

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 1886

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 19 November, 1886.

Motion for Adjournment—Massacres in British New Guinea.—Messages from the Legislative Council—Bowen to Townsville Railway Bill—Godsall Estate Enabling Bill—South Brisbane Mechanics Institute Land Sale Bill.—Police Pensions.—Building Societies Bill—consideration of Legislative Council's amendments.—Prospecting for Gold.—Adjournment.

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

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

MASSACRES IN BRITISH NEW GUINEA.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—In the absence of the Premier on Wednesday last, a subject was introduced by the hon. member for Burke, which I think it is desirable to bring forward again in order to elicit from the Chief Secretary what action has been taken by the Government in reference to the matter. I refer to the massacres which have taken place on the coast of New Guinea, and I shall conclude with the usual motion for adjournment. I think it is almost unnecessary for any member of this House to attempt to give expression to feelings of regret that so little has been done by the Imperial Government to show their disapproval of the cruel action which has been taken by these islanders on several occasions. I am quite sure that almost every man in the colony must feel that at any rate the time has come when some action must be taken in order to avenge the cruel butcheries which have taken place, because I think that any people, however civilised they may be, are not on that account inclined to suffer the treatment which some of our colonists have received at the hands of the savages of these islands, and it has always been a matter of great surprise to me, and to everyone else, that the Imperial Government, although they have a large number of vessels at their command which can be sent to the islands at any time—some of them being there at the present time—have not taken any action to retaliate upon the islanders in such a way as will teach them that the lives of white men, British subjects, must not be sacrificed merely to gratify their whims. It is well known that on several occasions several people have been killed; in some instances a considerable number have been killed at one time; on other occasions an odd man has been killed and attempts have been made on the lives of others; and yet nothing has been done to prevent that sort of thing going on. Why, if I am not mistaken, an officer of one of Her Majesty's ships was wounded a short time ago at one of the islands, and yet the ship went away without punishing the natives for the crime they had committed. Now, I think it is too bad that British subjects should be allowed to go to these islands in the prosecution of their legitimate business and that their lives should be exposed to the sort of danger they are exposed to at the present time. I have taken this opportunity of referring to the matter in order to give the Chief Secretary an opportunity of informing the House as to what has been done by the Government in the matter. It is a subject which causes a great deal of anxiety, not only to hon. members of this House, but to everyone outside, whether they have their own friends on the islands or not, and the opinion arrived at is that some steps should be taken to prevent this wholesale butchery, and the sooner it is done the better. I think I

may assure the Chief Secretary that whatever action the Government may take he can depend upon the support of hon. members of this House.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—I am glad to have an opportunity before the close of the session of saying something upon this subject. The present condition of affairs is extremely unsatisfactory, and I take this opportunity of stating exactly what is the position of affairs as far as this Government is concerned. The correspondence laid on the table of the House this session has brought the matter down to its latest development so far as regards the formal communications between this Government and the Governments of the other colonies and the Imperial Government. The letter which I addressed to the Administrator of the Government on the 20th May last embodied the terms of the proposals for the future administration of British New Guinea, which were agreed to by the Governments of New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria, at a meeting of Mr. Gillies, Sir Patrick Jennings, and myself, held on the 28th April last. Those terms, so far as I know, have been generally approved of in the colony as a good basis for future administration. Of course, there may be some modifications, but the terms I believe meet with the general approval of the people of this colony as a basis upon which this colony would be willing to guarantee to the extent specified the cost of the administration of British New Guinea in the immediate future. Of the other colonies, New Zealand and Tasmania have formally agreed to them; the colony of South Australia, as we know, has withdrawn formally from any further participation in the matter, and Western Australia and Fiji, being Crown colonies, have to await the sanction of the Imperial Government before they can join. But practically the colonies have agreed to a scheme which, with small modifications, will no doubt be adopted. That scheme was forwarded to the Administrator of the Government on the 20th May, the date of my letter; and it must have reached England not later than the beginning of July. The scheme is very similar to one discussed by the Agents-General with Colonel Stanley during the administration of the previous Conservative Government, and it was from what we conceived to be the general inclination of opinion of that Government that we were led to make these proposals in detail. Subsequently to that, Lord Granville telegraphed to the Administrator of the Government here to know when the formal proposals might be expected. There was a delay of about a fortnight, consequent upon a difference as to the wording of one of the articles; but the proposals must have reached England early in July, and we certainly had every reason to hope that the present unsatisfactory state of things would soon come to an end. The scheme involves the passing of a permanent Appropriation Act by this colony, guaranteeing £15,000 a year for five years, and we take the guarantees of the other colonies to contribute the amounts agreed upon. Further, the scheme provides, as hon. members will not have forgotten, that the Administrator of the Government of British New Guinea should be to a certain extent under the directions of the Governor of Queensland. On the 9th August I telegraphed to the Agent-General as follows:—

"When may reply be expected with respect to New Guinea?"

And on the 10th I received the reply:—

"In answer to your telegram of yesterday probably October. Not yet considered by Her Majesty's Government."

I replied on the 12th:—

"Very anxious for reply in time for introduction Bill present session otherwise year's delay."

To that the Agent-General replied on the 13th:—

"Further pressed the matter. Have reason to believe that it may be early brought before Cabinet. Secretary of State for Colonies not yet fully acquainted with papers."

On the 9th September the Agent-General telegraphed again as follows:—

"At an interview with Secretary of State for Colonies while declining to give his general opinion New Guinea scheme he thought that limit of five years would not be acceptable to Cabinet."

If even that had been stated definitely we might have done something. On the 20th October I telegraphed again:—

"Approaching to close of session. When may reply be expected to New Guinea proposals?"

And the answer sent on the 23rd October was—

"Cabinet quite unable to consider New Guinea proposals before separating—adjournment of House of Commons. Secretary of State for Colonies has been absent Yesterday informed me Cabinet would meet about first week November hoped get considered middle."

On the 1st November we had the information of the massacre of Captain Craig and his crew, and I telegraphed to the Agent-General as follows on getting that information:—

"Another serious outrage by natives of New Guinea under British Protectorate. Whole crew murdered. Present state of things cannot continue. Prorogation of Parliament end of this month."

I received this reply on the 4th November:—

"Referring to your telegram *re* New Guinea. At an interview yesterday with Secretary of State for Colonies he informed me that the subject could not be considered by Cabinet before the middle of this month. In the meantime he would consult Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject referred to in my telegram of 9th September."

That is all I have been able to get. I am sure it is extremely unsatisfactory, but I do not know what more we could have done. We have been continually urging the Agent-General, and the Agent-General has been urging the Colonial Office authorities; but we can get no answer. Even if we got an answer in the middle of November, we might have had a chance of doing something, and even if we received a communication this week there might be a chance to do something next week; but, as things are, there is no government of New Guinea whatever.

Mr. NORTON: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Mr. Douglas has no powers whatever, except that he can make regulations, but he cannot enforce them, as is shown by the words in italics in the instructions to Mr. Douglas:—

"In addition to this judicial authority"—

which is merely illusory—these words are not in the despatch:—

"Your commission as Special Commissioner empowers you in all respects to represent the Queen's authority, and to do all such things as in the interest of her service you may think expedient. You are therefore at liberty to make such regulations as you think necessary, compliance with which may be made a condition of residence in the protectorate, *if you are able to enforce them.*"

Those are the instructions to Mr. Douglas. General Scratchley seemed to think that he had the power to make regulations, but he had no such power—he had no power to do anything so far as I know.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: You have.

The PREMIER: No; I have no power to do anything at all. General Scratchley asked me to advise him formally in a semi-professional manner as being a lawyer, and to give him my opinion upon his powers. On investigating the

matter, I found he had no powers at all, and that is the opinion I gave him. That opinion was referred to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and published in the Imperial Blue Book. Mr. Douglas has no authority whatever, except as Deputy Commissioner of the Western Pacific, and the only authority he has in respect of that position is to deport obnoxious persons from New Guinea, having first obtained the consent in writing of the High Commissioner at Fiji. That is the position as pointed out over and over again to the Imperial Government. As I pointed out in one of the telegrams I have read, the present state of things cannot continue. However, that we should take the matter in our own hands is a view I cannot accept. As to the chastisement of these murderers, the proper way to deal with that was to communicate with the Admiral, and I communicated with His Excellency the Administrator of the Government, through whom communications are made to the Admiral, requesting him to ask the Admiral to take immediately such steps in connection with the outrage as could be taken. Speaking from memory, the Admiral's reply was that the "Diamond" and two other vessels were there and would take the necessary steps. I have no doubt they have done so. I have also written privately to the Admiral, and I have no doubt he will do all that he can, but the present state of things is likely to continue as long as a state of "no government" exists there. I should be glad to think that the Government were justified in pledging the credit of the colony to carry out the scheme proposed without a formal Act, but of course the Imperial Government would want a guarantee from the Parliament of Queensland, that could not be given except by the Parliament. The whole matter has been under the consideration of the Imperial Government all the time Parliament has been sitting, and they have been interviewed upon the subject from time to time, and yet we can get no answer at all. I cannot conceive a more unsatisfactory state of things. I am still in hopes that even to-day or to-morrow we may get some communication that will enable us to do something before the close of the session. I can get no further information than I have given, and I regret as much as anybody the present very unsatisfactory state of things; and I do not think it at all justifiable that the money contributed by the colonies for quite another purpose should be frittered away in the payment of the salary of a commissioner who has no functions or authority whatever.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The Premier says this very unfortunate state of things is likely to continue for a long time to come, but could something not be done by which the power given to the Commissioner could be put in force?

The PREMIER: General Scratchley was told he must not do anything of the kind.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: He was to make regulations, but was not to enforce them! Well, Mr. Douglas, I understand, as Deputy Commissioner of the Pacific, has power to deport obnoxious persons from New Guinea, and if he has that power could he not use it in deporting those obnoxious murderers? The hon. member for Burke, when he moved the adjournment of the House to call attention to this matter, made a suggestion by which these murderers could be caught, I believe. The aborigines of this country are very smart at tracking and catching men, if they want to do so. Now, I think it would be the very thing to bring the Imperial Government to its senses if the murderers of Captain Craig and his crew were

caught and deported—that is, deport them to the continent of Australia, and let them live the best way they can amongst the aborigines here. I do not suggest this in any jocular way, but in all seriousness. If a power exists to deport obnoxious individuals, then I say there are no more obnoxious individuals in New Guinea than the people who commit murders on white men who go there.

The PREMIER: Mr. Douglas has no power over the natives whatever.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then the best thing we can do is to withdraw the subsidy. Why should we pay anything unless we get something in return? It is utterly ridiculous that we should be dancing attendance in this way on the Imperial Government, which has no feeling or sentiment whatever in the matter, unless it is to protect blackfellows—they will do that. I am quite certain that, if white men were the aggressors, the Imperial cruisers would very soon have been instructed to take action of some kind against those white men; but as long as the blacks are the aggressors they will be protected, unless public opinion is aroused in Australia, and consequently aroused in England. I really do not see what the Government can do, seeing that they have no power to interfere with the blacks at all; they have only power to interfere with the whites. It is dangerous to say too much, because the men might take advantage of what is said here and take the law into their own hands, but I think they would be almost justified in doing so under the circumstances.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think we must all agree with the Premier that the position in which we are placed is really a painful one—to be so helpless under such distressing circumstances. It is a very painful situation, and the prospect of its being improved seems now very remote, so far as I can gather from the answers the Premier has received in reply to his very necessary and urgent telegrams. The most painful part of the situation is that whatever power there may be over the white men—they may be punished for their evil deeds—the black aggressors go free, that is the distressing part of it. The High Commissioner in Fiji seems to be the man in authority over these matters, and if he has power over one class, he ought to have power—and if he desired, Mr. Speaker, I am sure he would have power—to deal with the others. He seems to have power to order the war-vessels to go here and there, and do this and that; but I do not suppose there would be much relief even from war-vessels. They have visited the islands before, and the result has been a sham—a sort of comic opera business altogether. Everyone who is at all acquainted with savage life knows that the savages recognise the rule "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." In these murders they know that they are laying themselves open to retribution, and if this retribution is not carried out, they take it that the persons aggrieved are either incapable of taking revenge—

Mr. NORTON: Hear, hear! Or afraid.

Mr. PALMER: Or afraid. I know that amongst the natives of this country, when crime is allowed to go unpunished, it leads to still more; for the simple reason that they look upon the white race as incapable of avenging it. Now, we have seen in Imperial history quite recently that the British nation have taken ample revenge for their subjects that have been maltreated in other countries. For instance, the Abyssinian war was undertaken simply on behalf of some Englishmen who were imprisoned, and several other wars in Africa have taken place for the express purpose of avenging the wrongs of British

subjects; so why should our enterprising colonists here be completely wiped out and their massacre ignored when they are carrying on a legitimate business? Why should they not have protection? I do not hold with the Colonial Treasurer in styling these men "adventurers." Who are the "adventurers," Mr. Speaker? They are the best of our colonists; they are the men with the most energy and the most enterprise; and if they go out risking their lives in business which is advantageous to the commerce of this country, I think they should have every protection which the law of the country can give them. If we cannot give them protection, we ought to find means to protect them, and not style them adventurers who bring upon themselves their own troubles. I think wherever our colonists go—in these Southern seas at any rate—there our laws should follow and protect them; for we find they are dealt with pretty severely when they are the aggressors. There has been one bungle ever since this—I do not know what to call it—this maladministration of New Guinea started. The bungling has been in the Imperial Parliament not allowing the colonies to deal with New Guinea in their own fashion. It is absurd that we should be spending money with so little result. The idea seems to be to prohibit settlement or colonising in any way; and our money, I am quite sure, was voted that we might extend colonisation instead of prohibiting it. I look upon New Guinea and its adjacent islands as adjuncts of Queensland, and they should have been relegated to the Australian colonies. If they had been, I am quite certain this fiasco would not have been in existence, and we should have saved the lives of some of our best colonists—men who had the enterprise and pluck to go out and establish trading stations that bring wealth to the colony. We see by the returns from Thursday Island what trade they are opening up. I consider they deserve our very best protection.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—The Chief Secretary says he has no power to deal with these people. He has two gunboats, anyhow, at his disposal, and if I were in his place I would not ask for any better power than that. If I had them at my disposal, I would set matters right in my own fashion; and then the Imperial Government would perhaps see the necessity of looking after the thing, or instituting a proper organisation of the Government. It appears to me that the only legislation at all there is against the white man. The white man can be plentifully and abundantly hanged wherever he may transgress; but supposing the offence is committed against him, and he is cruelly and treacherously murdered, no punishment at all can be inflicted upon the savage murderers. I myself would suggest to the Chief Secretary the advisability of sending the "Gayundah" and "Paluma" to make investigation. They might as well do a little surveying there, and see if they cannot ascertain the whereabouts of these murderers.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—We may recognise that it is inadvisable to take the law into our own hands, but when one cannot get the protection of the law there is only one course to be adopted. As the hon. member for Townsville says, though it might be illegal, the people in Cooktown would have the sympathy of the residents in all the colonies if they took it into their own hands to avenge the death of their friends. I think if I were in Cooktown myself I would feel very much inclined to chance the law and join that party. When a similar murder was supposed to have occurred some time since, the Hon. John Douglas, though he may not have the power to sanction any such proceeding, really

did show his sympathy with it, for he in a stirring speech wished the expedition God-speed when it left to punish the supposed murderers, and he had with him the sympathy of the whole colony. It is a very good suggestion to send a gunboat with a few native police on board, in order to try to ascertain who these murderers are. If that were done we should be quite satisfied.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not like the tone of this discussion. There is a wild tone in it that seems to me quite contrary to any principle of Christianity.

