no man occupying the position could give general satisfaction. If he was lenient to the people who made the claims, the Government would find fault with him, and now, in the particular cases mentioned, where he appeared to lean to the other side, giving awards that did not please the claimants, they were not satisfied with him. They knew that in the early history of railway making in the colony the Government were completely swindled by people through whose land a line was run. They knew what the railway between Brisbane and Ipswich had cost in that respect. The cost of the land resumed had amounted to as much per mile as other railways had since been completed for, and they knew what sort of land

it was and what was the value of it at time. That system was altered, and matters were not quite so bad, but still the Government were defrauded very much under the Act which the hon. member for Carnarvon had quoted—the Railway Amendment Act of 1872. That hon. gentleman, however, appeared to have forgotten that there was an Act passed since that, under which the arbitrator now worked, and not under the Act of 1872. The arbitrator at present worked under the Act of 1880, and if the hon. member for Carnarvon would read the Act of 1880 he would find it put a very different interpretation on the duty of the railway arbitrator.

MR. FOXTON: Is that the Public Works Lands Resumption Act?

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was the Railway and Tramways Extension Act, and it was passed for the purpose of preventing the Government from being robbed. He did not intend to say anything about the cases mentioned, because he knew nothing about them; but he thought it was very likely that in dealing with them the railway arbitrator had acted under clauses 7 and 8 of the Act he mentioned, and had done what was fair. He would just read what clause 7 said in contradistinction to the reading of section 18 of the Act of 1872 by the hon. member for Carnarvon. The clause said:—

"Whenever any lands are resumed by the commissioner for the purposes of this Act, the railway arbitrator shall, before making an award, request the chairman of the municipality, or division in which such lands are situated, to furnish him with verified extracts from the assessment books of the municipality or division, as the case may be; and the amount named in the assessment-book for the year then last past as the value of the said lands shall be taken by the railway arbitrator as *prima facie* evidence of their value in awarding compensation for the same; and any chairman who refuses or neglects to furnish the assessment books when required by the railway arbitrator shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £10 for every such refusal or neglect, to be recovered in a summary way before two justices."

It was all very well to talk about the railway arbitrator taking evidence, but that clause provided for the best evidence he could get. It was no use going to auctioneers and commission agents for evidence, as they always quoted a high price. It was part of their business and duty as business men to keep the value of land up as high as possible, for the higher the value of land the higher their commission upon the sale of it; so that in taking their evidence an arbitrator would be taking what would be improper evidence. But the evidence provided by the clause—the evidence of the rate-book and the value for which the land was assessed in the municipality or division—was the best evidence that could be taken.

MR. FOXTON: Is there nothing about compensation for severance?

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that was provided for in the next clause, which said:—

"Every award made by the railway arbitrator shall set forth separately—

- (1) The amount of damage found by him to be sustained by the owner or party interested in the land taken, used, or temporarily occupied for the purpose of the railway or tramway, or injuriously affected by the construction thereof;
- (2) The amount by which the value of other land of such person or party is enhanced by the construction of the railway or tramway;
- (3) The amount by which the value of the land injuriously affected is enhanced in other respects by such construction;
- (4) The net amount of compensation payable to such owner or party."

He presumed the railway arbitrator did all those things, and in doing them he did not award the fictitious—or he should rather say the factitious—claims put in, or the fictitious valuations out upon land by persons who were trying to get money out of the Government which they should not get. He could not say anything of the resent railway arbitrator, as he did not know him, and was not acquainted with any of his actions as arbitrator.

Mr. FOXTON said he could not see any material difference between the clauses the hon. gentleman read from the Act of 1880 and the clause he (Mr. Foxton) had read from the Act of 1872. In both Acts it was provided that the depreciation and the enhancement should be set one against the other; but it must be depreciation and enhancement resulting from the construction of the line for which the land was required, and not a line in existence at the time the land was resumed. The line to Harrisville was constructed some years ago. The owner of the land in question possibly purchased his land at an increased value after the line to Harrisville was made. He did not know that such was the case, but he suggested the possibility in order to strengthen his argument. Then a new railway—a different work—was constructed by the Government. It went through the land in question, and the enhancement which was the result of the previous railway was set against the depreciation caused by the new railway, and that was unfair. To say that the man was to get nothing after being offered £32 5s. was a gross injustice.

