

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 1886

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 24 November, 1886.

Question.—Petition.—Administration of British New Guinea.—Suspension of Standing Orders.—Supply—resumption of committee—Supplementary Estimates No. 2, 1885-6—Loan Estimates.—Messages from the Legislative Council—Liquor Bill—British Companies Bill No. 2—Gold Fields Homestead Leases Bill—Crown Lands Act of 1884 Amendment Bill.—Ways and Means—resumption of committee.—Treasury Bills Bill—first reading.—Appropriation Bill No. 2—first reading.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTION.

Mr. ADAMS asked the Chief Secretary—

If it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill next session to give to the electorate of Mulgrave more representation?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) replied—

I have already this session, in answer to a question put by the hon. member for Burke, stated that it is the intention of the Government to introduce next session a Bill to deal generally with the question of redistribution of the electoral representation of the colony, but I am not in possession of sufficient information to be able to say how the electorate of Mulgrave will be affected by the Bill.

PETITION.

Mr. HAMILTON presented a petition from Franklin Lawrence, praying that the House will consider the advisability of granting him some reward for having stimulated quartz-reefing in Queensland; and moved that it be read.

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

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

ADMINISTRATION OF BRITISH NEW GUINEA.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith), in moving—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the following resolutions:—

1. That this House, having had under consideration the draft proposals for the future administration of British New Guinea, agreed to by the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland, at Sydney, on the 28th of April, 1886, as set forth in a letter addressed by the Chief Secretary to His Excellency the Administrator of the Government on the 20th of May, 1886, laid upon the table of the House on the 14th of July, 1886, approves of the said proposals.

2. That an address be presented to His Excellency the Administrator of the Government, informing him of the foregoing resolution, and assuring him that this House will cheerfully make good such expenditure from the consolidated revenue as may be necessary to give effect to the said proposals, with such modifications of detail as may be mutually agreed upon between Her Majesty's Government and the Governments of the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland, but so that the total sum to be expended in any one year by the colony of Queensland shall not exceed £15,000.

—said: Mr. Speaker,—The Government had hoped that during the present session they would have been in a position to submit to the House a measure for guaranteeing to the Imperial Government the cost of the administration of the government of British New Guinea, to an extent to be agreed upon by Parliament, so that some definite form of settled government might be established there, over which the colonies would indirectly have a certain amount of control, or rather in which they would have, to a certain extent, a voice. Hon. members will find by the correspondence laid on the table of the House, on the 14th July last, sufficient information, I think, to show what the present position is, although hon. members are otherwise pretty well aware of it. I will refer briefly to a few facts and dates as they are set out in a memorandum which I wrote on the 30th March of this year, and sent to the other colonies. I pointed out that—this will be found on page 8 of the last New Guinea papers :—

“ Lord Derby’s despatch of the 9th of May, 1884, after referring to the resolutions adopted by the Sydney Convention of 1883, proceeded to state that Her Majesty’s Government were disposed to think that there should be a high commissioner or a deputy commissioner, with large powers of independent action, stationed in or near the eastern coasts of New Guinea, and that he should be furnished with a steamship and with a staff sufficient to enable him to exercise protection in the name of the Queen over those shores; that the cost of this arrangement could not be accurately estimated; but that if one or more colonies would secure to Her Majesty’s Government the payment of the sum of £15,000 during the year ending June, 1885, they would be prepared to take immediate steps for establishing the High Commissioner’s jurisdiction. Very shortly after the receipt of this despatch the required guarantee was given by all the colonies, and the Legislature of Queensland passed an Act making permanent appropriation of the proportion to be borne by that colony.”

Hon. members will not forget that in 1884 a Bill was introduced by the Government, giving a formal pledge by Act of Parliament to the Imperial Government that we would keep the promise we had made by resolution. That was carried without any objection whatever, and we had reason then to hope that some further steps would be taken. The next step was taken on the 15th of October, 1884 :—

“ On the 15th of October, 1884, Lord Augustus Loftus was informed by telegram that Her Majesty’s Government had decided to assume the protectorate over a portion of the southern shores of New Guinea and some of the adjacent islands, and shortly afterwards Commodore Erskine was instructed to take, and did take, the necessary steps to give effect to this decision.

“ In a circular despatch of the same date, Lord Derby stated that he hoped very shortly to address to the Governors of the colonies a further communication in regard to the measures which would have to be taken to render the protectorate effective.”