Mr. HAMILTON: If you had been related to any of the murdered men you would not think so.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I hold that opinion, and I hold it very strongly, and I differ entirely from those who talk about going to inquire into these things. We know what these inquiries are. They only mean making twenty murders for one, and perhaps even more than that. The hon. member for Townsville said the Imperial Government always decided against the white man—or rather always took the side of the black man. That is not strictly correct. I think I have read of Her Majesty's gunboats in the Pacific instituting what are called "reprisals." What does that all mean but the blind, barbarous motive of revenge—bloodthirsty revenge? And that is the only deduction that can be drawn from a good deal that has been said this afternoon. The hon. member for Burke calls these men who go to New Guinea for the purpose of opening up trade and bringing wealth to this colony the best of our colonists. That is a very mercenary view to take of it. If he was a native of New Guinea he would take an entirely opposite view. He would regard those white men as invaders of his native land—there is no doubt about that—and he would consider himself justified, by all the means within his barbarous reach, in driving them away, even to the extent of committing murder. We know very well what the conduct of these men is when they go to New Guinea. So far from regarding them as the very flower of our colonists, I regard them with some few exceptions as the vagabonds of the colony. We know what sort of men these adventurers are; as a rule they are persons who fear not God, neither regard man. If New Guinea is to be regarded as an adjunct of Queensland—and I do not see how it can be so regarded, seeing that it is only under the protection of Queensland—that is no reason why we should invade the whole island and force them to trade with us. What I would prefer, and what the Chief Secretary, I gather from his speech, would prefer, is to have these matters settled by English law and order, with an authority coming from the highest quarter, the Imperial Parliament. There might even then be some failure in the administration of plain law and justice, because in our dealings with inferior races we have recorded a dreadful catalogue of crimes and oppression; but to treat the natives of New Guinea in the way suggested by a great deal that has been said, would be rushing into crime with our eyes open; and I for one refuse to be a party to it. An inquiry by gunboats means an inquiry by powder and shot; it means making a criminal state of things far more criminal; and I think that we in this Legislative Assembly ought to be very careful how we give utterance to such buccaneering ideas.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think there are many members of this House, or many people in the country, who hold the views which have just been expressed by the hon. member for North Brisbane. It appears to me that he shows a feeling of pusillanimity, which will not be endorsed by the inhabitants of Queens-

land. That hon. gentleman, who has been accustomed to sleep in his comfortable bed for many years past—and I hope he will do so for many years to come—knows little about the difficulties which the pioneers of the country have had to contend against in the past, and will have to contend against in the future; and the House will not be doing its duty, when it opens up the northern part of the colony for settlement, if it does not do something to protect the lives of those who are as legitimately employed in trade and commerce as ever the hon. member has been in Brisbane. The Premier has read the instructions given to the Hon. John Douglas. They were to the effect that he was empowered to make regulations if he could enforce them. I think, Mr. Speaker, that that gives him a wide power, and it gives this Government a considerable amount of power.

The PREMIER: We have nothing to do with it.

Mr. BLACK: The power given to the Hon. John Douglas is invested in the hands of this Government.

The PREMIER: No; that is the proposal we have made.

Mr. BLACK: If the Hon. John Douglas has power to make regulations it would justify our Government in giving him power to enforce them. I should like to know what would be the result, assuming that our Government thought it necessary to send one of our gunboats down there, and put it under the control of Mr. Douglas, with certain instructions. Suppose an objection is raised, what will it matter? The thing is done; it is an accomplished fact; and the savages will have been taught a wholesome lesson. Whether it is necessary or not to inspire terror into them by a few gunshots I do not say, nor is it necessary to discuss that matter. Something must be done which will have a deterrent effect upon them. They have no respect whatever for human life, whether white or black. They will kill white men if they get the chance, and they will kill their own relatives, and eat them too, if they get the chance. The Government would get the sanction of the country, and I believe of the House, if they were to take a very much more decided course of action than they have done hitherto.

Mr. W. BROOKES: They would not.

Mr. BLACK: I believe they would. I do not think the hon. member would get many persons to endorse the milk-and-water views which he entertains on this matter. We find that other nations protect their subjects. We find that the Germans and the French, if any of their subjects are killed, take action, which inspires very wholesome terror into these savages, and in all probability they have only to do it once, and there is an end of it. I think that we should do the same. And so far from those of our colonists who go out there with their lives in their hands, and endeavour to add to the commercial prosperity of this country, being, as the hon. gentleman termed them, "the vagabonds of the country," why, sir, an utterance like that does not do credit to the hon. gentleman at all. They are not the vagabonds of civilisation. Captain Craig, whose murder was the last atrocity we have heard of, was well known to be a most humane man—a man universally respected by those who knew him best at Cooktown. I think it is quite enough to have to regret the untimely death of a man like that, and those who accompanied him, without his memory being defamed by what the hon. member for North Brisbane has said. I do not profess to be very well versed in international law, and I would like some expression of opinion from the Premier, if he

can give it, as to what steps the Home Government could possibly take if we were to take the matter into our own hands and the Government of Queensland punished those people. I believe that the people of Queensland would endorse that action of the Premier if he carried it out.

The PREMIER: We might be liable to be tried for murder.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said: Mr. Speaker,—While both sides of the House agree in condemning the masterly inactivity of the Imperial Government with regard to the settlement of the affairs of New Guinea, I am convinced, sir, that a very small number would assert our right to interfere and by force of arms repress the outrages which have been committed in New Guinea. It would be a new departure entirely if the colony were to send one of our vessels of war to assert jurisdiction and attempt to maintain order in a country not under the government of Queensland. And hon. gentlemen should bear in mind that while the Federal Council took a very active part in considering the affairs of New Guinea, it never expressed an opinion that New Guinea should be ruled by Queensland. The question was discussed at a meeting of the Federal Council by representatives of this and southern colonies which take, along with Queensland, an especially warm interest in the settlement of New Guinea, and they never expressed an opinion that they would be satisfied to allow Queensland to take up the position of sending an armed force to New Guinea to maintain order there. I certainly would regard anything of the kind very much in the same light as the hon. member for North Brisbane does. It would be a buccaneering excursion, and would probably lead to a great many more outrages than those it would endeavour to redress or avenge. It would partake, to my mind, altogether of reprisals, in which those engaged might possibly be led to the commission of a great many more offences than the outrages that have been perpetrated. We must to a certain extent consider the aboriginals of these islands according to their tribal customs. They have not the same laws, they have not the same civilisation, they have not the same jurisprudence that we possess; and what we would consider murder and outrage may be considered by them retribution for spoiling them of their inheritance or invading their territory, or acting in a way which we ourselves would resent, perhaps in a more civilised form, if we were invaded by people whom we did not approve of. I do not make these remarks with any view of detracting from the general sorrow felt for the unfortunate men who have met their fate, but at the same time we must not allow our zeal to blind our judgment to the fact that the men who committed these massacres have acted perhaps according to the custom of their tribe for generations, and that if we are to endeavour to maintain order at the present time in New Guinea we should do it without actually becoming avengers of outrages committed in the past. I must say I am very strongly of opinion that the Imperial Government have shown a great deal of apathy in connection with this matter. That is very much to be deplored, not only for the sake of Queensland, but for the sake of all the Australian colonies who have joined together in expressing a very decided opinion that Great Britain should take New Guinea under its control and management. I say that the Imperial Government are breaking faith not only with Queensland but with all the other colonies that are joint contributories with us in subsidising the protectorate at the present time, through the dilatory manner in which they are recognising their

responsibilities in this direction. I do not think we can be too loud or too unanimous in expressing our surprise and regret that the Imperial Government should have allowed matters to degenerate into their present position. From the overtures that were made to the hon. the Premier a considerable time ago, the Imperial Government appeared to be animated by a proper sense of duty, except that I have always considered that demanding from the colonies any contribution whatever was a very narrow, illiberal, and very unstatesmanlike view in which to regard the whole question of the settlement of New Guinea in its relation to the Empire. Still the demand was made and acceded to, and having been acceded to, I am of opinion that the Imperial Government have certainly shown very great disregard of Australian interests and of national interests in allowing the matter to degenerate into its present position. It is not fair to the Hon. Mr. Douglas. It places him in a very equivocal position by giving him the shadow of authority without the substance or the means of enforcing it. When we consider that there is a considerable fleet on the Australian seaboard, I think it is the duty of the Imperial authorities and of the Admiralty to pay attention to the representations that have been made to them by the Premier, and send one or two vessels of war to investigate these matters and endeavour to maintain the authority of the Commissioner in New Guinea. The Premier has already formulated what are his views concerning the proposed settlement and establishment of authority in New Guinea, and no doubt hon. gentlemen have made themselves acquainted with those views. The hon. gentleman stated, in a despatch from the Colonial Secretary's Office, on the 18th May, 1885:—

"I entirely agree that, whatever may be the ultimate decision of Her Majesty's Government as to the mode of occupation and form of government of New Guinea, it is necessary for the High Commissioner, by personal examination, to make himself acquainted, as far as possible, with the requirements of the territory. I agree also that the government, whatever its ultimate form, must be organised on a tentative basis.

"So much being conceded, I think that the proposed annual expenditure as suggested in Schedules B and C of General Scratchley's memorandum is fair and reasonable, except that the cost of manning and maintenance of a steamer for the first year may possibly be reduced below the sum of £17,000 mentioned by him, and there may, perhaps, in consequence of the delay that has occurred, be more than £8,000 available out of the contributions from the colonies for the year ending 1st June next.

"I agree, also, that the High Commissioner will require a steamer of not less size than that suggested by him, and probably a schooner and boats in addition. It will also, I anticipate, be found necessary to erect suitable buildings for the residence of himself and his staff on shore at Port Moresby, or such other place as may be selected for his headquarters. I do not think that the annual contribution of £15,000 from the Australian colonies will be sufficient to defray the capital expenditure for these purposes, which must therefore be provided for in some other way. This Government will be prepared to recommend to Parliament an appropriation to cover their share, in proportion of population, of a loan of £20,000 for that purpose—if Her Majesty's Government, upon full consideration of the matter, think that the whole of the amount should be advanced by the colonies—or of such less sum as may be required after allowing for any contribution which may be made by the Imperial Treasury.

"In effect, therefore, this Government accepts and adopts General Scratchley's suggestions, subject to such variations of detail as to the mode of expenditure as may be found necessary after actual experience."

The Government of Queensland have shown themselves quite prepared to discharge their share of the responsibility, and on the score of finance not only Queensland but the other colonies have readily acceded to the request of

the Imperial Government. I very much regret what has happened, not only on account of the disturbed state of the government of New Guinea—which ought to be settled by this time—but also because it is throwing cold water on the scheme of federation. Several of the colonies have united very warmly indeed in the matter of federation, and have shown their practical acknowledgment by agreeing to contribute to the preliminary expenses of governing New Guinea; and now, if the Imperial Government break faith with the colonies, it will not only delay the settlement of New Guinea and the establishment of Imperial jurisdiction there, but also instil into the minds of the members of the Australasian Federal Council an idea that after all nothing tangible or practical is likely to be the outcome of the federation scheme. The Imperial authorities expressed entire approval of federation, and it is their duty to encourage by every legitimate means the extension of the scheme of federation amongst these colonies. In that light, I regret what has taken place; but I do not think that beyond what has been done by the Chief Secretary anything further of a practical nature could have been, or can be, carried out by the Queensland Government. As to sending gunboats to New Guinea, I do not think that would be approved by the country; and I may express the opinion that without the consent of the Admiral we could not do so, because our gunboats are flying the white ensign and form a portion of the British navy, and are subject to the control of the commander of the Australian squadron; and we cannot ourselves take action with vessels that are under his control.

Mr. WHITE said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very apt to be carried away by feelings of indignation at these atrocities; but when I consider the character of many of the sailors that are on those vessels frequenting those seas, my indignation cools down very much. I remember once seeing a Fijian robbed by the sailors on a ship, and I shall never forget the look of that man when he found how he was duped, and he was hustled off the ship without any chance of getting a recompense. When the anchor was being lifted he was hustled off the ship with such a look on his face as I shall never forget, the man being robbed of his all, as it were, which he, no doubt, prized very much, and the thievish sailors doing it while many good men winked at the action. No doubt but these New Guineans are also robbed whenever there is a chance, for sailors will rob them unknown to the masters, and many undeserving of such a fate suffer for the wrongs perpetrated by those bad characters that are employed as sailors on those vessels.

Mr. NORTON, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not know that it is necessary to tolerate the cruel murders going on in the neighbourhood of New Guinea because on one occasion sailors robbed a Fijian, or to condemn sailors as a body because the hon. member for Stanley, Mr. White, in one instance supposed some white men to have been guilty of robbing a Fijian. I am quite sure that if the hon. gentleman takes time to reflect he will see that the argument he has adduced in favour of tolerating this abomination is a very poor one indeed. I look at the matter with very deep regret. I regret that the Imperial Government allow the settlement of the government of New Guinea to remain so long in abeyance, though the colonies contribute to the cost. Though the government is allowed to remain in a helpless state owing to the consideration of more important questions, I think we might put up with that if the Imperial authorities would prevent men who are not vagabonds at all, but who are in pursuit of their

legitimate business, from being cruelly murdered by the blacks. The hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, seems to think that the white people had no business in New Guinea. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman has any objection to the expedition being conducted there by Mr. Forbes, which is likely to lead to a great deal of good. What is the use of such expeditions if the result is to end in nothing? We are not asked to contribute to the expenses of such an expedition, in order that a few people may gather a few feathers and a few butterflies, and say that they have been on the top of the highest mountain in the island. The object is to arrange for the exploration of the country that some sort of settlement may take place, which will lead to commercial relations between that island and the colony and Great Britain itself. The Colonial Treasurer referred to the fact that the ideas of the New Guinea people are not the same as our own—that we ought to remember that fact in our dealings with them; and I think we ought. Their idea is to have head for head. If one of their tribes is murdered, they require the head of one of the murderers; and the only way to bring them to a sense of what is right is to treat them according to their own law, and when they butcher the people who go there from this colony I think as many of them as have been concerned in the murder ought to be made to suffer. Do hon. members consider what these men are? They go out deliberately to waylay the men of the tribes with whom they have quarrelled. A couple of them will get hold of one of another tribe. One will stand behind and pinion him; the other will stand in front with his bamboo knife, take hold of his beard with one hand, and cut off his head with the bamboo knife. Those are the men with whom we have to deal. And when this is accomplished to their satisfaction they cut a nick in the bamboo knife and have it sharpened for the next victim. And they actually have a regular instrument for carrying the skulls of the unfortunate men they manage to kill. Is it reasonable that in dealing with these men we should treat them with the extraordinary leniency that is extended towards them? Mr. Speaker, I am not one of those who think that the Government ought to be encouraged in the idea of sending a war-vessel to the islands, however small she might be; but I do think this: that there is very great danger that private persons may be provoked into forming themselves into a body and going over to retaliate on the islanders for the people who have been murdered. That is one danger we ought to guard against. The Imperial Government have the power by their authority to prevent the Government of this colony from interfering in any way with what takes place in the islands. They may have power to prevent a war-ship going over to retaliate on the islanders; they may have power to swathe their High Commissioner in red tape like a living mummy, so as to prevent him from moving; but they have not the power to prevent that sense of retaliation which arises in the minds of friends who have had their relatives butchered. Flesh and blood have power to do more than any law. No law can restrain the feelings which are excited in the minds of people when those dear to them are butchered in that barbarous way, and when the authorities, who ought to protect them, do nothing. I say that when murders of this kind are committed, people with whom the unfortunate victims are connected will combine and send over a vessel in order to retaliate. And what will be the result? Are those men to be brought before the courts of law and to be put on their trial for murder?

Mr. W. BROOKES: Yes.

Mr. NORTON: Of course the hon. member says "Yes." Will they be sent away from their friends over to Fiji, to be tried by the High Commissioner there? That is a pretty state of things! I think if the people of this colony should combine together to retaliate in the way I have suggested, the Imperial authorities alone will be to blame for it. And for my part, although I do not wish to see anything of the kind take place, I can only say I shall not be surprised if it does. As to the form of government of that part of the island of New Guinea with which we are concerned, I do not think there is any necessity to discuss it now, for I am sure the Chief Secretary, from what has fallen from him, has done all in his power in connection with it. But I think that the people of this colony ought to lose no opportunity of pressing the Imperial authorities to take some steps which will have the effect of preventing the butchering of people who go there for the legitimate prosecution of their trade.

Question—That the House do now adjourn—put and negatived.

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

BOWEN TO TOWNSVILLE RAILWAY BILL. GODSALL ESTATE ENABLING BILL.

The SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that I have received messages from the Legislative Council, agreeing to the Bowen to Townsville Railway Appropriation Bill, and to the Godsall Estate Enabling Bill, and returning the same without amendment.

SOUTH BRISBANE MECHANICS INSTITUTE LAND SALE BILL.