Mr. CAMPBELL said that if the railway arbitrator had acted in accordance with the clauses of the Act read by the hon. member for Townsville in valuing the land resumed on the Cabarah line, the gentleman of whom he spoke would have been awarded £4 or £5 more. If he had consulted the chairman of the divisional board he would have found that the capital value of the land was £5 per acre on the books, whereas the award was at the rate of something like £3 per acre. The arbitrator did not take into consideration the severance right through the centre of the land, or the fact that part of the land resumed had been trenched at a cost of £32 per acre. He thought the owner had just cause for complaint.

The PREMIER said the hon. member for Townsville was mistaken in supposing that the Act of 1880 made any change in regard to the method of arriving at the amount of compensation to be awarded. It merely required the arbitrator to set out how he arrived at the final amount, because there used to be a good deal of wonder as to how it was arrived at. The Act required that first of all the value of the land taken should be stated, then the amount of the damage done to adjoining land, then the amount of the enhancement of other land, and that then it should be shown how the balance was arrived at.

Mr. SALKELD said he hoped the Minister for Works would reconsider his decision not to interfere in the matter, and would see that justice was done. The land in question was situated at Harrisville, a short distance from the station, and the claim sent in was at the exact rate per acre that was paid for an acre of the land adjoining. The railway cut one part of the land from the water, and the fact of the railway going through, instead of increasing the value of the land, had deteriorated it very much indeed. Before the railway went to Harrisville the township was the business centre of the district for twenty-five miles round, but now it was simply a roadside station. He would rather have land there without the railway than have it now there was only

a roadside station. He spoke on the subject with confidence, because he had been engaged in business in Harrisville, and had sold land there in all directions for the last twelve years. Before the construction of the railway to Harrisville the population was increasing in number, and the land in value, and the district would have prospered very well without the railway, but since Harrisville ceased to be the terminus the value of land in the locality had depreciated 50 per cent. He had listened very attentively to what had been said in reply to the hon. member for Carnarvon, and he might inform hon. members that during the time he had been in business in Ipswich as an auctioneer and valuator he had been asked several times to value properties in Brisbane, but had invariably declined, because he considered that he was not in a position to know their value. Any person who really understood the business would know the reason for that. It required an intimate knowledge of the locality, and the amount of business being done, and the prices paid, to be able to judge of the value of the land in any locality. He must say that, after hearing the speech of the Minister for Works, he thought that hon. gentleman ought to have been a lawyer—a special pleader—for he started off with cases in which thousands were claimed, simply to draw a red herring across the track. They were not complaining about that. They were not complaining about the arbitrators stopping people who wanted to rob the Government. Every case had to stand on its own merits, and if a thousand people wanted to rob the Government that had nothing to do with the case. If they took a dozen business men who knew the locality, and who were acquainted with all the circumstances, he ventured to say that they would give a unanimous verdict that a wrong had been done by the railway arbitrator. There was a great deal in what was said by the hon. member for Carnarvon, that the duty of the arbitrator was to arbitrate between the amount claimed and the amount offered by the Commissioner for Railways. They were told that there was no redress—that the arbitrator occupied the position of a judge. He seemed to hold a better position than a judge; because though a judge weighed the evidence, he did not act as assessor or arbitrator; he generally had a jury to assist him. Again, the judge was not a special advocate for one side; his duty was to hold the balance between the two sides; but the railway arbitrator seemed to be more zealous in the interests of the Railway Department than the Commissioner himself. He (Mr. Salkeld) hoped the Government would revise the matter, take some reasonable basis to work on, and make compensation on proper grounds. In the case he had mentioned it was simply confiscation, and people felt that wherever a railway went, the property owners were at the mercy of the arbitrator. He did not know who the arbitrator was, but he was told he was someone from the North who knew nothing about that locality, and was simply pitchforked into the office. If the arbitrator was not thoroughly conversant with the value of property in the district he should simply weigh the evidence and depend upon the witnesses brought forward by the Railway Department on the one hand, and the claimant on the other. He hoped the Minister for Works would reconsider the matter. He knew nothing about the cases brought forward by other hon. members; but if that one case was a specimen of how the arbitrator was going to act, they would have no end of cases of confiscation.