We have been waiting for that ever since.

“ On the 31st of October, a further telegram was despatched to Lord Augustus Loftus stating that Her Majesty had approved of the appointment of the late General Sir Peter Scratchley as special commissioner for the protectorate; that Her Majesty’s Government thought it desirable that the contributing colonies should appoint members of a council of advice in Australia to assist him; that the Admiralty recommended the purchase of a steamer in England for the Commissioner, at an estimated cost of £16,000 or £18,000; and that the £15,000 guarantee would apparently have to be considerably increased; and the colonies were asked to say whether they would agree to be represented in the proposed council, and whether they would double their contribution for the purposes indicated.”

Well, the colonies naturally waited for further information before they gave any definite answer to those questions. Then the next step was the circular despatch of the 19th November, 1884, announcing General Scratchley’s appointment, from which it was discovered incidentally that the colonies were expected to defray the whole

cost of the protectorate. That certainly was not understood before, because the undertaking given by the colonies was—

“ To defray in proportion to population such share of the cost of giving effect to the resolutions of the convention as Her Majesty’s Government, having regard to the relative importance of Imperial and colonial interests, might deem fair and reasonable.”

That was the undertaking that was given. It was certainly not understood that the colonies were to bear the whole cost, though I do not think we should have haggled about that; but we were only told of it in this incidental way. Subsequently we were told of an extension of the boundaries of the protectorate to include some adjacent islands, and we were also informed of Her Majesty’s intention to annex the territory to the British Empire. Then nothing was done till the 14th of August last year, when Colonel Stanley telegraphed :—

“ Her Majesty’s Government willing to proclaim Queen’s sovereignty and to contribute to cost of New Guinea if colonies agree to following arrangement Colonies to contribute £15,000 per annum and provide any further expenditure they may approve Imperial contribution will be the gift of suitable ship costing delivered at New Guinea not less than £18,000. This offer made in full confidence that your Government will as soon as possible obtain from Legislature Act to secure permanently annual proportion. On proclamation of sovereignty Scratchley would have full legislative powers and control over all nationalities.”

No information was given as to the way in which it was proposed that the Government should be administered. Then I pointed out in the same memorandum that with the exception of this colony, which had already passed an Act of appropriation, none of the other colonies had taken any action. The colony of South Australia formally withdrew from their promise, and there was nothing to indicate that the other colonies were likely to take any action before a satisfactory statement was made of what was intended to be done. Nothing has been done since then; that telegram of the 14th August, 1885, was the last formal communication on the subject—asking the Government to guarantee £15,000, not saying what for, or indicating in the slightest degree what they were to get for their money—not indicating that we were to have any voice in the management of New Guinea, or to be consulted in any way. We have asked for information, and no information has been given. I then pointed out in the 11th paragraph of the memorandum—

“ The essential elements of the position appear then to be these: It is necessary that the territory should be annexed to the British Empire, but Her Majesty will not be advised to assume sovereignty until the colonies, or some of them, undertake to bear the whole cost of administration, except perhaps some small initial contribution. On the other hand, the colonies are unwilling to give such an undertaking without a clear understanding as to the future government of the territory, or unless they have a substantial control over the expenditure of the money contributed by them. And such control cannot at present be exercised by them collectively.”

That is how I summed it up; and I do not think the case can now be stated more concisely or more clearly. The colonies are not willing to guarantee £15,000 without knowing what it is for; until the money is guaranteed Her Majesty will not assume sovereignty, and until the Queen assumes sovereignty there will be no government. That is the position now, and that was the position when I wrote in March. Then I made certain propositions as a basis for the administration of New Guinea in the immediate future. I need not refer to those particularly now; they were substantially the same as those afterwards agreed to by New South Wales and Victoria,

of which I propose to ask the House to express approval. They were submitted in March to the Governments of the other colonies. The first condition was—

"That the colony of Queensland should undertake by a permanent Appropriation Act to defray the cost of the administration of the Government to an extent not exceeding £15,000 per annum for a term of, say, ten years, subject to the following conditions:—"

The only other one I shall now mention is the second—

"That the other colonies should undertake (by similar permanent Appropriation Acts, if practicable, or by resolutions of their respective Parliaments) to repay to Queensland, for the same time or such shorter period as may be agreed upon, a proportionate part of the amount which Queensland is called upon to pay under her undertaking; each colony contributing either a fixed proportion of the total of £15,000 or an amount proportionate to its population as estimated on the 31st of December preceding the year of contribution."