The SPEAKER: I have also to report to the House that I have received a message from the Legislative Council, agreeing to the South Brisbane Mechanics Institute Land Sale Bill, with the amendments made in the accompanying schedule, in which amendments the Council request the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

On the motion of Mr. FRASER, the consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's amendments was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

POLICE PENSIONS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. B. Moreton): Mr. Speaker,—When the Police Superannuation Fund was being voted last night the leader of the Opposition stated that he had been informed that an extra amount had been given in a pension equal to the whole year in which the pensioner died. On inquiry I find that that has not been paid. The pension is paid up to the date of death to the representatives of the pensioner. That is the invariable rule. Only three pensioners died last year—Patrick Byrne, David White, and Bartholomew Shea.

BUILDING SOCIETIES BILL.

CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the motion of Mr. WAKEFIELD, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into Committee of the Whole to consider the Legislative Council's amendments on the Building Societies Bill.

On clause 23, as follows :—

"A registered society may employ its funds for such of the following purposes as are provided for in its rules—

- (a) For making advances to members of the society upon security of their shares ;
- (b) For making advances to members and other persons and to corporate bodies upon the security of freehold or leasehold estate by way of mortgage ;
- (c) For making advances to other registered societies ;
- (d) For buying, selling, and mortgaging freehold or leasehold estate ; and
- (e) Generally for carrying out such purposes of mutual advantage as are provided for in the rules."

Mr. WAKEFELD moved that the amendment of the Legislative Council, omitting subsection (d), be disagreed to. Building societies, in the way of business, advanced money by way of mortgage, and if that was allowed he did not see why they should not be allowed to buy and sell property.

The PREMIER said the hon. member mistook the meaning of the amendment. The subsection which was struck out was fully provided for in clause 25, and the amendment would therefore do no harm whatever.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said as far as the older societies were concerned it would make no difference, but some societies had been started lately which dealt in land. They bought and sold, and might have to mortgage to pay up final instalments. What reason was there for circumscribing the action of societies and hedging them round with all those difficulties? The societies he referred to certainly bought and sold land, and might have to mortgage.

The PREMIER : They are not building societies.

The ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge) said it seemed to him that the amendment was absolutely necessary to make sense of the clause. If subsection (d) was read with the first two lines of the clause, it would be seen that it was unnecessary. If a man wanted to mortgage he did not employ funds. He borrowed funds. He mortgaged his estate for the funds he received. A mortgagor did not employ funds for the purpose of having his estate mortgaged or for selling it. The subsection seemed to have been a mistake, and should be omitted.

Mr. ADAMS said he thought the amendment was necessary, and should be agreed to. It would not affect the Bill in the slightest degree.

The PREMIER said there were three things specified—buying, selling, and mortgaging. As far as selling and mortgaging were concerned, there could be no doubt that the words were inserted by mistake, and ought to be left out. The question had been raised whether a society ought to be allowed to buy freehold and leasehold estate, and that was a question upon which there might be a difference of opinion ; but he did not think it was the business of a building society to speculate in land. On the whole, therefore, it would be better to agree to the amendment, and amend the 25th section by leaving out the words "although not empowered by its rules to buy freehold or leasehold estate."

Mr. WAKEFELD said, with the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his motion.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

Mr. WAKEFELD moved that the Legislative Council's amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 25, as follows :—

"A registered society, although not empowered by its rules to buy freehold or leasehold estate, may purchase, build, hire, or take upon lease, any building in which to conduct its business, and may purchase or hold upon lease any land for the purpose only of erecting thereon a building in which to conduct the business of the society, and may sell, mortgage, exchange, or let such building, or any part thereof."

The PREMIER moved as a consequential amendment the omission of the words "although not empowered by its rules to buy freehold or leasehold estate."

Question put and passed.

On clause 26, as follows :—

"A registered society may receive deposits or loans, at interest, from the members or other persons, or from any building society or friendly society, to be applied to the purposes of the society."

"Provided that the total amount received on deposit or loan, and not repaid by any society, shall not at any time, in the case of a permanent society, exceed three times the amount for the time being of the existing paid-up capital or subscriptions of the society and the accumulations thereon, and shall not at any time, in the case of a terminating society, exceed three years' income on the shares for the time being in existence."

Mr. WAKEFIELD said the Legislative Council proposed two amendments in the clause : first, the insertion of the words, "for a term not less than two months" after "interest" in the 2nd line, and, second, the omission in line 7 of the words "three times," and the insertion of the word "twice." He moved that the first amendment be disagreed to, for the reason that building societies' receipts depended upon deposits received from members, and he could not see why they should be restricted and obliged to take money for a term not less than two months. If two months, why not six months or twelve months? If a member wished to deposit money for a month, and the society was willing to take it, why should he be debarred from depositing it?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he really could not see why a society should be debarred from receiving deposits on such terms as the public might choose to lend to them their money. A private individual could receive deposits to any extent and for any time ; a bank could do the same ; it was a matter of mutual arrangement ; if they agreed to such an amendment they might just as well restrict the amount of deposit of any individual depositor and say that no man should deposit more than £100, £200, or £300. The matter was of much consequence to the societies ; he did not think that their rights should be curtailed, and, moreover, he could not see that it would be any protection to the depositor. If a society was unsound, it would not be rendered sound by insisting that a man's deposit should remain there for two months. A great deal of money was held by societies pending certain transactions being completed, because the banks would not give depositors anything for a term under three or six months. He failed to see the object of restricting the term for which societies should hold money. The amendments in clause 26 would render the Bill wholly inoperative for the larger societies. Clause 24, subsection 1, of the Friendly Societies Act provided that by calling a meeting of the shareholders, and having a resolution affirmed to that effect, the society could register under the Companies Act, and that would certainly be the effect of the amendment. The object of the introducer of the Bill was to have an Act passed especially dealing with building societies ; but what would be the use of so framing the measure as to drive the societies to go outside of it? The Bill would be a dead letter if the amendment were accepted. On the broad principle, he would like to know on what

ground it could be advocated that they should deter a society any more than an individual from making any reasonable bargain with those with whom they might wish to do business.

Mr. BULCOCK said he took an opposite view to that taken by the Colonial Treasurer. As the hon. gentleman and every member of the Committee knew, building societies borrowed money for the purpose of lending it again, and some of them borrowed money at 8 per cent. and lent it again at 8 per cent. It was most necessary that every care should be taken to make the position of the societies secure, and what would be the position of a society lending all its money and having an overdraft at the bank if it had to pay money borrowed at call? A society with which he was connected held deposits amounting to £90,000 or nearly £8,000 a month, and they made it an invariable rule to see what deposits were falling due for two months ahead, and to make their advances accordingly. They knew what their income was from repayments, and they could see what they ought to do. Supposing a society held a deposit of £20,000 at call, and that all that money was lent again by the society, and in addition to that they had an overdraft at the bank, what could the society do supposing the £20,000 was asked for? The consequence would be that the society would have to shut its doors, as it would not be able to meet the demand. Societies of the kind were intended to act, and did act, as savings banks for the public, and they should be considered as safe as any bank, and for that reason the amendment was, he thought, absolutely necessary. It was necessary for the security of the society and the public that depositors should not be able to draw at call, as the societies paid a large interest for the money they borrowed, and charged but a small interest on the money they lent. That made it absolutely necessary that at least two months should be the shortest time within which depositors should receive money.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. gentleman made no distinction between two months' notice being necessary before money deposited could be withdrawn, and lodging money on deposit for any period less than two months. A good deal might be said in favour of societies requiring a certain notice before deposits could be withdrawn, but that was not the question before them. To provide that a person depositing money with a society could only do so for two months would be restricting the business of the societies, as a depositor might require his money within six weeks, and if he could not get it before the end of the two months he would not deposit it at all, but would have to let the money lie idle. There was a great deal of force in the contention that a certain amount of notice of withdrawal by depositors should be given, though that would restrict operations very much also; but that would not act in the same way as the present amendment would act, for, under this amendment, at the end of two months the money would be at call. As hon. gentlemen were aware, the operations of building societies in the ordinary course extended over ten or twelve years, and while the limit of two months would in no way improve the position of those dealing with the societies it would at the same time hamper those who had money to invest, and who invested it temporarily in building societies to obtain a small amount of interest on such money until they wanted to employ it in some other way.

Mr. BULCOCK said he must reply that if the depositors could not receive their money for less than two months the directors would know exactly when the money was payable, and

could then make provision for it; but if depositors could give one or two days' notice of withdrawal the directors might not be able to make provision for their calls, because they must lend the money they borrow to cover expenses. They were really lending societies, and should be treated as savings banks. They paid high interest for money they borrowed, and charged a small amount for money they lent.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said his hon. friend must see that if the directors had to make provision for the money being withdrawn within two months they could not invest it at all, and their funds would lie idle.

Mr. BULCOCK said the difference was this: He could conceive the case of a man having £2,000 to lend to a society for two months, and the society might have an overdraft of £20,000 for which they were paying 9 per cent., and though they might be able to make provision during the two months for the repayment of the loan, suppose they had to pay it within twenty-four hours—what then? Those who knew anything of building societies would know that sometimes they would have deposits falling due to the amount of £11,000 a month, and if in addition to that they had to meet a call of £4,000 or £5,000, where would they be? What was wanted was that they should know the exact amount of money they would have to make provision for, and he thought two months would be sufficient to give the societies a fair amount of time to control the demands to be made upon them.

Mr. ADAMS said he could not see that it would mend matters to agree to the amendment at all. He thought the societies were themselves the best judges as to whether they should take a certain sum of money for less than two months or not. It might pay societies doing a large business to take a loan for less than two months when it would not pay smaller societies to do so. In the society he was in they could only take deposits for a certain length of time, as if they had not sufficient fixed deposits to carry on business, and if they became a pawnshop—for it almost amounted to that—the banks might come down on them. He thought the societies ought to be the best judges whether they should take a deposit for one month or two months or ten months. It would be very unwise to try and hamper the societies.

Mr. WAKEFIELD said that in Victoria a Bill had been in existence for a considerable time without that restriction, and no evil results had followed.

Question put and passed.

Mr. WAKEFIELD moved that the Legislative Council's second amendment be disagreed to. The amendment would hamper the business of building societies to a very great extent. He quite approved of some limit being fixed, but he considered that the limit proposed by the amendment was too small altogether. They were legislating for the future business of building societies, which would not remain in its present limited state. He had just received a memorandum showing the business done by various building societies. One society, called the Birkbeck Building Society, turned over £50,000 a day for every business day throughout the year. Its receipts exceeded £7,000,000 last year, and its surplus funds amounted to over £3,000,000. It had over 40,000 members, and its total receipts since its establishment in 1851 amounted to over £92,000,000. Now, when building societies carried on business to such an extent, they should have power to borrow more than twice the amount of their paid-up capital. The limitation would cripple the operations of the societies very much.

Mr. NORTON said he thought there ought to be some limitation, and that the limit proposed by the Upper House was a reasonable one.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that if any limit was to be imposed at the present time it should certainly be of such a character as not to cripple any existing societies. He knew one society which received deposits considerably in excess of twice the amount of paid-up capital, and if the amendment were agreed to, it would be restricted from doing the same amount of business next year as it did last year. If an institution had £100,000 of paid-up capital, and had been borrowing to the extent of £300,000, he could not see that, by curtailing that to £200,000, they would be imparting any greater soundness to the institution.

Mr. NORTON: Why impose any limit at all?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he did not see why they should. He would be inclined to remove it, and he believed it would come to that eventually. Whatever limit was imposed would in time be removed. The public confidence in the institutions would become so much strengthened, and the public accumulations would so largely increase, that they would demand the removal of those restrictions with a view to the profitable employment of the capital entrusted to them. However, he was not arguing for the removal of all restrictions. The Bill was a tentative measure; it would give a legal status to the societies which they did not now possess; but it was no use passing an Act which would be inapplicable to large institutions at present in existence, and necessitate their taking steps at once to be incorporated on another basis.

Mr. CHUBB said the Bill gave a very large extension of the powers which building societies possessed at the present time. Of course, they all knew that building societies were originally established for the purpose of allowing the working classes to contribute small subscriptions to form a fund from which they might borrow enough to build or buy houses for themselves. Now, of course, they had a wider scope, and the transactions of the building societies in this colony were of a character which would be undreamt-of at home, at any rate in the early days of building societies. Their business was extended to the buying and selling of lands on a big scale; and, of course, if the Committee was prepared to concede that to building societies, there was no reason for restricting their operations any more than those of any other trading company. He saw no objection to leaving the clause as it stood. The limit provided was not too much, and the time would come, as the Colonial Treasurer had said, when all limitations of the kind would be swept away. As provision was made in the Bill that the accounts of the societies should be properly audited, there was no danger in allowing them to borrow three times the amount of their capital.

Mr. NORTON said the objection was one of principle, and the same objection applied to giving the societies borrowing power at all—that was to say, borrowing for the purpose of lending. The objection was, that it encouraged a kind of speculation which was liable to endanger the funds of the shareholders. It was transforming building societies into large financial institutions, and it seemed to him desirable not to encourage that to too great an extent. Unlike most hon. members who had spoken on the other side, he was not a shareholder in any society, and did not look at the question from a shareholder's point of view.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he did not think the hon. member took a correct view

of the matter. It would certainly not tend to encourage unwholesome speculation. A well-managed society would be guided by its ability to lend.

Mr. NORTON: But they are not necessarily well managed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that might be said of all institutions. It was hoped that under the present Bill they would show that they were well managed and become very important factors in the prosperity of the State. The hon. gentleman's contention was that no financial institution should extend its transactions beyond a certain limit, or it might become an incubus on the community. But the directors of any well-managed building society would not borrow more money than could be profitably employed. The suburbs of Brisbane, and many other towns throughout the colony, afforded ample illustration of the benefits that had accrued to the whole community through building societies. If they were starting *de novo* perhaps twice the amount of capital might be sufficient, but there were, as he had said, societies in existence which would be crippled during the present year by the proposed restriction. Certainly their position was improved by the fact that their operations were now legalised, but that could be done now under the Companies Act, which they would certainly register under, if the restrictions imposed by the Bill interfered with or hampered their business. The proposed restriction would be detrimental to the entire community.

Mr. CHUBB said that if a society borrowed three times the amount of its capital it would be able to lend three times as much, and would have three times as much security for its shareholders. The more a society lent the more persons they would have liable for it. The borrower would not be injuriously affected, because he was only liable for what he had borrowed, with a certain amount for interest.

Mr. WAKEFIELD said a number of restrictions were imposed on building societies by the Bill which were not imposed on them before, and it was only fair that they should have some privileges given them.

Mr. NORTON said he quite agreed with the Colonial Treasurer as to the great services those societies had rendered to the community, but that was the very reason for providing against dangers which would be incurred by giving badly managed societies too great powers.

Mr. WAKEFIELD: But there is the Government audit.

Mr. NORTON said he knew that, but the value of securities sometimes depreciated very largely. No doubt a well-managed society would see that the security was sufficient; but if a society was not well managed—and it was well known that that occasionally happened—and if a large borrowing power was allowed, it might very easily occur that it would advance more largely than the properties were worth, in the event of a very serious depreciation taking place. Other members who had spoken seemed to have some connection with building societies, and their aim was, according to the hon. member for Moreton, to get as many privileges for them as they could. In his opinion, the Bill conferred great privileges on building societies, while at the same time it placed upon them some very desirable and wholesome restrictions.

Mr. BULCOCK said there was another view of the matter, and that was, how would building societies meet an unusual demand for repayment of deposits, if a large amount of their capital was invested?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: How do banks pay deposits when they are called up?

Mr. BULCOCK said banks had large reserves. The society with which he had been connected for years had been as carefully and successfully managed as most of them, and the first thing asked at every board meeting, before they advanced any money, was what amount of deposits was coming due during that month and the next month. If the amount was three times instead of twice, and there was a strain on the funds, it would make it very difficult to carry on operations safely.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was astonished at the arguments of his hon. colleague. Did he imagine for one moment, because a man in business chose to avail himself of only a certain amount of credit, that a hard-and-fast line should be—must be—laid down upon the same basis for the whole mercantile community—that no one engaged in commercial pursuits should be allowed to extend his credit beyond a certain amount? If the society referred to was well managed, as he believed it was, that was no reason why others might not be equally well managed, and have larger facilities and avail themselves of those facilities; and to say that a hard-and-fast line should be adopted by all institutions—that they should all be uniform in the extent of their obligations and in the conduct of their business—why, it was simply ridiculous. Did the hon. member for a moment contend that every bank should be restricted as to the amount of deposits it should receive, or as to its stock of bullion, and that its circulation should be uniform with all other banks—that one should never attain any larger dimensions than another? The idea was simply preposterous. Such a proposition was wholly untenable in business. Any enterprising man or society would extend its operations legitimately, and was quite justified in doing so. To impose restrictions upon trade and enterprise in any shape was injurious; it was a relic of the dark ages altogether unworthy of the present day.