Mr. BULCOCK said he thought the real point at issue had been very clearly set before the Committee by the hon. member for Carnarvon. The

point of dispute appeared to be between the claim made by the claimant and the amount offered by the Commissioner; and the arbitrator had to decide between those amounts.

Mr. KELLETT said the claim amounted to £246 10s., and he believed the man who made the claim thought he was justly entitled to it. The area of the property was, he thought, about four acres. The hon. member for Ipswich, who had lived in the locality, and knew the value of land there, had already told the Committee that the land alongside was sold for £60 an acre. Now, the Minister for Works had told them that the arbitrator was the right man in the right place. Well, if that were so, the Commissioner for Railways was the wrong man in the wrong place. The Commissioner was pretty good at cutting down without anyone coming after him; no doubt he thought it suited the Ministers, and perhaps he sometimes went against his own grain. The Commissioner stated that he got a competent valuator to value the property, and then the arbitrator came and reduced that. Either one or other of them did not understand the business. The Commissioner had been a long time at the business, and he was always under the mark—it was his business, no doubt, to be under the mark. In that case he was considerably under the mark; but the new-fledged man thought it was his place to upset everything that had been done, and start on a new line. No doubt after the present discussion the Minister would see reason to make an alteration.

Mr. ANNEAR said he preferred to say what he had to say before the Committee rather than go to the Minister, because the Minister was armed with the Railway Resumption Act, and was always ready with the reply—"Read the Act; I can do nothing for you." He (Mr. Annear) wanted to know what was the duty of the arbitrator? He appointed a court at Maryborough, took evidence for and against, and the court was closed. Now, what was the use of taking evidence if the award was not to be given on the evidence? Of course, the arbitrator should use his discretion as to whether the evidence was reliable or not. Well, when the case was closed, the arbitrator went to Brisbane, and everybody went their way; but after that he wrote private letters to people for further information. He (Mr. Annear) did not call that arbitration at all. There should be no evidence given after the court was closed in Maryborough, after evidence had been given for and against. If they were to have arbitration let them have it in a proper way, as other cases were arbitrated on. Suppose there was a big case in Brisbane to-morrow in which thousands of pounds were involved, evidence would be taken by the arbitrators for and against, and the case would close. There would be no finality in a case of that kind if the arbitrator went on in the way he had mentioned. If that gentleman followed his present course, and was supported in it by the Minister for Works, it would give rise to endless trouble. Cases would crop up shortly in different parts of the colony, and if they were all going to be dealt with in the same manner as those which had come under his notice at Maryborough, it would take as long to get through them as it took the House to get through the business of the session.

Mr. FOXTON said he should like to have an assurance from the Government that in those cases where there had been what he could not help calling a miscarriage of justice—where nothing had been awarded, although a considerable sum had been offered by the Commissioner—they would reconsider them, and award the sum originally offered by the Commissioner. It was only just and fair that such an assurance should be given.

The PREMIER said he did not think it was absolutely necessary in such cases to award the amount offered by the Commissioner, because it was quite possible that the Commissioner might have made a mistake. Ordinarily, it would be surprising that the Commissioner should offer a substantial sum, and the arbitrator award nothing; and he thought he should award a nominal sum in every case. He did not agree with what some hon. members had said, that the arbitrator should not visit the land; the evidence might be so conflicting that a personal visit to the land would be necessary in order to enable the arbitrator to arrive at a decision. Certainly the arbitrator was not authorised to write letters to people for the purpose of obtaining private information after the inquiry was closed. He hesitated to believe that that had been done, and thought the hon. member for Maryborough must have made a mistake.

Mr. ANNEAR: There is no mistake.

The PREMIER said the duties of the arbitrator were laid down very plainly, and he could hardly see how the arbitrator could go very far wrong if he had any common sense, and any experience in the valuing of land.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had no objection to give the claim a re-hearing, as to do so was quite in accordance with the Act. If the statement of the hon. member for Maryborough was correct, that the arbitrator had been attempting to obtain private information after an inquiry was closed, there would be trouble; but he could hardly believe that the hon. member made the statement on good authority.