And I added that, if desired, I thought Queensland would not object to bear a somewhat larger share of the cost than would be payable on the basis of her population. That memorandum was sent to the other colonies, and the next practical step which was taken was when I was in Sydney in the end of April last for the purpose of conferring with the Admiral and with Sir Patrick Jennings and Mr. Gillies, on the question of the naval defence of Australian waters. We then took the opportunity of discussing this memorandum; and after discussing it fully, and after some further correspondence, we agreed upon certain draft proposals, which are embodied in a letter addressed by me to the Administrator of the Government on the 20th May. I think I had better read the draft proposals, in order that the record of the debate may be complete in itself. They are not very long. These are the proposals which we made:—

"Draft Proposals for the future Administration of British New Guinea agreed to by the Governments of the Colonies of New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria, at Sydney, on the 28th of April, 1886.

"I. The Colony of Queensland to undertake by a permanent Appropriation Act to defray the cost of the administration of the Government of British New Guinea to an extent not exceeding £15,000 per annum for the term of five years, subject to the following conditions."

The term of five years is mentioned because the other colonies were not willing to give the promise for a longer period—I refer to New South Wales and Victoria—and they did not wish Queensland to make a promise to undertake the burden for any longer time than they were willing to agree to, as they held that in that case there might be an implied obligation of honour on their part to continue to contribute for that longer period, although they did not think it justifiable to make the promise for so long a time.

"II. The colonies of New South Wales and Victoria to undertake by similar permanent Appropriation Acts to bear equally with Queensland any amount which the latter colony may be called upon to pay under Article I., so that each colony shall be liable for one-third of the whole expenditure to an extent not exceeding £5,000.

"III. Any contribution made by the Governments of any of the other Australasian colonies to be applied in reduction of the amount which the colonies may be called upon to pay under Articles I. and II.

"IV. Any revenue raised by the Government of New Guinea to be similarly applied in reduction of the amount which the colonies may be called upon to pay under Articles I. and II., unless in the event of a larger annual expenditure than £15,000 being agreed to, as provided in Article XVI., in which case the excess is to be provided from the revenue.

"V. The Imperial Government to make a reasonable contribution (by way of loan or otherwise) towards the cost of efficiently starting the Government, and the necessary Government buildings, etc."

It will be observed that the amount of the contribution is not mentioned.

"VI. Upon the proposed guarantee being given by Queensland, Her Majesty to assume sovereignty over the protectorate.

"VII. An administrator of the Government to be appointed with that title, to whom, with two or more other persons, legislative powers are to be delegated under the Imperial Acts 6 and 7 Victoria, c. 13 and 23, and 24 Victoria, c. 121.

"VIII. The colonies, recognising the necessity for a small Civil list, propose the following as probably sufficient for the first initiation of the Government:—

Administrator	...	...	£1,500
Private Secretary	...	...	300
Judicial Officer	...	...	1,000
Secretary to Government	...	...	500

"IX. No purchase of land to be allowed to be made by private persons, except from the Government or purchasers from it.

"X. No deportation of natives to be allowed either from one part of the colony to another, or to places beyond the colony, except under ordinances reserved for Her Majesty's assent and assented to by Her Majesty.

"XI. Trading with the natives in arms, ammunition, explosives, and intoxicants to be prohibited, except under ordinances reserved and assented to in like manner.

"XII. No differential duties to be imposed in favour of any of the guaranteeing colonies, or any other colony or country.

"XIII. The foregoing four Articles to be made part of the constitution of the colony; preferably by Orders in Council made contemporaneously with the assumption of sovereignty, or else by ordinances to be passed immediately afterwards under instructions to the Administrator from Her Majesty's Imperial Government. Standing instructions to be given to the Governor of Queensland and to the Administrator of British New Guinea to observe the conditions of these Articles.

"XIV. An appeal to lie to the Supreme Court of Queensland, at Brisbane, in all civil cases involving an amount of over £100, and in all criminal cases involving a punishment greater than three months' imprisonment.

"XV. An estimate of revenue and expenditure to be submitted by the Administrator to the Governor of Queensland, and approved by him before the passing of any appropriation ordinance. The Governor of Queensland to have power to disallow any item of proposed expenditure.