Mr. BULCOCK said it would depend very much upon the demands that might arise on the society. Was there any law that required the Bank of England to have a certain amount of bullion? A bank had always a reserve fund to meet contingencies of the kind he referred to, but, as a rule, building societies invested all the money they could get. That was the difference.

Mr. FOXTON said the last remarks that fell from the hon. the Treasurer were well worthy of consideration in reference to the inutility or absurdity of imposing restrictions of any kind as to the amount of business which any individual or company should transact. They had a notable instance of that brought before the House two or three sessions ago. A gentleman died; he had made a will by which he restricted the amount of capital to be invested in his business to about the amount he had been in the habit of employing in it. The trustees found that it was utterly impossible to carry on the business without increasing it. If they were to let it remain stationary it simply meant ultimate insolvency, and the only way in which they could carry it on at all was to deliberately commit a breach of trust by increasing the capital, and ultimately they had to apply to Parliament to give them a Bill of indemnity, enabling them to override the provisions of the will. Exactly the same principle applied in the present case. When once a compulsory limit was reached, a check on the business would take place. That could be the only result—exactly the same result that the trustees he had mentioned found in conducting the business they were carrying on.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of Mr. WAKEFIELD, the amendments of the Legislative Council in clauses 28 and 34 were agreed to.

On the motion of Mr. WAKEFIELD, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported that the Committee had agreed to the amendment in clause 23, with a consequential amendment; disagreed to the amendments in clause 26, and agreed to the other amendments.

Question put and passed.

Mr. WAKEFIELD moved that the Bill be returned to the Legislative Council with the following message:—

“MR. PRESIDING CHAIRMAN,

“The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the Legislative Council's amendments in the Building Societies Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

“Agree to the amendment in clause 23, with a consequential amendment, in which they invite the concurrence of the Legislative Council.

“Disagree to the amendments in clause 26, because the proposed amendments appear to impose unnecessary restrictions on the conduct of building societies; and

“Agree to the other amendments.”

Question put and passed.

PROSPECTING FOR GOLD.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider of an address to the Administrator of the Government, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates for 1886-7 the sum of £5,000, for prospecting purposes for gold.

A few days since the sum of £5,000 was put on the Estimates for prospecting purposes, to be lent to companies for the purpose of sinking shafts to a certain depth on established goldfields with the view of testing their permanency. The sum I ask for is to assist in the discovery of new goldfields. At a time like the present, when most of our industries are very much depressed when money is scarce and insolvencies unfortunately very plentiful, and when hundreds of men are walking about in search of employment, the discovery of a good goldfield, such as the Palmer or Charters Towers, would be of vast benefit. The immediate result that would accrue would be just as great on the present state of things as a good downfall of rain on a parched country after a long drought. There is no other interest which causes such an immediate change in the position of affairs as the mining interest. For instance, if such a discovery as I have mentioned took place, thousands of people would pour into this colony without Government expense. They would scatter the mineral treasures obtained throughout the colony; the squatter would have a splendid market for his cattle; business would be stimulated; employment would then be as plentiful as it is now scarce; and there would be a different state of things altogether. Everyone would benefit either directly or indirectly from the discovery of one of those fields, of which we know so many lie hidden in this colony. We know that nothing contributed more to the rapid advancement of Victoria and New South Wales than the discovery of gold. After New South Wales had been colonised for seventy-two years, within seven years after the discovery of gold its population was trebled, and its exports and imports increased in a corresponding degree. And we know very well, though so little is known of this colony compared with the others, that our mineral resources are infinitely richer than theirs. We have such a vast extent of mineral country and such a variety of minerals, that the Government should make a specialty of their development. If that could be done, unexampled as has been the advancement of the sister colonies owing to

the development of the industry, it would be nothing to the advancement that would accrue to this colony: we could pass the other colonies in a canter. Most of us have read the legend of the mountain of gold said to exist in the far interior of the American continent, which so many miners have spent and lost their lives in vainly searching for, and which is considered a myth; but what is a myth there is a reality here. We have a mountain of gold. I saw also in the *Courier* to-day information of the discovery of another mountain of gold. Regarding the first mountain, I took the trouble to prepare to-day a statement of the returns of Mount Morgan, simply to show the great richness of our mineral treasures compared with those of the other colonies. I compared that one mine with one of the richest mining districts in Victoria—Sandhurst—the second richest mining district in that colony. In the whole of the Sandhurst district—namely, Sandhurst, Eaglehawk, Kilmore, Heathcote, North Weranga, South Weranga—the returns for the whole district last year, estimating the gold at £3 16s. an ounce, show an amount of gold representing a value of £802,788. During the last six months Mount Morgan—the one mine—has produced 193,000 ounces. Double that—say it only produces the same amount during the next six months, though everyone knows that it will produce infinitely more on account of the improved machinery—and it will have produced £781,200 worth of gold; and estimating it at £4 4s. per ounce, which it brings, this mine is producing within £20,000 in one year of what was produced last year by the whole of the second mining district in Victoria. Let us now go a little further. In that mining district it took 4,714 miners to produce the gold, but at Mount Morgan it has taken only 200 miners. Again, our most experienced geologists have pronounced our tin lodes, especially at Herberton, to be of superior richness, and to promise equal permanency to the far-famed mines of Cornwall. And the returns from the silver-mines of the Etheridge, Ravenswood, and Mount Albion in the Herberton district, indicate the probability that Queensland will have its silver kings as well as Nevada. It has been urged that there is a great difficulty in getting parties sent out prospecting to do their work faithfully, and also that no good returns have ever accrued from the expenditure of Government money in that way. If we followed the example which obtains in Victoria, where the Government gives grants to various boards, and allows them to spend a certain amount of money in prospecting, the result would be different. There can be no doubt that these boards on the various goldfields would get reliable men. It would be a libel on the miners to say otherwise. I know many miners on the goldfields in this colony who are so fond of prospecting that they would prefer prospecting, if only they got the bare necessities of life, to getting twice the money in wages. I am sure such men could be depended upon. Now, even if the statement were true that the money expended by the Government already in prospecting had produced no result, that would be no argument why we should cease prospecting; for we cannot expect that by the expenditure of so many thousands of pounds so many goldfields will be certain to be discovered. All the money put on the Estimates for prospecting for new goldfields and expended up to this time amounts to £4,187. Well, if we spent ten times that amount and discovered a good goldfield, we would be amply repaid. If, after twenty failures, we had one success, we would be amply compensated. I contend that if nothing had been discovered from the expenditure already

incurred, that would be no reason why we should not follow the example of the neighbouring colonies and still spend money for the purpose of developing our mining interests. But, as a matter of fact, the money that has been expended by the Government in prospecting in this colony has been attended with the most magnificent results. That goldfield in this colony which has produced more gold and in a shorter time than any other goldfield in Queensland was discovered by Government money. In 1872 Mr. Ham was sent out on an expedition in order to prospect the country and examine its features, and when on that expedition he discovered a river which he called the Palmer River, after Sir Arthur Palmer, then Colonial Secretary. In a gully running into that river, Mr. Warner—one of the party—discovered gold; and it is very interesting to note that the reward that was given for the discovery of the chief goldfield in the colony was half-a-pound of tobacco. Mr. Ham, in his official report, says that in order to stimulate the members of his party he offered a reward of half-a-pound of tobacco to the first man who would find gold; and Mr. Warner, who was camped on the Palmer, came to him with gold in a dish and claimed the reward, which he obtained. He then prospected along the course of the Palmer, and discovered gold in it, but not in paying quantities. But the report which he gave of the gold he had got and of the auriferous nature of the country induced Mr. Mulligan to go to the Palmer, which he opened up, and which has turned out such an exceedingly rich field. Now, in that instance, for an expenditure of £1,000 or £2,000 for the outfit of the Government prospecting party, we had a return, calculated on the amount of gold produced from the Palmer, of five and a-quarter millions. It is interesting to observe that the mining interest develops others. The town of Cooktown owed its birth to the discovery of the Palmer, and, in one short year after that discovery, its contributions to the revenue were second only to those of Brisbane. Hundreds of miles of magnificent pastoral country were also discovered and settled, which, had it not been for the discovery of the goldfield, would have been still the hunting-grounds of the blacks. The Hodgkinson and Herberton Gold Fields indirectly owe their discovery to the discovery of the Palmer, which was owing to the expenditure of that Government money, for a Government expedition was subsequently organised by Mr. H. B. King, when Minister for Works, and Mr. Mulligan, as leader, travelled out to Herberton, and found tin on the Tait, and gold on the Hodgkinson. In consequence of that discovery, those places were opened up, and we all know how highly remunerative those fields have been. It will appear very absurd when we are expending hundreds of thousands of pounds every year on railways, which it is problematical will ever pay us, that we should grudge £4,000 or £5,000—about the sum sufficient to make one mile of those railways—in attempting to discover some of those goldfields which we are perfectly certain exist in our midst. I think, if we only take the example of Victoria, we shall not go far wrong. Last year that colony put £80,000 on the Estimates for prospecting, and we know that Queensland has far greater chances of good results accruing from the expenditure of money in prospecting than Victoria has. If we are unsuccessful the loss is a bagatelle, and if we succeed the gain will be immense. Anyone would be considered a fool if he had a rich claim and did not care to expend a few hundreds in developing it, and we should be placed under the same category when we know that we have immense mineral resources in our midst if we do not take some steps to develop our wealth. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Mr. Speaker, —The hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, has drawn very largely on his imagination in connection with this motion. The hon. member might have gained some credit for his imaginative statements if this had been the first occasion in which he had brought his motion forward. Some sessions ago the House voted a sum of money for the purpose of prospecting for gold, and the result was that there were sixteen prospecting parties subsidised by the Government to the amount of £4,187 7s. 7d. And out of the whole not one of these was successful, with the exception of the discovery of some tin between the Walsh and the Tait. The hon. member made a proposal that this money should be handed over to some of the boards. Well, the Government have had a considerable experience of boards when money has been handed over to them. In the hon. member's own district there are two boards—one at Port Douglas and one at Maytown—each of which received £500 to be expended on their roads, and the consequence was that the money was divided amongst themselves. They appropriated the money to their own purposes and did not use it for the purposes for which it was given. Now, the hon. member wants to aggravate or repeat that system by giving the boards money for prospecting for gold. He also referred to the fact that many men make a hobby of prospecting and would go in for it if they got just enough to subsist upon. Now, I have got before me an invoice that was sent in by a storekeeper who supplied one of these parties, and there are such items mentioned as dried apples, jams, marmalade, cheese, butter, bacon, preserved milk, coffee, currants, raisins, hats, socks, singlets, sauces, curry powder, hops, potatoes, sardines, and pickles. Now, the men who constituted the party that required those things are probably the men whom the hon. member says go in for prospecting for the love of the thing. There was another prospecting party that the hon. member for Bowen knows something about. The leader's salary was £13 a month; one hand at 7s. 6d. a day, two at 6s. 6d., three at 5s., and one at 4s. I do not think that any money that could be voted by this House could be worse spent than the £5,000 voted some years ago. The whole of that money has been spent without the slightest result; and not only that, but there is no way of checking the expenditure of these parties. I would not like to make use of any strong language, but I must say that for anyone with nothing to do, and who wanted an easy billet, he could not do better than form one of a prospecting party. Does the hon. member suppose that a man who can get £13 a month, or 7s. 6d. a day, with rations, is going to trouble himself very much about prospecting? He has a very good billet; he is out on a sort of picnic, and of course he does not care about finding gold so long as he gets paid. My opinion, Mr. Speaker, is that if the Government are going to encourage prospecting they ought to do so by way of reward.

Mr. HAMILTON: They give that also.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The proper system is to offer a reward for the discovery of a payable goldfield. This prospecting vote I consider is about as great a swindle as was ever perpetrated. For this £4,000 odd that has been spent not one single result can be pointed to, and not only that, but the distribution of the money is very unpleasant work. The Minister who is entrusted with the matter may try and do his best, but he has no check on the expenditure. I hope the House will set its face against this motion. My opinion is that rewards should be offered for the discovery of payable gold,

and I do not care what sum is given, but this £5,000 which the hon. member proposes to apply to prospecting will simply be money thrown away. The only result of the expenditure of the previous sum voted was the discovery of a little tin between the Walsh and Tait Rivers, and I think that ought to convince hon. members that it is about time to stop. I have no doubt whatever that when a sum of money was voted in the first instance the House did expect that some good would come out of it, but we have tried the experiment and it has proved a failure, and why should we continue it? The proper way, as I said before, is to reward people for discovering payable gold, and that is exactly what the Government are doing. The Government are bound to oppose this motion.

Mr. CHUBB said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. gentleman in opposing the motion has thought fit to refer to an association at Bowen which was formed for prospecting for gold. Now, I am sorry that the matter has cropped up here, because I intended to bring the question before the House in the shape of a motion for payment to that association of money which, undoubtedly, they should be paid according to the promise of the Minister for Works.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You will never get it.

Mr. CHUBB: We will see whether the House will allow a Minister of the Crown to repudiate a distinct promise made to honest people. That is the question. It is not whether we shall get the money, but whether the House will allow any Minister to make a distinct promise, and then repudiate it after inducing those people to contribute their own money, and to spend it. That is the question, and I am sorry I did not know that this matter was coming on, or I should have been prepared with the papers. However, I hope I shall be able to get the information during the evening, and before the debate closes, and I will give the House the full benefit of it. Now, in the beginning of last year a gentleman at Bowen, named Mr. Masterton—who, by the way, is no loafer, as the Minister for Works insinuated, but is as good a man as the Minister himself—a gentleman who has been manager of a station, and who is a justice of the peace appointed by the present Government—well, this gentleman at the beginning of last year sent a telegram from Bowen to the Under Secretary for Mines, Brisbane, asking him this question:—

"Will the Government subsidise prospecting party forming here Pound for each pound subscribed Reply paid."

"A. M. MASTERTON."

The answer to that was a telegram, of the same date, from the Under Secretary to Mr. Masterton:—

"Further particulars required as to locality amount subscribed etc."

Then Mr. Masterton replied to that on the same day:—

"Old Normanby Diggings Bowen River Broken River and vicinity Subscriptions two hundred and fifty (£250) pounds Reply wire if satisfactory Reply paid."

Then, on the 9th January, Mr. Masterton telegraphed again to the Under Secretary for Mines:—

"Two hundred pounds subscribed Please confirm if bona fide you will grant pound for pound subscribed Reply paid."

Then there is a letter, dated 8th January, from Mr. Masterton to the Under Secretary for Mines:—

"Bowen, 8th January, 1885.

"SIR,

"I wired you with reference to your subsidising a prospecting association which I am forming here, to thoroughly prospect the country from the Prosperpine River through by the old Normanby diggings (deserted

some years ago); thence through by the Broken River and Bowen River. I have been promised the sum of £200 in subscriptions, providing the Government will grant what is, I believe, the usual subsidy in such cases, of £1 for each £1 subscribed by the public. Your reply to my telegram gives me the encouragement to believe that you will grant such assistance, as it will be of the utmost value at present if we can succeed in opening up a goldfield, and of such we have every confidence, as with £400 we should be able to test the district fairly well.

"I annex herewith the names of a number of those who have subscribed.

"Trusting to receive your favourable consideration,

"I am, etc.,

"A. M. MASTERTON."

Then followed a list of subscribers :—

"Dr. Browne, Rev. Mr. Tucker, R. O. Bourne, John Macalister, R. H. Smith, John Bell, Waldron Burrows, Cheffin Brothers, W. Buchanan, F. Stanborough, E. Goertz, A. M. Masterton, G. F. Sandrock.