Mr. ANNEAR said he was making no mistake. After the case at Maryborough to which he referred was closed, the arbitrator, on his return to Brisbane, wrote the letters to which he referred to the town clerk of Maryborough, Mr. W. B. Jones.

Mr. FERGUSON said he knew the present railway arbitrator perhaps better than any other member of the Committee, and would say of him that as far as honesty and conscientiousness were concerned no man would carry out his duties more faithfully. He was also, from his (Mr. Ferguson's) own knowledge, a judge of the value of property, in which he had had a great deal of experience. The people in the South had been in the habit of getting such enormous amounts in the shape of compensation for land resumed for railway purposes that they could not understand the sum being cut down to its proper rate. As a general rule, when a railway went through a certain piece of land it enhanced the value of it so much that the owners, instead of asking for compensation, ought to be only too willing to give it for nothing. That, at all events, was the feeling of the people in the Central district. They were quite satisfied to have the benefit of the railway, without expecting the country to pay them ten, twenty, or fifty times the value of the land resumed. The people in the South seemed to look upon railways as a means to enable them to dip their hands into the public purse and take out what they were not entitled to. He fully approved of the action of the Government in their endeavour to fix the amount of compensation at a sum that was fair and reasonable, both to the owners of the land resumed and to the State.

Mr. KELLETT said the hon. member for Rockhampton, who had been absent during the debate, had talked all round the question without ever coming to the point. No one could deny that when property was improved in value by a railway passing through it, the resumed

land should be given for nothing; but the particular case they were discussing was a case in which the property, instead of having improved in value by the railway being made through it, had deteriorated. Very likely the arbitrator was a nice conscientious gentleman, but he had met many nice conscientious gentlemen who were not good judges as to the value of land. As to the arbitrator not visiting the land, no member had said he ought not to visit it: occasions might arise, such as a conflict of evidence, when it would be necessary to do so; but in nine cases out of ten it would be far better for him to keep away, and to give his verdict according to the evidence only. He was quite satisfied to have the assurance of the Minister for Works that he was willing to give the particular case in question a rehearing.

Mr. CAMPBELL said that when the hon. member for Rockhampton heard the description of the piece of land in question he would not say that a railway running through it would enhance its value. It was a piece of land twenty chains broad by forty-five chains in length, and the railway ran nearly through the centre of it, severing it from the creek. They could scarcely compensate that man for the loss he had sustained, particularly as the land was selected especially for nursery purposes.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was a very difficult thing for a man coming from the North to be able to value land accurately in the South; it was as difficult for a man living in Brisbane to value land accurately in Ipswich, for instance; and according to that the Government should appoint a railway arbitrator for each district.

Mr. KELLETT: Nothing of the sort.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The Act which he had read pointed out a remedy for that. Every divisional board and every municipality appointed a valuer, who valued all the properties in the division or municipality for rating purposes, and he thought it was very seldom that they undervalued properties.

Mr. KELLETT: Always.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The rate-payers did not say so.

Mr. DONALDSON: Take Brisbane last year.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Yes; there was a general outcry against the over-valuing of property. However, the Act to which he had referred said that the rate-book should be taken as *prima facie* evidence of the value of the property. That helped the valuer, no matter where he came from, in arriving at a decision. Of course he had at the same time to take into consideration the enhancement or deterioration in the value of property. He did not think that the hon. member for Rockhampton had referred to the particular cases mentioned; neither did he himself; but those were the general instructions to the railway arbitrator, and if he had acted as some hon. members had stated he had not done his duty, because in the case of severance land might be destroyed altogether. In the case mentioned by the hon. member for Stanley, the land might have been deteriorated in value by the railway being taken on further, and that should be taken into consideration in valuing the property along with the value set down in the rate-book. He would like to know from the Minister for Works what section of the Act gave him power to rehear a case?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The 17th section,

Mr. FOXTON said the hon. gentleman's argument was quite correct as far as it went—in reference to the rate-book being taken as the standard of value—but severance was a different thing altogether. Nor was the rate-book any guide as to the question of the enhancement or deterioration of the value of property through the construction of the railway. The rate was fixed probably long before the railway was surveyed. All those things had to be taken into consideration in addition to the rate. The hon. member for Rockhampton had argued as though the property was necessarily enhanced in value by the construction of the railway beyond Harrisville. No doubt the construction of the railway to Harrisville had increased the value of the property referred to, but then they had to consider that a new railway was constructed beyond that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; a continuation.