"XVI. Any appropriation beyond the amount of £15,000 for any one year to be agreed to by each of the three guaranteeing colonies.

"XVII. All accounts of receipts and expenditure to be audited by officers of the Queensland Government.

"XVIII. The Administrator, in the exercise of his legislative and administrative functions, to be subject to the instructions of the Governor of Queensland (subject of course to Her Majesty's power of disallowance of proposed laws).

"XIX. The Governor of Queensland to be directed to consult his Executive Council upon all matters relating to British New Guinea.

"XX. The Government of Queensland to consult the Governments of the other contributing colonies in all matters other than those of ordinary administration, and to report to them all action taken.

"XXI. An annual report to be furnished by the Administrator to the Governor of Queensland of the proceedings of the Government (legislative and administrative), and copies of such report, together with any observations which the Governor of Queensland may think fit to make thereon, to be forwarded to the Secretary of State, and to each of the contributing colonies."

Those are the proposals, Mr. Speaker. In substance they amount to this: that the Administrator of British New Guinea would have full legislative and other authority, and, although an Imperial officer, on all matters appertaining to the government of New Guinea he would be under the direction of—or rather would act in consultation with—the Governor of Queensland. The other colonies

undertake to contribute to the expenditure to the extent I have mentioned, and in return they would have the control which is pointed out in these proposals. As far as I know, these proposals have met with general approval in the Australasian colonies. Certain matters relating to the natives are reserved for the Imperial Government, as it was considered that the Imperial Government would not be willing to entrust that power to any colony. It is, I think, as practicable a scheme as can be devised, and I am sure it will commend itself to the Parliament not only of this colony, but also of the other colonies. It reached the Imperial Government in July, although they had heard of it some months before, and during the interval there had been two changes of Government. The general outlines of a scheme on this basis were discussed between Sir Frederick Stanley and Sir James Garrick during the time of the last Conservative Government, and a confidential report sent to me led me to think that it would be worth while to develop the idea. That was done in the memorandum and the proposals I have just read. The question was under the notice of the succeeding Government, because, as I said the other day, Lord Granville telegraphed in April or May to know when he might expect these proposals which he understood were coming. However, up to the present time nothing has been done. Since I read the correspondence last week, I telegraphed again to the Agent-General, pointing out that we were not haggling about £100,000 as the amount of the Imperial contribution; but that what we wanted was to form some sort of settled government in British New Guinea, adding that the session would probably close this week. I received a reply this morning from the Agent-General to the effect that he had seen the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who informed him that the matter was still under the consideration of the Government. Of course, sir, we cannot give an effective guarantee except by a permanent Appropriation Act, and that was asked for—a very reasonable request—by the telegram of the 14th August, 1885. But it is impossible to pass an Act of that kind during the present session, unless we get a telegram this afternoon saying that the Imperial Government have made up their minds—which is very unlikely, seeing that no later than Monday the question was still under consideration. The only way to prevent a delay of quite a year is to adopt the course which I now ask the House to adopt. Supposing nothing is done this session, a permanent Appropriation Bill cannot be introduced until next session. It would not be passed earlier than the end of June under the most favourable circumstances. Then the necessary steps would have to be taken to proclaim the sovereignty, to appoint the officers, and to frame the Orders in Council; and it would be very nearly the end of next year before the present state of things in New Guinea could be materially altered. I think the position is becoming really a scandal—I think that is the proper word to apply to it. The colonies are willing to do anything that can be reasonably asked of them, and the Imperial Government will not stir a hand. I propose that we take away the last excuse from them by assuring them that this House is willing to give a guarantee upon this basis. As to the form of these resolutions, it is one not previously adopted here, but it is warranted by the practice of the Imperial Parliament, and also by that of the Dominion Parliament of Canada. I trust it will be adopted. Hon. members will see that I ask the House to express a general approval of the proposals, and to address the Administrator, and assure him that the House will make good all necessary expenditure to give effect to the