"Each of these £10 each. Balance to be made up by Saturday, 10th instant.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister characterised these people just now as loafers; he said it was an association of loafers, got up to work this money improperly out of the Government. I have read the names of the gentlemen who subscribed to the association, and I will tell you who they are. Dr. Browne, a medical man practising in Bowen; the Rev. Mr. Tucker, Church of England clergyman; R. O. Bourne, the chief superintendent of telegraphs in Northern Queensland; John Macalister, clerk of petty sessions at Bowen; R. H. Smith, an auctioneer and town clerk of the municipality there; Jno. Bell, a merchant; Waldron Burrows, Commissioner for Crown Lands; Cheffin Bros., business people; W. Buchanan, also a business person; F. Stanborough, a business person; E. Goertz, associate of Justice Cooper at that time; A. M. Masterton, a gentleman well known to other hon. members besides myself; and G. F. Sandrock, Collector of Customs. Now, Mr. Speaker, those are the individuals the hon. gentleman insinuated were loafers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I said nothing of the sort. I said the prospectors were.

Mr. CHUBB: Well, those were the prospectors. They were the gentlemen who found the money to prospect with. Now, Mr. Speaker, before that, Mr. Masterton wrote me a letter, but I was in Sydney at the time and did not get the letter till I came back. The letter was to this effect :—

"I wired you with reference to the Government granting a £1 for £1 subsidy in proportion to the amount of subscriptions collected in aid of the Bowen Prospecting Association. I found that you had left for Sydney, hence could not have received my wire. Immediately I then wired to the Under Secretary for Mines, and his reply was, that amount subscribed, locality, etc., should be supplied. I advised him to the effect that £250 would be subscribed; but I find that we will only be able to allot twenty shares of £10 each, and I have allotted seventeen of these already. By Saturday all the twenty will be taken, and this with the £400 which we should receive from the Government will put our association on a very fair financial footing, and if we have anything like a fair run of luck, the results of the prospecting party may be of the very greatest value to our district and your constituency. I am sure you will give the subject your hearty support.

"The association propose to thoroughly prospect the district from the Proserpine River, through the Old Normanby Diggings, thence, if necessary, to the Broken River and Bowen. Any auriferous reefs, if deemed of any value, are to be tested by assay at the Victorian mint, so that a really thorough test may be made of the value of any finds. I feel most sanguine myself and have undertaken charge of the party, which will start immediately the Government grant the subsidy. I mention a few of the subscribers who have each subscribed £10 each."

Then he gives the names of all those gentlemen whom I have mentioned, nearly all of whom are Civil servants, and business people.

"By Saturday we will have the balance completed, so that there is no difficulty in the way I presume. Will you therefore kindly undertake to urge the matter on with the Under Secretary for Mines, as it is most desirable to start the party at once. Any telegraphic message with reference please make collect here."

Well, Mr. Speaker, that letter remained here for three or four weeks before I got it, and in the meantime, on the 9th January, the answer went up from the Under Secretary for Mines :—

"Minister declines to subsidise party for prospecting old diggings. The vote only applies to new country."

Then on the 28th January the manager of the Joint Stock Bank at Bowen telegraphed to the Minister for Mines :—

"Two hundred pounds lodged to-day to the credit of Bowen Prospecting Association."

Then I suppose on that telegram was endorsed this—at any rate it is a memorandum by the Minister :—

"Usual amount to be paid on vouchers forwarded through the gold warden.—W.M."

Then the next communication was a memorandum from the Under Secretary for Mines, Brisbane, to the gold warden, Bowen, dated 30th January :—

"With reference to the prospecting party lately formed at Bowen for the purpose of prospecting the country from the Proserpine River, thence by the Broken and Bowen Rivers, I have the honour to inform you the Secretary for Mines has approved of the usual subsidy of two pounds being granted by this department for each pound expended from private subscription, the amount to be paid as required on vouchers forwarded through you for the supply of actual necessities for the trip.

"A telegram has been received from the manager of the A. J. S. Bank stating that £200 has been lodged to the credit of the Prospecting Association, and I am to request you will forward a list of the subscribers with the amounts. A monthly report of the progress of the prospecting party should be forwarded to this office.

"Please inform the chairman of the association accordingly."

Then, on the 31st January, Mr. Masterton telegraphed to the Under Secretary :—

"Two hundred (200) pounds lodged credit Bowen Prospecting Association local office Joint Stock Bank manager has advised you Please advise collect if subsidy sent."

Then, on the 3rd February, there is a memorandum from the Under Secretary :—

"Mr. Macarthur has been written to on subject."

Then, on the 2nd February, there is a letter from Mr. Masterton sending the bank voucher for the deposit of £200, and adding—

"The party is now almost complete, and only waiting the departmental subsidy.

"We hope to hear by to-morrow's mail that cheque has been sent to the bank, as kindly promised by the Minister."

Underneath that is a certificate from the teller of the Joint Stock Bank that £200 has been placed to the credit of the association by Mr. Masterton. Then, on the 9th of February, the goldfields warden, Bowen, writes to the Under Secretary for Mines :—

"In accordance with your request in memo. No. 85, 105 M., and dated 30th ultimo, I now do myself the honour to transmit herewith a list of the names of subscribers to the Bowen Prospecting Association, containing the names of twenty persons contributing £10 each, and certified by the hon. secretary, Mr. Waldron Burrows."

Then follows the list of names I have already read. On the 9th of March, there is a telegram from the Under Secretary to the warden :—

"Cheque for £99 12s. 10d. being two-thirds of expenditure by prospecting party will be sent to Joint Stock Bank by first mail."

This was the proportion of the expenditure the Government agreed to pay. On the 10th March, the Under Secretary writes:—

"Confirming my telegram of yesterday, I have the honour to inform you that a cheque for £99 12s. 10d., being two-thirds of the expenditure incurred by the prospecting party (£149 9s. 4d.), as per accounts forwarded by you, will be forwarded to the A.J.S. Bank, Bowen, by first mail, to be placed to the credit of the Prospecting Association.

"The vouchers certified by you for £293 18s. 8d. have been cancelled, you evidently having laboured under a mistake as to the amount payable."

The vouchers were sent in, dated February, 1885, for the amount of the subsidy, or £149 9s. 4d., expended by the association for the purchase of plant, rations, etc. It appears that the association fell into this error: having been promised £2 for £1, they thought at that time that as soon as they had spent £1 they were entitled to receive £2 from the Government. That, of course, was not correct. As was pointed out afterwards, the Government paid two-thirds. They did not actually give £2 to £1; they gave two-thirds of the actual amount. There was some correspondence about that error, but it is not material that I should read it, as it does not affect the question. It was put right. The party having spent £149 for plant and rations at that time, they sent in a voucher believing they were entitled to £2 to £1, as they were according to the promise of the Minister, but not in that way. The Minister only paid two-thirds of the £149 at the time. The association did not understand the matter in that way then, and they communicated with me on the subject, asking me to see the Under Secretary, which I did on the 12th March. The Under Secretary then wired to the warden at Bowen as follows:—

"This department contributes at rate two for one in equipment and rations that is two-thirds of expenditure"

I want hon. members particularly to note the words that follow—

"and any further outlay that may be necessary will be assisted at same rate. Have explained matter to Mr. Chubb who will write to association."

When I saw the Under Secretary on the subject, the Minister, I believe, was not in town. My object in seeing the Under Secretary was, of course, to know the reason why they had refused the vouchers that were sent in for double the amount the association had spent. The Under Secretary explained that away satisfactorily, and I communicated that to the association at Bowen. The words, "and any further outlay that may be necessary will be assisted at the same rate," were occasioned by something I said to the Under Secretary. I said—"What about wages? I suppose the party, who are not miners, will require to employ men; they will have wages to pay and rations to find?" The Under Secretary replied—"Any reasonable expenses will be subsidised." The Minister for Works shakes his head, but he was not there. That is what the Under Secretary said to me. Then, on the 12th March, I wrote to Mr. Smith, at Bowen, one of the association. I may tell you, Mr. Speaker, that at that time there was no dispute as to wages between the association and the department, because no vouchers for wages had gone in, but when the Under Secretary spoke about subsidising all actually necessary expenses for the trip it occurred to me that there must have been some expenses for wages incurred, seeing that those gentlemen could not go out themselves and prospect. The letter I wrote to Mr. Smith on the 12th March was as follows:—

"Brisbane, 12th March, 1885.

"R. H. Smith, Esq., Bowen.

"DEAR SIR,—I have seen the Under Secretary for Mines in reference to your telegrams. He explained the system of the Government in supplementing the pros-

pecting expenditure to be this:—The Government does not place the £2 for £1 in the hands of the association, but pays on their expenditure, as shown by vouchers, in that proportion. Thus your voucher was, in round figures, £150. The Government pays on this £100, thereby contributing their two-thirds. Your association has spent the other one-third. The next voucher that comes in will be dealt with in the same manner, so that the funds of the association and the Government supplement will be disbursed together in the relative proportion mentioned. It is explained that this is the only check the department can have on the expenditure of the Government funds. To do otherwise would be to place in the hands of an unscrupulous party the means of working a fraud in this way: Say the party professed to spend £200, and bought an outfit to that cost, then obtaining the £400 from the Government, abandoned the enterprise, sold the plant, divided the £600, and dispersed, leaving the Government to whistle for the money. This, of course, is putting an extreme case by way of simple illustration. No doubt persons who acted in this way could be prosecuted criminally, but we know the difficulties of proof (apart from the cost), and the fact that there are rogues who would swindle if they had the chance renders it the duty of the Government to run no unnecessary risks. I pray you not to make any personal application of these remarks to present circumstances. I am only 'pointing a moral to adorn a tale.'

"I am, yours very truly,

"C. E. CHUBB."

The party started out, and on the 31st March Mr. Masterton sent in his report to the chairman and directors, as he called them, of the Bowen prospecting party, Bowen. His report is as follows:—

"South Proserpine, 31st March, 1885.

"GENTLEMEN,

"Our party, comprising six men, with an equal number of horses, left Bowen on the 2nd ultimo, and travelled thence first up the Don River; thence we shaped our course between Roma Peaks and the Clark Range; from thence on to the northern source of the Proserpine, and continued further thence to the South Proserpine with a view of searching this locality for reefs, as up to the present there has, I believe, been very little prospecting done for reefs in this part of the district.

"We have passed several very likely looking creeks for alluvial, but through the dryness of the season very little water, consequently we have postponed these for future tests on our way through, and this can now be accomplished from the fact of our having had heavy rains since our arrival at this camp. The country around here is very difficult to prospect, from the fact of the hills being covered in most places with jungle. You will observe that I have taken out an extra supply of rations. This I think very necessary, as, through the lateness of the wet season, it is better that we have a good supply on hand, and it saves the expense and delay of sending pack horses and men into town.

"The men that I have with me are all old experienced miners, and as such we have to pay them reasonable wages, which I think are very moderate in comparison to the usual rate of miners' wages.

"My report must of necessity be brief this time, as we may say that we have just fairly set down to work properly."

"Yours faithfully,

"A. M. MASTERTON."

Mr. Masterton attaches to the report a statement of expenditure incurred by the party, and he has informed me by letter that the wages paid, leaving out his own salary, did not amount to more than 25s. a week all round. Then there is an account of the rations purchased for the party, such as sugar, tea, soap, and a dozen pickles to which the Minister objects so much. We will take the pickles off. We will take off the pickles and the jams to which the hon. gentleman objects so much. Then, Mr. Speaker, on the 1st June that report was forwarded by the goldfields warden to the Under Secretary for Mines, together with that statement, so that on receipt of it the Minister had immediate notice of what was being done, and how the money was being spent, but he took no steps in the matter, and raised no objection to the expenditure of the money in that way. The report would reach him in the ordinary course of post; the Bowen people

generally write their letters on mail day, so that he would receive it four or five days after the 1st June, and although he was thus made fully aware that the Prospecting Association had those men in their employment at those wages, he took no steps to object or to show that he disapproved of it. On the 30th April Mr. Masterton sent another report, showing what he had done. He says :—

"During the month our party have been busily engaged in sinking on two well-defined reefs; but pending sinking to a further depth, cannot definitely decide as to the probability of their being payable. Certainly the prospects of one of them give promise of such; but, pending further development, it would not be judicious to venture a definite opinion. Since the commencement of the month we have prospected a good deal of the country on the south side of the Proserpine, and colours of gold can be found in all gullies and watercourses. We discovered a large lode of oxide of iron; and as I was under the impression that this lode carries gold, I had a small quantity of ore sent down through Burns, Philp, and Co., of Brisbane, to Mr. Staiger, who assayed the sample sent down, and he pronounced it as a valuable lode, proving by assay that it contained 70 per cent. of pure metallic iron of superior quality. The lode is quite 3 feet thick, and the ore in large disconnected pieces, varying from 20 lbs. weight up to 10 cwt. This discovery, though not of any commercial value to your association, proves that the district contains many valuable minerals, and I have no doubt but that when coal can be landed near the site of this lode at a price compatible with a cheap reduction of the ore into 'pig,' this lode will be profitably worked, for there can be no two opinions of the extent of the lode, which can be traced for half-a-mile on the range. Alongside this iron lode is a small leader of quartz, carrying good gold at the cutting that has been made. This leader is only about two inches; but as it seemed to make larger further down the range, I am having another trial cutting made, in hopes that it may make larger. From 1 lb. of stone crushed in the mortar it averaged over 1 grain gold. This would be about 5 oz. to the ton, so I am in hopes that the deeper ground may increase the size of the reef. I have discharged one man, Moran, and engaged another, H. Barnes, in his place; the other men are working well, and seem to be competent miners.

"I enclose herewith the statement of disbursements for month of April, and receipts accompanying same."

The vouchers were sent down to Brisbane, and on the 10th June Mr. Smith, the secretary, telegraphed to the Under Secretary for Mines :—

"Re Bowen Prospecting Association's vouchers forwarded you for March and April. Kindly wire amount Joint Stock Bank here. Urgently required. Account withdrawn. Reply."

The word "withdrawn" should be "overdrawn." Then on the 11th June—and this is the first time the department took any exception to the course of procedure—the Under Secretary, Mr. Deighton, sent this memo. to Mr. Smith :—

"This department does not pay salaries and wages to prospecting parties, but only contributes towards supply of necessaries for the trip as the warden has already been informed."

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is the principle we acted on.

Mr. CHUBB: It may be the principle the Government have adopted now, or perhaps adopted before; but it was not the principle upon which they induced these people to go into the undertaking.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Mr. CHUBB: They made a promise of £2 for £1. Whether the Government made a good or a bad bargain was not the question at all. It was whether they had made a promise; if they had, they were bound in honour to perform it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The promise was never made.

Mr. CHUBB: That is for the House to say. It is all very well for the Minister to say it was never made, because he has refused to pay the money, and we all know how obstinate he is. When he

makes up his mind upon a subject he sticks to it, whether right or wrong. He has been proved to be wrong in several instances in this House, and I believe I am able to prove he is wrong in this. This association now find themselves in a very peculiar position. They have spent a large sum of money, a great deal more than the £200 that they contributed at first. They have spent altogether over £500 of their own money, and it was only after they had spent that money that the Minister objected, although he knew before how they were spending it. On the 13th June, Mr. Smith wrote this letter to the Under Secretary for Mines :—

"SIR,

"We sincerely regret that such a serious misunderstanding should have taken place with reference to your departmental subsidy to our local Prospecting Association, in which you decline to allow any assistance to us, in allowing a portion of the subsidy to be used in paying wages incurred in carrying out the functions of the association. In our opinion, and we were under the impression from the formation of prospecting party, that there would not have been the slightest hesitation or objection on the part of your department in allowing the subsidy to be used for the disbursements of wages, as we consider the object of our association could not be carried out without ways and means being provided for the practical working of the party, and, a sequence to this, paying the miners, and others undertaking the practical work on our behalf, a fair and reasonable rate of wages. We would again ask you to favourably consider the matter of the payment of wages, otherwise it will involve those who have subscribed to the association in a serious loss to them, as there was a prospect of the association and the district reaping some reward for their pluck in subscribing to the enterprise.