Mr. FOXTON: Unquestionably it was a new railway. Ten years might elapse between the construction of the line to Harrisville, which enhanced the value of the property, and the construction of the new line; and persons who purchased during that period would have paid the enhanced value of property in the neighbourhood. He did not know the railway arbitrator; he did not know that he had ever seen him; but he had been told that when asked why he had given the decision he gave, he said that he had considered the enhanced value of the property in consequence of the construction of the line to its present terminus at Harrisville. That was where he had made the mistake—in taking the whole line from Ipswich as one line instead of two.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member for Carnarvon had not put the case correctly. The hon. member admitted that the land in question was enhanced in value by the construction of the line to Harrisville.

Mr. FOXTON: I said so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Well, the line to Harrisville was simply the first section, and the second section was simply part and parcel of the same line.

Mr. FOXTON: Of course not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member might say it was not, but it was a fact nevertheless. Harrisville was simply the first section of the line, and no doubt if it had stopped there it would have suited some people remarkably well. But it was only the commencement of the line, and there could be no doubt the construction of the line did enhance the value of the land as a whole.

Mr. FOXTON said the hon. gentleman did not see the point at all. He would assume that before the railway went to Harrisville at all the land was worth £2 an acre. The construction of the railway from Ipswich to Harrisville increased it in value to, say, £10 an acre, and the man in question paid that price for it. Then a new loan was introduced, a new railway Bill was passed, and another railway was made—certainly a continuation of the railway, as far as traffic purposes were concerned, but in reality a new railway. It was introduced under a new authority, and was sent along another fifteen or twenty miles. The effect of that was to reduce the value of the land about Harrisville to below, possibly, the original £2 per acre; and because the railway went through there that unfortunate man, who had paid the enhanced value in hard cash, had that counted against him.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would like to know from the Minister for Works if the driver Welsh, mentioned in the Estimates, was the man who was hurt near Toowoomba ten or eleven years ago?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: And is his pension to be taken away altogether?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the intention.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said then he understood it would not appear on the Estimates any more. Would the £95 put down for the late Under Secretary appear on the Estimates every year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Why not put it down in the list of other pensioners on the first page of the Estimates?

The PREMIER: Because the law does not give it to him.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Done by executive authority, I suppose?

The PREMIER said it could only be done by Parliament. It seemed a fair thing to do under the circumstances. Mr. Herbert had been in receipt of £1,000 a year for some time, and it seemed only reasonable that his retiring allowance should be based upon that salary; but the Civil Service Act did not allow it on that basis, but only on the basis of the salary he received at the time he retired. Of course, that was very hard on Mr. Herbert.

Mr. KELLETT said if he understood the Minister for Works correctly the item of £200 "compensation for injuries," included the allowance to driver Welsh—£100 for six months. He might mention that Welsh was an engine-driver on the railway, and nearly lost his life in the performance of his duty. He was incapacitated for work, and was awarded at the time his full salary, which was, he thought, £195 a year. He had been in receipt of that ever since, and he (Mr. Kellett), knowing the man and knowing all the circumstances of the case, made inquiries from the doctor who had been attending him ever since the accident occurred. He should state before that, that when he saw the amount on the Estimates he went to the Minister and made inquiries respecting it, and he was told that the man was in a good position; that he was fit for work, and that the Minister did not see why he should be paid the money. He (Mr. Kellett) then made inquiries in writing from the doctor who had been attending him ever since the accident, and he was very sorry to say that he had not the doctor's letter in reply with him. He had handed it to the Minister for Works to read over carefully at his leisure, and that hon. gentleman had told him that he had mislaid it somehow. At any rate, between the Commissioner and the Minister and his officers they got rid of it somehow. He (Mr. Kellett) was perfectly certain that if he had the letter with him and read it before the Committee, there was not one member out of twenty who would not say that it was a most unfair transaction for the man's allowance to be knocked off. Dr. Lightoller had been in constant attendance upon him, and he believed he was a gentleman who would not put his hand to a statement that was not thoroughly reliable. The purport of his letter was that the man would never be fit for any labour, and that if he attempted to go into anything like constant work he would be laid up immediately, and would have a relapse, and