"We further wish to point out to you the impracticability of the subscribers to the party making personal practical use of the funds provided for prospecting, as you will perceive from the list of subscribers which you have that the members of the association are enrolled from the clergy, medical, Civil Service, and others whose business prevents them from undertaking such duties, and who, though having the welfare of the town and district at heart, are debarred by their occupations from enrolling themselves as practical miners; consequently, to enable them to launch the prospecting party into practice, it was absolutely necessary to engage reputable practical miners, and under the supervision of a responsible person. So far the administration of the party has given the shareholders satisfaction, and it is hoped that, on your further considering our position, you will further and favourably reconsider the matter of allowing the subsidy to be made use of in disbursing wages. No prospecting party could be carried on under the system proposed by your department. Having expended the greater portion of the total subscriptions (nearly £200), and you only allowing a subsidy of two-thirds of our actual expenditure for rations alone, means, pure and simple, a thorough collapse of the party at the expiration of the second month's work, from the fact that we would have no funds available to pay wages owing to the men.

"We have no intention of implying a disrespectful remark when we drew your attention to the subsidy paid to the Maryborough association, which was given them in a single payment by your department; but we waive any claims that we may have had to expect this, for, having acquiesced in every way to the wish of the department, we still hope from the peculiar surroundings of our case that you will again reconsider the matter, and assist us thereby in carrying out the programme of the prospecting party in its entirety, and which we can assure you will result in much good to this district.

"I may inform you that the association is now involved to the extent of nearly £200 with the bank that the party do business with, and this means, should you refuse to reconsider the matter, a very serious loss to those who have already subscribed—a loss to private individuals which I am sure the Mines Department does not wish to see incurred through a misinterpretation of your vote.

"We may say, in conclusion, that we never had the slightest doubt in our own minds that we were not to be permitted to use the subsidy for wages, and the Gold Warden upheld our opinion, from the tenor of your letter to him.

"Trusting that our explanation may be in your opinion, satisfactory, and awaiting your reply, which we hope may be favourable."

Now, I happened to be in Bowen three or four days after that letter was written, and I was spoken to by members of the association, who told me the state of affairs. I advised them to wire to the Ministers. I may say, sir, that I have no interest in the association. I offered to subscribe when they were getting up the party, but it was not accepted, and I have no interest in the association whatever. It is not a railway line on which I have got land. I told them then for the first time the conversation I had with the Under Secretary about wages in the previous March. I never communicated it to them before, because the question had never arisen. Then they sent this telegram to the Minister for Mines on the 16th June:—

"Have seen Mr. Chubb re vouchers Bowen Prospecting Association. He says he specially mentioned to Under Secretary the question of wages and was informed that they would be allowed on vouchers. Have incurred further liability for wages over vouchers of about ninety (90) pounds for which directors personally liable. Must disband party forthwith if payment further delayed."

Then Mr. Smith wired to the Under Secretary on the 20th June, asking for an answer to that telegram, and Mr. Deighton on the same day sent this telegram to Mr. Smith:—

"Mr. Chubb must be labouring under mistake as after seeing him on subject I wired warden twelfth March, specially mentioning equipment and rations and my letters thirtieth January and thirty-first March stated supply of actual necessities for trip. It has not been the practice to pay wages or salaries to prospecting parties neither has it been asked for and the Secretary for Mines declines to pay them."

I ask this House, Mr. Speaker, to judge between me and the Under Secretary whether I am labouring under a mistake. If I am, why is it necessary for the Under Secretary, in his telegram to the warden on the 12th March, to use these words:—

"This department contributes at rate two for one in equipment and rations that is two-thirds of expenditure and any further outlay that may be necessary will be assisted at same rate."

What does that mean if it does not mean any reasonable outlay in connection with the prospecting? I maintain that I did distinctly bring it specially under the notice of the Under Secretary, and got his answer, which proves that it is so, because he said so to the association. The Minister remained obdurate; he declined to pay the subsidy; and in course of time some further reports were sent down by Mr. Masterton. The party was not disbanded; the association kept it on for a time, and then disbanded the party after discovering some very good reasons for doing so. But they made no claim on the department any further than for the £400, which the Minister promised, and against which they had spent more than £500, not £200 only as they were bound to do. After that, Mr. Masterton came to Brisbane at his own expense to see the Minister, and I went to the Minister with him. The Minister then refused to admit the claim. He used language which characterised the demand as a fraud, a swindle, an imposition. He used very strong language—certainly not polite language—at any rate, he refused to pay the subsidy. At that interview we brought under the notice of the Minister—Mr. Masterton did—the fact that he had given Maryborough a subsidy on no conditions. He denied it, and said it was only paid on voucher, and that the money was expended on rations and equipment. When I pressed him, he said it was only a small amount, only £100; but it does not matter whether it was £100 or £1,000; it is a question of principle, not of amount. And to show that the Minister was wrong I have a letter from the gentleman in Maryborough who got the £100.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No proportion of that £100 was paid for wages.

Mr. CHUBB: You say so; but wait a moment. When the Minister brushed aside the case of Maryborough, Mr. Masterton had no proof with him, but he afterwards wrote to the secretary of the association at Maryborough, and received this letter in reply:—

"Maryborough, August 10, 1885.

"Mr. A. M. Masterton.

"DEAR SIR,

"Your favour of the 26th July to hand, and in order to be as brief as possible, I will reply to your questions as arranged in your letter.

"1. Amount subscribed by public, £50; Government subsidy, £100; or £2 for each £1 collected.

"2. The full amount was obtained from the Mines Department on application.

"3. No restrictions placed on the association whatever.

"4. We use the funds in paying wages of prospectors. The department do not define in any way how the money is to be expended.

"5. We send men out to likely-looking country—no matter whether abandoned gold workings or old gold-fields.

"6. We pay the men 15s. per week each.

"I enclose a copy of the agreement entered into between the prospectors and the association. It will convey some idea of how we manage matters.

"Yours faithfully,

"D. GARDNER,

"Secretary Gold Prospecting Association."

Now, Mr. Speaker, that gentleman explains the terms on which the Maryborough association got the £100 from the Minister for Mines for prospecting in the Maryborough district, and hon. members can see the difference between the treatment accorded to that association and that accorded to the association at Bowen, whose accounts are all in print.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The money given to the Maryborough association was expended in rations.

Mr. CHUBB: If the Minister says the letter is not true, he is welcome to do so. It is the statement made by the secretary of the association at Maryborough.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I say the money was paid for rations, not wages.

Mr. CHUBB: This gentleman says it was not. He contradicts the Minister. That is all I can say. I have no other information about the Maryborough association. He says they got £100 as soon as they had subscribed £50, without any restriction. But to the Bowen people the Minister said, "No! When you subscribe £150 you can have £100." That is the case, Mr. Speaker.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: You are certainly making the most of it.

Mr. CHUBB: The Bowen Prospecting Association have spent their money, and I have been waiting for a favourable opportunity of bringing the matter before the House. I got from Mr. Masterton a statement of the circumstances under which he interviewed the Minister, because we know that Ministers very often deny statements made by other people. I was not at the interview, but Mr. Masterton says:—

"You made inquiries from me of the circumstances that the amount of £400 promised by the Minister for Mines was granted to the Bowen Prospecting Association and subsequently repudiated by their only paying us the amount of £194 instead of the £400 as promised. Mr. Macdonald-Paterson, who introduced me to the Minister, you being absent in Victoria, was present when the interview took place, and I distinctly state that the Minister informed me that when the bank-slip for the deposit of £200 was placed in his hands he would forward the amount up to our credit. Why should an exception be taken with us in comparison

with Maryborough? The letter from the secretary, which I sent to you, asserts that the whole amount of the subsidy of £160 was sent to them in one sum. Then the Minister quibbles over the money being paid in wages. It is quite an impossibility to get miners in this district to undertake prospecting without paying them, and the statement made that they were receiving fancy wages is incorrect. The camp was divided in two, and the sub, in charge of the second camp, working as a miner, as such received only 45s. per week, and they ragged down from that to 25s. per week. Why was not objection raised to Maryborough paying the miners of their association? They were paid from the date the party started out. I may also inform you that there are no proclaimed goldfields in this district, and as the Maryborough people—as per their secretary's letter—had *carte blanche* to do what they liked, and go where they wished, I presumed that we were entitled to the same liberty. The Minister stated to the House last session that not one of the parties had made any discoveries, excepting a small discovery of tin at the head of the Taif. Your local knowledge can easily upset such a theory. One company have already expended ten times the amount of the Government subsidy received in tunnelling into a hill to develop one of the reefs discovered by the association, and a second company are pumping with a large capital to develop a second reef discovered by the Bowen party. That the Bowen Prospecting Association has been *bond fide* in their action and intentions may easily be exemplified by the fact that they have now locally subscribed £500 instead of the £400 that was originally intended to be the maximum amount to be subscribed. The Government on the other hand have only paid us £194 0s. 10d instead of the £400 promised."

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is the case. These gentlemen had subscribed the money in good faith on the promise of the Minister, as I read it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I made no promise.

Mr. CHUBB: The House can judge for itself. There is what he said in black and white, and yet he says there is no promise. Hon. members can draw their own conclusions. These miners were induced by the loose way of expression of the Minister—I admit it may be a loose way of expression—to embark their money to benefit the district, and when they sent in their vouchers the Minister for Mines said, "I will only pay for actual necessities. You have employed miners and paid them, and although I did not prohibit it you must pay for it out of your pocket." That is not reasonable, and if the Minister says that any of these people are loafers he is saying what is not correct. I know Mr. Masterton, and so does the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Brown; and he can say whether Mr. Masterton is a loafer or not. I say undoubtedly a promise was made, which was not kept; and it is not fair, in opposing the motion proposed by the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, to do so on the ground that a party of gentlemen attempted—I can use no milder term—to swindle the Government out of £400.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think you have sufficiently proved that this motion should not be carried.

Mr. NORTON: Mr. Speaker,—Before this question is put to the vote I would like to say a few words in connection with it. I cannot help feeling some surprise, after the long statement made by the hon. member for Bowen, at the action of the Minister for Mines. He says he has made no promise to those people connected with Bowen that they would get £2 for £1 on the conditions that seem to have been given to the association at Maryborough.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I never said anything of the kind.

Mr. NORTON: No doubt the hon. gentleman does not think he did. Judging from his argument he appears to be under the impression that he made a distinct arrangement that the money was not to be paid for wages. It seems

to have been paid in that way in Maryborough at any rate, and I do not see why he should make fish of one and flesh of another. I think that the hon. member for Bowen has proved by the documentary evidence brought forward that his view of the case is correct, and that the gentlemen in Bowen thought, and reasonably thought, that if they subscribed £200 the Government would give £400, and not ask whether it was to be paid for wages or not.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is not correct.

Mr. NORTON: I think it is correct, and I am sorry that the hon. gentleman should show his temper in that way. I am quite sure that the hon. gentleman's contradiction will not alter the opinion that has been formed by the reading of that documentary evidence. I do not accuse the hon. gentleman of making misstatements, or of desiring to make misstatements, or to induce anyone that what he believes to be the case is not the case. But I do think he is mistaken himself. I am sure, from the way the case has been put before the House, that the people of Bowen have just cause of complaint of being badly treated. I do not intend to refer to the subject any further. In regard to the motion before the House, I think there is no doubt there is some truth in what has been said that prospecting votes hitherto have not given that good result that might have been anticipated from them, and that a great deal of money has been spent in prospecting without yielding a satisfactory return. At the same time, it is rather unfortunate that men who went out in prospecting parties have not hit on the right places. Many have gone out, I am sure, with the intention of striking gold if they could, and that they have not done so is unfortunate. I do not think money spent in that way has been altogether wasted, and I think the House should go as far as they could in inducing miners and prospectors to go out and find new fields. I do not doubt that there must be many places where there are large deposits not yet discovered. It seems an extraordinary thing that during the first two or three years of the gold discoveries in all the colonies the miners should have hit on all the rich patches. But there is every reason to believe that in a large territory like this, only partially explored, there are many more places not discovered at the present time, and if inducements are held out to miners I believe there is some prospect of finding new goldfields, which will not only benefit them, but largely contribute to the prosperity of the colony. If, in future, miners are to be encouraged to go out prospecting, there is no time like the present, when there are a large number of men who would engage in prospecting if they had the means of doing so. I believe that in some of the Northern districts there are numbers of men who go and take a job at work—for instance, on the Cairns railway—and who after, when they have saved a few pounds, are always on the look-out for new mines. When they exhaust their stock of money in prospecting they take work again to keep things going until they are able to go out again. That has been pointed out to me by a gentleman connected with Herberton. I believe there is in those Northern districts a great deal of that kind of prospecting, and I feel sure there is room for it. In the Central district we know that finds have been made since the discovery of Mount Morgan in places where men would never have thought of looking before, and the stone that is now found to be gold-bearing would have been spurned a few years ago, and the very idea laughed at. Now, what I think in connection with this proposal is that the Government would do well to give some consideration as suggested by

the hon. member for Cook. I do not believe in giving grants of money to anybody who likes to say he wants to go and prospect, but I think regulations could be made of so stringent a character that it would be quite possible to regulate the expenditure sufficiently to prevent unnecessary waste of money by men fossicking about until the money is exhausted. In Victoria, as pointed out by the hon. member for Cook, very large sums of money are voted by the Government to encourage prospecting—not only deep prospecting, but prospecting of all kinds for gold. In some portions of Victoria—at Sandhurst, for instance—the Government have been in the habit for some years of giving large sums of money to the mining schools for prospecting purposes, the board of management having the disposal of the money in the way they think best. Well, I believe that there they have traced the course of the reefs twenty-eight miles, and the way they expend the money is this: they offer inducements to any persons who like to go and prospect, paying a low rate of wages, sufficient to keep them during the time they are at work on the reefs whose courses have been traced, and then if they find gold the men themselves get the benefit of it. But the money which is given by the Government for this purpose is devoted to the payment of wages while the men are out. I am not prepared to say that that system would be altogether successful here, because I believe that at the present time all the reefs that are known to exist have been thoroughly prospected within a reasonable distance. No surveys have been made which would lay down the course of the reefs at any great distance, such as those in Sandhurst. That information I derived from the President of the School of Mines at Sandhurst when he was here twelve months ago, and since then I have received from him other information in connection with the same subject. I do think it is somewhat of a pity that in a colony like Victoria, where the mining industry is waning, so large a sum should be expended for the purpose of further developing the mining industry, and that in this colony, with its almost inexhaustible golden treasures, comparatively speaking, no assistance is given to miners. The mere fact of a colony like Victoria, whose gold returns are falling off every year, offering such encouragement to prospecting should stimulate the Government of this colony to do what it can to encourage the gold-miners here. I believe the time will come in a very few years when it will be proved that the mineral deposits here will be the mainstay of the colony. There is no other industry which will compare with mining, and although both the pastoral and agricultural industries are no doubt of great benefit, yet I think it will be shown that the mining industry is to become the great mainstay and backbone of the colony. I shall be glad to give the motion my support.

Mr. KATES said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not agree with the latter part of the hon. gentleman's speech, that the mining industry is the leading industry. I maintain that there is nothing to compare to the agricultural industry not only in this colony, but in all parts of the world. After the answer that I received from the Premier last week, when I asked him whether it was the intention of the Government to give effect to a resolution passed last session in connection with agricultural education—after the answer of the Premier, that the finances of the colony would not permit of the establishment of an agricultural college, I cannot support this motion for £5,000 for prospecting purposes. In looking over the Estimates I find that £24,000 is spent annually for mining purposes, while for agricultural purposes not 24,000 pence is spent. I think

the Government are making a mistake. I do not wish to say anything against mining. It is a very valuable industry, no doubt, but I repeat that it is far inferior to the agricultural industry. It is certainly not as important either in this colony or in any other part of Australia. The hon. member for Port Curtis referred to Victoria, and said the Victorians were supporting the mining industry; but they are to a much greater degree supporting the agricultural industry. In face of the answer I received from the Premier, I cannot support this motion, nor do I think that any other hon. member of this House can support it. There are three things I wish the Government would bear in mind—three things which are necessary to the prosperity of this colony, and I shall, before the close of the session, point out to the Government the three things that are chiefly wanted. First of all, protection to native industries; secondly, agricultural education; and, thirdly, water conservation. I am sorry to say that the Government have not attended to these things as well as they should do, and it is to be hoped that next year, which is the last of the present Parliament, they will devote some of their energy to attending to the three questions I have mentioned.

Mr. SMYTH said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very sorry to hear that the mining industry is to play second fiddle to the agricultural industry. The agricultural industry! What is it doing for the colony? The hon. member for Darling Downs can see no further than Allora. I don't believe he has been to Charters Towers. He has not been at Gympie, and I doubt whether he has seen any mining town in the colony. The farmers of Queensland have done nothing for the colony, as a large quantity of produce has to be imported from Victoria. The farmers get their ground for 2s. 6d. per acre, and have five years to pay it in.