would likely meet with a sudden death. Now, he had taken that letter to the Minister for Works, and he had been astonished to hear that the vote was to be cut off. There were votes on the pension list not anything like so well entitled to the consideration of the country as this man was. Why should he, because he was an engine-driver, be wiped out? It was a most monstrous piece of business. He would propose that, instead of the vote being put on the Estimates every year, the man should be put on the pension list for £100. The Minister said that the man was well-to-do; but because a man had been a saving, industrious man, and tried to earn a little more money for his family on a farm bought with his wife's money, why should he not have that compensation voted to him? If he had been a scoundrel living in town and drawing his £200 of a pension, he would have got it for ever. He (Mr. Kellett) was sure the Minister could not have read the doctor's letter, or he would not have proposed to do such an injustice, which would be a disgrace to him and the Ministry with which he was connected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member had handed him a doctor's certificate, which he had mislaid, but it was to the effect that the man would not be capable of hard work. Of course he had seen the man several times, and he appeared to him to be strong, healthy, and a far better man than he was. Not only that: he amused himself occasionally by challenging people to fight. If he was capable of doing all that, surely he was capable of earning his own living, and should not be requesting support as a pauper! Moreover, he was a man with a considerable amount of property. The fireman who was on the engine with him at the time of the accident, and was in exactly the same position, recovered in three months and went back to work. The department had offered Welsh light work, such as gatekeeping; but of course if he had accepted that he would not have received £195 a year, and he declined the offer. Was it just and fair, under the circumstances, to the community to continue paying that man £195 a year?

Mr. KELLETT said the Minister for Works was making incorrect statements. The man was neither strong nor healthy. The letter from Dr. Lightoller stated diametrically the opposite.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had admitted all that the hon. member had said was in the letter, but he knew what doctors' certificates were worth.

Mr. KELLETT said that was as much as to say that Dr. Lightoller was an unreliable man, and wrote down in a letter statements which were false. The letter was a long one, and stated that the man was not fit for any kind of constant work. Now, the Minister for Works said that he was a strong healthy man.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had the use of his eyes.

Mr. KELLETT said the hon. gentleman's eyes might be very good for a railway, but he could not see a man's backbone. A man might be perfectly healthy, and drop down in twenty-four hours. What good were eyes in a case of that kind? The Minister for Works evidently thought he was a physician as well as everything else. The man was to his own knowledge not healthy, and he had seen him in spasms for half-an-hour at a time, and hardly able to crawl. If he did not know he would be the last to come to the Committee and ask for that money to be voted. He did not want people to say that because that man happened to be an engineer he was to be neglected, and have that small sum of

money taken from him. What about the Darra accident? What compensation was given in those cases? It was given in lump sums.

The PREMIER: Yes, unfortunately!

Mr. KELLETT said they must not make fish of one and flesh of another. He supposed some of the awards were justifiable. It was a most unfair thing for the Government to cut that man off simply because the Minister said he had means. He gained those means by striving hard, and trying to rear his family decently. Why should that man have to lose his pension, whilst others had amounts upon the pension list because they were in high offices and that sort of thing? It was monstrous, and a disgrace to the Ministry, and there would be an outcry in the country that the Ministry had no thought for small men. That man's case was known all over the colony, and the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Aland, was on the bench at the time of the inquiry into the accident in 1876, and knew all the particulars of it. He certainly thought the Minister should put something on the Estimates for the man, who had been rendered incapable through an accident in the discharge of his duty.

The PREMIER said the whole question involved in the case was, whether, when a sum was once voted in that way to a man, in consequence of injuries sustained in the Government service, it was understood that it was to be a perpetual pension, whether he needed it or not?

Mr. NORTON: Why not put him upon the pension list?