Mr. KATES: They pay £5 an acre.

Mr. SMYTH: It would be pretty good land for which they will pay £5 an acre; and they get their produce carried for next to nothing. The hon. member is always crying out for agriculture, and objecting to any vote which would enable the miners to develop the country. He sits down on his nice farm with his family, while the poor wandering miner has to go through sun, and rain, and fever and ague to do his work. I think that the Government will be doing quite right to assist the mining industry, and if we look at what the various Governments have done, we shall find that as we have progressed the Government have of late shown a tendency to spend more money for that purpose. I do not think the resolution is necessary, because I believe if the matter is fairly brought before the Government they will do it without any motion of this sort. Motions of this sort are very often brought forward by members to let their constituents know what they are doing, and make them believe they are doing more than anyone else. It is more like electioneering tactics than anything else. I feel quite satisfied that if the question is put fairly before the Government the money will be granted. The Bowen Prospecting Association was not an association, but a company—I can call it nothing else. I know they were actually trafficking in shares, as when I was in Bowen there were some shares for sale, although I do not know whether they were sold. Let anyone look at the figures in the report. Does a man, when he is prospecting for pastoral country or for gold or anything else, take with him as a month's supplies such luxuries as 20 lbs. of currants, hops, pickles, and English jams? Would any prospector burden himself with all these things? Then the man in charge received £13 a month,

Mr. HAMILTON : The man who discovered the Palmer got more than that, and he was worth it.

Mr. CHUBB : He could receive £500 for managing a sugar plantation.

Mr. SMYTH : We want miners—not sugar-planters. The other men got good wages in proportion, and they received those rations as well. There is something behind it. The usual custom with prospectors is to give the men £1 or 25s. a week, and the man in charge receives something more than the rest, as he has to report, and if they find gold they receive the benefit of it. Then there is some inducement to prospect, but when they are paid, as was the case with the Bowen party, they will stop out till all the money is done. They will not be so anxious to look for gold as the men who are to get all the gold they find, and who therefore look for it. There is something wrong from the beginning with this Bowen party, and it really was a joint-stock company and not a prospecting party at all. If the men had found gold the first to benefit would be the shareholders, and the first thing they would have to do would be to report to those gentlemen instead of to the warden.

Mr. CHUBB : The Minister knew all that. He approved in writing before he made the promise.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : I did not make the promise.

Mr. SMYTH : I do not know what the promise was, but the men seem to have got very good wages, and very good rations. I think prospectors are not so luxurious, and as they trafficked in shares it seems more like a company than a prospecting party.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said : Mr. Speaker,—I am very sorry the hon. member for Gympie, who knows something about mining and has the interest of the mining community at heart, should speak as he did. I do not think there is any necessity to go into the question of whether it is an electioneering motion or not. It is scarcely the right time for electioneering motions, as a general election is so far off; and I do not think the merits or demerits of the Bowen prospecting party have anything to do with the motion, which is a general one. What we have been discussing for the last hour and a-half has been about this Bowen party, and I do not wish to enter into any discussion on that at all.

Mr. CHUBB : The Minister for Mines started it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : I know the Minister started it for the purpose of balking this motion, which is a general one, and he characterised the prospecting parties as being composed of “loafers,” because, in his mind, this prospecting party from Bowen was a loafing one.

Mr. SMYTH : Who said that?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : It is very unfair that, because the Minister believes one party to have been a loafing party, sixteen should suffer. The hon. member holds this particular one up to the House as an evil example to prevent the motion passing. As I have said, I am not going into the merits or demerits of that prospecting party, but I must say that, so far as I have gathered from the letters and documents read, the Minister made a mistake, and having made that mistake, I think he is bound to abide by it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : I made no mistake.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : There can be no question about this—that previous to this party going out, wages such as these were not paid to the men. I know that as an undoubted fact, as I sent thirteen out of the sixteen parties. I am not surprised at what the Minister did, as neither he nor the Under Secretary know anything about mining. It seems to me they made a great blunder, and the mistake was made through the urgent requests of the hon. member for Bowen, who went to both the Minister and the Under Secretary, and got them to agree to what they never should have agreed to, and sent telegrams to the prospectors. The telegrams should not have been sent; but I think the Minister for Mines should fulfil the obligations he has incurred. There is no colony in Australia which has received so much advantage from gold-mines as Queensland, with the exception of Victoria; and there is no colony which has gold-mines that has done less for gold-mining than Queensland has. What is this paltry sum of £4,187 which has been expended compared with the results that would accrue to the colony from one goldfield alone? Are we not all acquainted with the fact that there was a time when Queensland was in the most depressed condition it ever was in—probably a worse condition than any Australian colony has ever been in—and that it was helped to recover from that state through the discovery of one goldfield—the goldfield of Gympie? Now, this of itself ought to be sufficient reason why the Minister and other hon. members should not object to a motion of this kind. The total amounts that have been expended for prospecting purposes and as rewards for the discovery of payable goldfields would not amount together to more than £10,000 or £12,000 at the outside. Now, what is that compared with what we have received from one goldfield? I have no doubt the Minister thinks he is doing right, but I believe he is making a mistake. He says that all these parties have been unsuccessful. Well, how many hundreds of parties have I known to go out and be unsuccessful, and yet another party has gone out on the very same track and found payable gold? The thing occurs almost every year in all the gold-producing colonies. It is not because we have sent out sixteen unsuccessful parties that therefore we should prospect no more.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : Reward them when they find gold.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : Look at the immense auriferous tract of country we have in Queensland. Our auriferous territory is, I believe, twice the extent of the whole colony of Victoria, and yet how much of that has been proved to be payable by actual mining? A very small percentage indeed. There is therefore room for finding more goldfields; and I ask the Minister for Mines, I ask the Colonial Treasurer, if there has been a time since the discovery of Gympie, when a payable goldfield was more required than at the present time? Why, some of these very parties prospected country in which payable gold has since been found. The Woolgar was gone over by some of these parties, and the goldfield which has been discovered within the last few weeks, between the Russell and the Johnstone, was actually prospected. The heads of the Johnstone, I find from this return, were prospected by Mulligan, a most experienced prospector, one who discovered the Palmer River, or rather was the means of opening it out; yet he was unable to discover that field which has since been found by Clarke, Palmerston, and others. It is no argument, therefore, to say that because one party has been unsuccessful in one part of the country, another party would be unsuccessful

there. The dividing line between success and non-success in prospecting is a very fine line indeed, frequently a line no broader than this Chamber. I think the Minister has done very wrong in trying to throw discredit on prospecting parties. Out of the men who are mentioned here as leaders of these parties, I know several intimately, and they are anything but loafers. The very first man upon this list, McElmeel, is a man I have known for years as a thoroughly practical miner, with not a lazy bone in his body, yet that man was out for months prospecting and was unsuccessful. That is no proof that he is a loafer. He was prospecting at the heads of the Flinders, Clarke, and Cape Rivers. The next man, Crosbie, whose party spent more money than any other party mentioned in this list—£811—is a thoroughly practical man, and prospected one of the most difficult parts of the country to be prospected, where he had to keep his eyes continually open for fear of being killed by the treacherous aborigines. He prospected the whole of the Cape York Peninsula, and did not find payable gold; but the Minister for Mines will find from his report that he found lots of payable tin. It was not payable then, and is not payable now, owing to the difficulty of transit; but it will be worked at some future time, so that that party can scarcely be called unsuccessful, although they did not find payable gold. Then there is Mulligan, and Palmerston who is well known as a prospector, and is the discoverer of this new field at the Russell. He was the leader of one party I sent out, and was unsuccessful; yet now he is successful. There was Lloyd, another man I sent out. I knew him for years as a thoroughly practical miner and a hard-working man. He lost his life as leader of a party. So far from being a loafer, he actually worked along with his own men, and unfortunately was killed at the bottom of a 65-foot shaft in the basin of the Cape River, where he was trying to find a lost lead. These were all practical men, and yet the Minister condemns the whole of the parties on account of this unfortunate Bowen party. I think that is extremely unfair. I will give my support to the motion of the hon. member for Cook. I would not care if it was an electioneering motion. I support it because I believe some practical good might accrue from it. The money will not be wasted, even if parties are unsuccessful, because the spots that have been prospected once would not need to be prospected again. The same country might be prospected, but the exact spots would be avoided. Just as mariners avoid the shallow part of the bay, so prospectors, when they see that others have preceded them unsuccessfully, take another track, perhaps half-a-mile or a quarter of a mile away, and so they may find gold which others were unsuccessful in finding. Now, out of the sixteen parties the most expensive cost £811, the least £40; the average of the sixteen was about £260. That includes the Bowen party. I may say that the rule established in the Mines Office by myself, who began these prospecting parties, was that there were to be no wages paid. As a rule the prospectors found tools and horses and so forth to a certain amount, and the Government subsidised them in the way of rations. All the men got was simply rations for the period they were out prospecting; they were entitled to retain all the gold they discovered, and if they found a payable field they were entitled to the prospecting claims and also to the reward provided by the Gold Fields Act of 1874. I always found capable men willing to go out on those conditions, and the Minister for Mines could find men willing to go out on the same conditions; in fact, he could probably find more men than I could then, because the times were more

prosperous then than now. I think the Minister might do far worse than agree to this resolution of the hon. member for Cook. I do not think we need discuss which industry is the most important—whether it is the agricultural, the pastoral, or the mining. We are all quite willing to advance every industry in the colony, and I think it is not a good thing to be putting one industry against another. It is not a right thing for the hon. member for Darling Downs to say that because Ministers will not give him an agricultural college therefore he will vote against a prospecting vote for miners. It is a most miserable system of legislation to adopt in this House.

Mr. KATES : There are no funds.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : I would vote to do anything I considered proper for agriculture, no matter whether Ministers refused anything I considered proper for mining or not. That is not the question. Will the country in any shape be likely to be benefited by a vote of this kind? The Minister himself can make the regulations under which the vote will be expended; he can be as strict as he pleases; he need not expend more than he thinks proper.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : You let them run up storekeepers' bills which the Government had to pay.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : I never did anything of the kind. I knew what I was doing, and I kept full control over the expenditure. When I thought that the men who were unsuccessful, as I did in the case of several of the parties, were deserving of something—men who were going almost without shoes to their feet, after spending months in the wild bush prospecting—I gave them a certain sum to fit them out to go and work on their own account on the goldfields. The Minister will find plenty of able men willing to go and do what was done then. I shall have great pleasure in supporting the motion, and I hope the Minister will withdraw his opposition.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : No, I will not.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : I am very sorry to hear it.

The PREMIER said : Mr. Speaker,—If there was any probability of any good being done to the country by carrying this motion, the Government would be very glad to support it. But there is really no probability of the kind. The object of the motion is perfectly transparent. These Government prospecting parties have been tried for a great number of years, and they have failed for various reasons. No permanent goldfield has ever been discovered by a Government prospecting party.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : Oh, yes; the Palmer was.

The PREMIER : That is the only one. But the whole of that country has now been thoroughly explored—every corner of it. For some years past all these prospecting parties which have started have been fiascos, to say the least of it.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : Don't say that, because you do not know it.

The PREMIER : I need only mention the recent one at Bowen. I believe the best way is the older way—namely, to reward the people who discover new goldfields. The Government are disposed to do that in a very liberal spirit indeed.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : You cannot go beyond the Act.

The PREMIER : Perhaps we may induce Parliament to be more liberal. We all know

that Government prospecting parties work too much on what is known as the "Government stroke." Take, for instance, the Bowen prospecting party.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : That is the only one.

The PREMIER : It is the last one, and it has certainly not been a very bright and shining example to be imitated. We know very well why the motion has been brought forward at this time—the Government are going to be held up to obloquy before the miners for not accepting the motion. But the miners are not all fools, Mr. Speaker.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : Hear, hear !

The PREMIER : They are not by any means fools, and they can understand exactly the meaning of this motion being brought on at this period of the session. The Government are not disposed to increase the expenditure by £5,000, on the motion of the hon. member for Cook or any other hon. member, at this period of the session. The Government will give every assistance they can in the discovery of goldfields, but at the present time we are certainly not disposed to place such a sum as this on the Estimates. If a reasonable amount had been proposed, there might have been some chance of its finding acceptance; but the sum asked for is preposterous, and no doubt it was made preposterous in order to compel the Government to vote against it, so that certain hon. members can say to their constituents, "Look at what the Government have done." But the Government are not afraid of threats of that kind—threats which will certainly not have the effect of inducing them to support the motion.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : I forgot to mention, Mr. Speaker, that I am quite willing that the motion should be altered so as to include prospecting for other minerals than gold.

Mr. FOXTON said : Mr. Speaker,—I do not intend to occupy the time of the House very long, but as I represent a mining constituency, I do not care to give a silent vote on the motion. I regret that the hon. member for Cook has not framed his motion in such a way as will enable me to give it my support. The sum is proposed to be expended on prospecting parties for the purpose of prospecting for gold. I am one of those who hold that the finding of minerals other than gold is just as valuable to the country as the discovery of gold itself. I know the hon. member for Townsville does not think so. He is an old gold-miner, and like a shoemaker, he sticks to his last. I need only point to coal, tin, and copper, of which we have every reason to believe that there are enormous quantities in the colony awaiting discovery. These minerals will, in time, give employment to just as many men as gold, and with perhaps more profit to those engaged in getting them, for it is said that every ounce of gold cost nearly its own value to get out of the mine. The district which I represent is one which has never had any assistance in the way of prospecting. Numerous parties have been from time to time sent out, but their expenses have been paid locally, without any assistance whatever from the Government. If assistance is to be given for prospecting of any sort, it should be given to those who prospect for minerals other than gold just as much as to those who prospect for gold. This is, I think, a favourable time to bring under the notice of the Minister the unsatisfactory way in which the Mineral Lands Act is working with reference to prospecting for lodes. I speak more especially with reference to tin lodes, as they are amongst those with which I am best acquainted. When a man goes out to prospect for a lode he takes up a 40-acre block,

for which he pays a year's rent in advance and a survey fee of £8, making in all £28, before he can with safety put his pick into the ground. The effect of this is simply that men frequently go out prospecting on their own account, being unable to take up the land owing to the regulation being prohibitive. If they find a lode they keep the information to themselves, hoping almost against hope that they will some day be able to take up the land and make a good thing out of it. Until they are in a position to do that the information remains locked up in them, and they are not prepared to make it public. That is the way in which the Mineral Lands Act is working at the present time in the Stanthorpe district. I know of two men who profess to have found rich lodes in that district, and for that very reason are not able to avail themselves of their discovery. That rich lodes exist there, there can be no doubt, for recently a very rich lode was discovered at a place called Lode Creek. That happens, however, to be on freehold property, and a very handsome royalty is being paid to the fortunate owners of the property. My remarks do not apply to that case, of course; the discoveries to which I allude are on Crown land, and it will be really very much to the benefit of the country at large, and to the district in particular, if some means can be devised by which these men could reap the fruits of their industry and perseverance. Unfortunately, the information which I have reached me so late in the session that I have been unable to bring the matter forward at an earlier period, when it was likely to be attended to; but I hope, during the next session, either to induce the Minister for Mines to take the matter in hand, or to do so myself. To return to the subject of this prospecting vote, I should be very happy to give it my support if it were also to be given for prospecting for minerals other than gold.

Mr. HAMILTON : It can be amended to that effect in committee.

Mr. FOXTON : I am not aware how far that may be practicable, but if the hon. member is willing to amend it in committee to that effect he shall have my support to-night.

Mr. LISSNER said : Mr. Speaker,—I am very sorry that the motion moved by the hon. member for Cook has met with so little sympathy from the members generally, and from the Government in particular. It ought not to be viewed from a political standpoint, or considered as an electioneering move. I do not look upon it in that light. For my part, when the time comes for me to offer myself for re-election, and I want to seek the suffrages of my constituency, I shall take my chance in the usual way, without a motion like this. I think that the mining industry deserves more consideration than I have seen indicated by hon. members of this House all round, with very few exceptions. It is all very well for the hon. member for Darling Downs to say there is nothing like farming. Farming is all very nice in its way, but I certainly say that the gold-mining industry in Queensland is only in its infancy, and that it would come with a good grace and good judgment from any Government in power to support and assist it as much as they possibly can. I hear a lot of members on the other side speaking about the support that miners get from the Government, but I ask where would that industry be except for the energy and enterprise of the miners themselves? They have opened the eyes of the people who are jealous of the amount of capital that is now being thrown into the mines, which those men discovered themselves. We have voted away, since I have been in

the House, £50,000 to keep out rabbits. That is in the interests of the pastoral tenants; we have voted another £50,000 to try and grow sugar in a certain way; we have voted any amount of money for other industries when they are all reckoned up, and very little in comparison has been spent in assisting the mining industry. The hon. member for Darling Downs does not care very much about mining. I believe he is frightened to speculate in gold-mines, although I believe he held some scrip once of a Charters Towers mine, and made a small profit out of it. If he likes to speculate in nothing but farmers' wheat, let him do so; but that is no reason why the mining industry should be neglected. He says the farming industry is the only important one in the colony. I think I can contradict that by a few small figures I have here. Our largest industry last year was wool, amounting in value to £1,779,000; next to that comes the output of gold, £1,139,000. That is no trifling thing, and shows that the industry deserves some consideration at the hands of the Government. The Government, I dare say, as far as they know, try in their own way to do what is best. They put down a sum of money as a subsidy for deep sinking some time ago. I did not believe in it myself, and do not think it has operated to any great extent yet. At the same time I may mention that the Minister for Mines made a mistake the other evening in accounting for the way in which that subsidy has been spent. I was told that there were two mines subsidised on Gympie; that is quite correct. I believe £2,000 has been spent on two very deep shafts, and a small item at another place. The Minister also said that two mines were subsidised at Charters Towers—the Dan O'Connell and the Papuan. I asked him distinctly if the Dan O'Connell was one and he said yes; and it is there in *Hansard*. But I have since received wires from those people, who say that the Dan O'Connell never required the subsidy, and never accepted it, and whether the Papuan required it or not, they never received one shilling of money out of the Treasury. So that all the support my constituents have got I hope will not create jealousy amongst other constituencies. What I want to state is that no extraordinary amount of liberality has been shown to the mining industry, but I am perfectly satisfied that the miners of Charters Towers and Ravenswood are a body of men who are quite able to look after themselves. They have to pay heavy taxes on all the articles they consume. They have had a tax put upon machinery since this Government came into power which they had not before; and I think that when a motion like this is brought forward asking for £5,000 for prospecting for the benefit of the whole colony, it is a reasonable demand that ought not to be sneered at. If the £5,000 is granted, it does not follow that it will all be spent at once or in a foolish manner. It will remain at the discretion of the Minister, to divide as he thinks proper, or he may leave it in the Treasury if he thinks fit. It is not going to be thrown away, and there is no cause for jealousy on the part of other constituencies. An output of a million and a-half of gold is an important matter for Queensland, and it affects farmers as well as anybody else. I know miners who have accumulated money out of gold mines who are now farmers—farmers for cash, not credit. I know some farmers at Warwick and on the Darling Downs who made their money on Charters Towers. I shall certainly support the motion, whether it is an electioneering trick or not. I think that neither this Government, nor any other Government that has been in Queensland, has done enough for the mining industry. No colony has better chances of developing into a great

mining colony than Queensland has. Victoria has not half the chance, and yet the Parliament have voted £80,000 to assist the industry there, and over £2,000,000 to take water to the mines, and for irrigation. And what has the Government of this colony done, even in the way of rewards for the discovery of gold? I believe £10,000 would cover the whole of the rewards for prospecting. The Minister harps upon what he calls a loafing party who tried some ground near Bowen, and were using tweed trousers, and jam and pickles. What has that to do with the country at large? I trust that hon. members will look at the matter as one of colonial interest, not a particular thing for any constituency, or as a political matter in any way, and give some support to the mining industry more than I see at present. If this motion is carried in any shape or form, it will be available for any purpose connected with the encouragement and development of mining, whether for gold, tin, or anything else. The Minister for Mines stated that £5,000 has been spent in subsidies for deep sinking, but nearly £3,000 of that has been expended in boring for coal.

Mr. HAMILTON: No; for purchase of tubes.

Mr. LISSNER: For diamond drills boring for coal. It was not spent in gold-mining at all. I want to show that the miners of the colony have not got all the benefits some hon. members want to make out. They got £2,000 on the Estimates for schools of mines; but that was considered not sufficient to establish decent schools of mines, and it was taken off, and instead of that we have got lecturers. I believe there has been a lecturer operating at Herberton, but I have not seen anyone going round enlightening the miners elsewhere. I do not know that the Government have done anything extraordinary to assist mining, and I think this £5,000 might very reasonably be voted. If the money is not spent for prospecting, the Minister may make use of it by giving assistance to miners in other ways, such as helping them in connection with machinery—say, offering a reward for the best and cheapest way of treating pyrites or ores or anything of that kind. The money can be very well spent in assisting mining in general, and I trust the motion will be carried.

Mr. HAMILTON, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—There is nothing more contemptible than for a Minister of the Crown to make imputations as to the object of a motion when a member brings one forward in the interests of his constituents. Even if the motive of the member in moving the motion were an unworthy one, that would not justify the Premier in opposing it if the motion in itself were good and for the benefit of the colony. The member for Carnarvon promises to support the motion if I consent to its alteration so as to include prospecting for other minerals. I have no objection to include silver, tin, and copper. I worded the motion in the way it now stands because I was afraid that if I included all minerals perhaps the whole amount might be appropriated to sinking one or two shafts for coal; and I know that when the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, was Minister for Works, although the sum then on the Estimates was only voted to prospect for gold, he shut his eyes if men who were subsidised by that vote prospected for silver or tin, provided they were *bona fide* prospecting, and I considered him quite right in so acting. The hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, is of an elastic turn of mind; he was able to swallow a vote for £1,000,000 for the construction of a railway to convey from his district to Brisbane fourteen cabbages—

Mr. KATES: No!

Mr. HAMILTON: Well, say fifteen. But now he refuses to vote £5,000 for the development of our mineral resources. The Minister for Works accuses me of having drawn largely upon my imagination. I shall quote his own words to show who has drawn on facts and who has drawn on his imagination. Last year the sum of £10,000 was placed on the Estimates to be lent to persons on established goldfields for the purpose of deep sinking. Last Tuesday the Minister for Works informed the House that the sum of £5,097 14s. 6d. had been expended in prospecting, leaving a balance of £4,900, which he has decided to carry forward to the present year in addition to the £5,000 voted this year, making a total of £9,902, which can be expended, if the Minister chooses, in assisting deep sinking during the present financial year. So that there shall be no mistake, I shall quote from *Hansard* what he said in explaining how this £5,097 was expended. He stated:—

"The gold mines to which loans had been granted were as follows:—Two at Charters Towers—the Dan O'Connell and the Papuan Block."

The SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. member that he is not in order in referring to a previous debate.

Mr. HAMILTON: I am referring to how the money was expended.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member can only do so in explanation and with the indulgence of the House. Does the House consent to the hon. member doing so?

Mr. McMASTER: We have heard it all before.

Mr. HAMILTON: You have not, because the Minister for Works on that occasion promised to give me some returns on the following day; and surely I can refer to those returns.

Mr. KATES: You will keep us all night.

Mr. HAMILTON: Not so long as we were kept over the *via recta*. This is what the Minister stated further:—

"According to the account certified by the mining surveyor and the Government Geologist, the cost had been 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."

Mr. Lissner on that occasion asked him:—

"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."

Mr. McMASTER: I rise to a point of order. It is only a few days—a week—ago that I made a reference to a previous debate, and I was stopped. The hon. member is alluding to a debate which took place last Tuesday.

The SPEAKER: I have already decided that the hon. member is not in order. He can only do so to make an explanation and with the indulgence of the House.

Mr. HAMILTON: I was charged on the last occasion when the Minister made these statements with having been in error when I contradicted him. I denied the truth of the Minister's statement that any of the vote money had been expended on the Towers—or even in the North.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. HAMILTON: I was giving the reason why.

Mr. BROOKES: I rise to a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I never saw anything like the audacity of the hon. member.

Mr. HAMILTON: You are afraid of my proving the truth and exposing your Minister.

Mr. BROOKES: The hon. member has been ruled out of order, and he has not the least indulgence of the House.

Mr. HAMILTON: I was explaining, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. BROOKES: No, you were not.

Mr. HAMILTON: I was referring to *Hansard*. I consider it a most unjustifiable thing if, on a simple technicality, I am not allowed to prove that I was perfectly correct in denying the truth of the information the Minister for Works supplied the House with a few nights since, regarding the way the prospecting vote was expended. It shows that he is afraid of my showing what the truth is. What I wish to explain—I will not read from *Hansard*, if I am not allowed; but I wished to read it in order to prove where the Minister for Works misled the House in stating that money had been expended—

The PREMIER: Order!

Mr. HAMILTON: On certain claims on the Towers. And when, in reply to the hon. member for Kennedy, Mr. Lissner, and the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, who questioned his statement, he reasserted it, I also asserted that his statement was incorrect, and that not one penny of money of the prospecting vote had been expended in the North. The Minister for Mines—

The PREMIER: I hope, Mr. Speaker, that you will maintain the authority of the Chair.

Mr. HAMILTON: I have finished what I was going to say, and now I propose to read the official list showing the money actually expended of the prospecting vote, which has since been given to me, and surely I can read that list. I know the Premier would like to prevent me, because he has such reverence for the truth that he is afraid to approach it.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order in saying that the Premier has no reverence for the truth.

Mr. HAMILTON: I said that it was on account of his great reverence for the truth that he was afraid to approach it.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must be careful not to make imputations of that kind. I scarcely think it is a proper expression to use towards the leader of the House.

The PREMIER: I have no objection to anything he says.

Mr. HAMILTON: The hon. member appears to have a very decided objection, judging from his continued *sotto voce* remarks. The memo. of expenditure from the vote of £10,000 in aid of deep sinking, which was supplied by the Minister for Works, and which I suppose I can read, is this:—

	£	s.	d.
Gympie—Aurelia G.M.C.	1,585	0	0
Gympie—London G.M.C.	524	0	0
Morinish—Welcome Shaft	231	0	0
Cawarral—Annie Reef.	122	0	0
Stanthorpe—Noble Tin Mining Co.	18	10	0
Stanthorpe—Wellesly Lode— ...	16	9	1
Diamond Drills—			
Diamonds, bits, etc.	1,268	6	7
Tubes	1,209	10	4
Freight, charges, etc.	122	9	6
	5,097	14	6

It, therefore, now transpires that my statement was correct that not one penny of the money voted for prospecting about eighteen months ago has been expended in the North. And this list also shows that, instead of £5,000 having been expended in prospecting on the terms on which the money

was voted, only £2,497 8s. 1d. was expended in prospecting, and £2,600 6s. 5d. in purchasing diamond drills to bore for coal. I think, therefore, that I have supplied the facts, and the Minister for Works the imagination. Another thing I would like to point out to the northern representatives of the mining districts of this colony is a warning with regard to this money already placed on the Estimates for deep sinking. We have been informed that the Minister has decided to act on the recommendations of the Government Geologist and the wardens in respect to the amounts they have stated should be expended on the various mines. According to these recommendations they have recommended that £3,517 of the present vote should be expended on one claim at Gympie and £1,376 on another claim at Gympie, making a total of £4,993, which it has been decided to expend on Gympie in addition to the £2,109 already expended there, and this was actually decided on several days before the money was voted. After that I can easily understand the objection of the hon. member for Gympie to my speech. Of the £9,902 5s. 6d. which the Government now have in hand to expend in deep sinking—namely, the £5,000 voted this year, and the unexpended balance of £4,902 of last year's vote—they have already recommended the expenditure of £5,357 11s. 11d., and in addition to that they have recommended that more money should be spent on the Welcome at Morinish, the Annie at Cawarral, and the Hit or Miss at the Crocodile. They have fixed no limit on the expenditure at these three places, but say that the amount will be £2,000—which is a low sum, considering what is expended at Gympie—it means that the Government have already decided to expend £7,400 out of the £9,902 voted, in the southern portion of the colony. Therefore there is reason to conclude that we shall be treated the same as last year, when we were told, as an excuse for not allowing us any share of the money for prospecting, that Mr. Jack, the Northern Geologist, and whose salary is charged to us, was out west searching for water and engaged in examining Southern fields, in order to recommend expenditure on those fields. I cannot expect this motion to receive the favour of the Government, for this Government have always been antagonistic to the mining industry. The Premier was one of those who voted against the remission of the 10 per cent. duty on machinery, which, however, was carried; and he was the first to reinforce the new tax on machinery. All his actions have been similar in regard to the mining industry. But I hoped that the Colonial Treasurer would have received this motion in a little more favourable spirit, for he certainly can see nothing for it but to come here with a depleted Treasury next year, and put it down to the drought. The drought is a god-send to them. Everything is put down to it, and it is as useful to them as the cat is to the careless servant-maid. If the expenditure of this paltry sum of money resulted in the discovery of a goldfield like Gympie or the Palmer, I should see the Treasurer coming down with a beaming face assured of another four or five years' tenure of office. Now, in regard to the money spent in prospecting, the McIlwraith Government voted £3,510 13s. 8d. and spent every penny of it. The present Government put down £2,000 on the Estimates one year and £5,000 another year. Out of that money they only spent £663 13s. and allowed the rest to lapse. It is like the money put on the Estimates for railways in the North: it appears on the Estimates, but stays there; it is not spent. It is said that no more money should be spent by the Government in searching for new goldfields, because the last sixteen prospect-

ing parties had been unsuccessful. Could any reason be more ridiculous? There is this fact that cannot be denied, that the Palmer was discovered by the expenditure of Government money—the richest goldfield in the colony. The Hodgkinson and Herberton were also discovered by the expenditure of Government money. The Minister for Mines also says it is perfectly absurd to appoint boards to expend this money, because one or two boards up north had appropriated money. That would be an argument for abolishing divisional boards and boards of all kinds. But if the statement is true that one or two boards have appropriated money, the Minister is very much to blame for not having brought them to justice. I recollect when one of these occurrences took place that a prominent man on one of the boards was a strong supporter of the Government, and knowing that, I bet a new hat that the board would not be prosecuted. I won the hat, but can't find the member of whom I won it. It is very unfair of the Minister to say that one cannot find honest parties of miners to go out prospecting. To prove this he carefully picked out two or three parties who it is alleged by him have not done their work faithfully. But I would suggest that these parties were appointed by his own Administration, whereas the parties who have all done good work according to the report of the department, although they have not succeeded in discovering gold, were appointed by the previous Administration. As to offering a reward for the discovery of a goldfield after it is found, of course that is very good, but that will not have the effect which my motion is intended to have. There are hundreds of miners who would only be too glad to go out prospecting, but have not the wherewithal to do so. If they discovered gold, they would be satisfied with the reward they got in the discovery of the field itself, and that is why I propose this motion. It appears to me that the Minister's logic is as incomprehensible as his facts, when he explains that one gentleman appointed by the present Ministry is a loafer because he received £13 a month when prospecting. If a man is a loafer because he receives £13 a month, what must a Minister be who receives £80 a month? It is absurd to suppose that any person would undergo the hardships of prospecting for bare rations, even if we threw in a few pots of marmalade. I hardly expected I should carry this vote, but I considered it my duty to bring it forward, and I have done my best.

Question put, and the House divided:—

AYES, 8.

MESSRS. Norton, Brown, Macrossan, Hamilton, Adams, Lissner, Jessop, and Foxton.

NOES, 19.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Dickson, Moreton, Dutton, Miles, Sheridan, Anner, W. Brookes, Buckland, Bulcock, Whitt, Wakefield, Kates, Horwitz, S. W. Brooks, Bailey, McMaster, Fraser, and Grimes.

Question resolved in the negative.

Pairs:—For the motion: Messrs. E. Palmer, J. Ferguson, W. Smyth, and C. E. Chubb. Against the motion: Messrs. J. Macfarlane, J. Foote, R. Aland, and W. Salkeld.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. On Tuesday we propose to deal first with the two smaller Orders of the Day—namely, the amendment of the Council in the Liquor Bill and the proposed new Standing Orders. We will then go on with Committee of Supply.

The House adjourned at a quarter past 9 o'clock.