The PREMIER said the pension list contained in the schedule was the list of persons entitled to pensions under Acts of Parliament, and they were not voted annually. The money must be appropriated either by permanent appropriation by Act of Parliament, or by annual appropriation in the Estimates. They had no general law for giving pensions to disabled people. There was one law—the Manning Pension Act—and since it had been passed it had been continually complained of as having been passed in a great hurry. That was a perpetual pension given to a man who two or three years afterwards was as well as he had ever been in all his life. The present was a case in which Parliament did not pass a Pension Act. They gave the man for the first year a sum equivalent to his income, and that was continued year by year, the idea being that it should be continued as long as it was needed, and no longer. He believed when perpetual pensions were given, they were never given to the full extent of the income the man was receiving. In the present case the man was no longer in need of it. When he met with the accident he was a poor man, and his only means of support were taken from him, so the Government treated him as a liberal employer would do, and allowed him the same income as long as he wanted it. He no longer required it. Then was it to be understood that an annual sum was to be given under the circumstances? It was not a perpetual pension, because it had to be voted every year. In the other case—that of a widow—he supposed that if she married a man well-to-do they would not continue her pension. The circumstances of the present case might be such that they ought to continue to vote the whole amount; but the facts, as stated by the Minister for Works, were not such as to show that they should do so. Whether they should vote any part of it or not was a different matter. The amount proposed for the present year was £100, and if the man were still in a bad state of health there would be a reason for continuing it. He did not see any reason for voting the full amount, but he thought further inquiries should be made.

Mr. HAMILTON said two reasons had been given why the amount should be knocked off. One was that the Minister for Works did not believe the man was incapable of working, and the other that he had misconducted himself. The Minister for Works had no proofs in support of his statement, while the hon. member for Stanley had brought forward evidence to disprove the statements of the Minister for Works. Only a short time since they adopted the principle in that Committee that it was desirable to pay compensation to employés who suffered injuries in the employ of their masters, and that principle should be applied also to persons who suffered when in the employ of the Government. The Minister for Works stated as a reason why that man should not get his pension, that he had been drunk on several occasions, and had challenged people to fight. In the first place, the mere fact of the man having been drunk should not cause him to be deprived of his pension, and with regard to his challenging a man to fight, he might have had good reason for doing so, and again, it did not follow that he was capable of doing it; but if he had knocked-out his man in a certain time it would have proved his capacity for doing hard work. The hon. member for Stanley said from his personal knowledge, that although the man looked well he was not so. They frequently saw cases of that sort, and besides that they had the testimony of a qualified medical practitioner, who would not have signed his name to a lie.

Mr. NORTON said he did not know how the Committee could arrive at any conclusion in regard to cases like that. The Minister for Works said he had seen the man, and to judge from his appearance he was quite as capable of carrying out his duties as he was before, and earning his own living. Of course it did not follow that because he looked well he was so. He was reading of a case that occurred in Sydney the other day, where a strong healthy man, to all appearance, died most unexpectedly; and many other cases of that kind had occurred. Besides the case mentioned by the Premier, there was another he knew of where a man who could easily earn his own living received a pension. On the other hand, they had the statement of the hon. member for Stanley who said he knew of his own knowledge that the man in question was incapable, and the Committee could not disregard that statement. The best thing to do would be for the Minister for Works to obtain some further information on the subject, so that he might be able to place more reliable evidence before the Committee, and they could decide at some future time whether the pension should be continued to him or not. He (Mr. Norton) was very much opposed to continuing those pensions if it was shown that the people were not entitled to them. He quite agreed with the Premier, in regard to the widow he had referred to, that if she married the pension should be stopped.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would make full inquiries and ascertain what were the real facts of the case.

Mr. KELLETT said he was perfectly satisfied with the statement of the hon. gentleman, as he was sure that if the department sent their own doctor he would give a similar opinion to that which he (Mr. Kellett) had laid before the Committee.

Question put and passed.

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

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

NORTHERN RAILWAY DEVIATION INTO HUGHENDEN.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that they approve of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed deviation of the Northern Railway into Hughenden, in length about 2 miles, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 20th October.

DEVIATION OF FASSIFERN BRANCH RAILWAY.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that they approve of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed deviation of the Fassifern branch, between 3 miles 5 chains 43½ links, and 3 miles 63 chains 63 links, in length 0 miles 62 chains 56½ links, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 20th October.

NORMANTON TO CLONCURRY RAILWAY.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that they approve of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed line of railway from Normanton towards Cloncurry, 0 miles to 38 miles, in length 38 miles, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 20th October.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. To-morrow we shall proceed with Committee of Supply.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at fourteen minutes past 11 o'clock.