proposals, with such modification in detail as may be mutually agreed upon by the Imperial and Colonial Governments. Of course, it is impossible to say that these proposals will be agreed to exactly in their present form, and unless some modification is authorised any small variation in detail would render the authority of no use. But so long as the principle laid down is adhered to, I am sure that the House will not disagree to any small modification of details. Supposing, for instance, it was provided that the salary of the Administrator should be £2,000 instead of the amount stated, or that the salary of the secretary was made £700 instead of £500, small modifications in details of that kind would not affect the principle. The main principle is that New Guinea—shall be placed under an administrator, who is to be subject to the authority of the Governor of Queensland; that he is to consult his Ministers on all matters relating to New Guinea—that is, that the Ministers of Queensland advising the Governor shall have a voice in the administration of the affairs of British New Guinea, acting on behalf of the Australian colonies generally. The other colonies are willing to accept that position, two agreeing to contribute equally with Queensland and three others in proportion to population. As to Queensland contributing a full share, I think, considering that we are nearer to New Guinea than the other colonies, and are likely to get considerably more benefit from the trade of that country, it is not unreasonable that we should agree to do so. In fact, I do not suppose that Parliament would be very angry if we proposed to undertake even a larger share of responsibility. I propose now briefly to refer to the authorities for this form of procedure. In "Todd's Parliamentary Government in England," page 435, I find this passage:—

"Addresses from the House of Commons to the Crown, requesting an issue of public money for some particular purpose, with the assurance that this House will make good the same, are perfectly regular and agreeable to precedent. But such addresses are only justifiable when there is no reason to apprehend that the proposed advance would be disapproved of by the other House of Parliament, whose concurrence is necessary to give legal effect to any measure of supply or appropriation. Such addresses have generally been adopted upon occasions of urgency which have arisen after the Committee of Supply has closed its sittings—as, in order to submit to the Crown a proposal to confer a pecuniary benefit on a particular person; or to show respect to the memory of some illustrious person lately deceased, by the erection of a monument to his honour; or for the purpose of obtaining the co-operation of the Crown in a matter affecting the privileges of the House. But it is always presumed that the proposed advance would meet the approval of the Lords, when afterwards included in the Bill of Supply."

Of course, the circumstances here are not exactly the same as those mentioned, because this is not a question of ordinary annual supply, but of permanent supply; but the principle undoubtedly is just the same, and this is certainly an occasion of urgency. It is necessary that this House should do something before the close of the session, and it is impossible to pass a Bill before it closes. The same practice has been adopted in Canada, though only once in the Canadian Parliament since 1867, and it was that that reminded me of this way of, to some extent, getting over the difficulty. I thought it convenient to make this speech before the House goes into committee to consider the resolutions, because it may assist hon. members in dealing with the matter. I think it will be convenient, considering the nature of the motion and its unusual character, to ask the Legislative Council to concur in the first of these resolutions, that is, expressing general approval of the proposals, and that can be added in committee. I beg, sir, to move the resolutions.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not intend to refer to the general question of the government of New Guinea on this occasion, because I believe it will be equally convenient, or perhaps more so, to take any discussion of that kind when the matter is under consideration in committee. It appears to me that on an occasion like this whatever is said in connection with the proposals of the Government should be confined to the resolutions themselves. I think I express the general feeling throughout the colony when I say that the people are tired of waiting for the Imperial Government to take some action in this matter. We have been told repeatedly that the subject is "still under the consideration" of the Imperial Government. Well, sir, they take a great deal of time to consider. I do not think we need mince matters at all in speaking on this subject, because I am quite sure that there is a strong feeling of dissatisfaction throughout not only this but the other colonies, that the manner in which the government of New Guinea shall be administered has not yet been settled. I believe the people generally are quite prepared to make every allowance for any necessary postponement of the settlement of the question which may have taken place through recent political troubles in Great Britain; but notwithstanding that, I am convinced that I express the feelings of the people in all the colonies which take an interest in the matter when I say that we are all tired of waiting for the Imperial Government to take the matter into their hands and settle it on some definite basis. I do not intend to offer any opposition whatever to the proposals of the Government. I think, sir, we should be prepared to show, so far as we can, that both sides of the House are willing to be united together in desiring to let the Imperial Government know that we, at any rate, are not prepared to draw back from the position we have taken up, but that, on the contrary, we are quite ready to carry it out as far as we possibly can. The resolution which has been proposed is a very unusual one, but I do not think we need look for any precedent for it in other places. The question we have to consider is, whether it is expedient for us to take this action, and, if necessary, make a precedent for ourselves. I think that under the circumstances we are quite justified in doing so; and, as far as I am concerned, I am quite prepared to assist the hon. gentleman as far as possible. No opposition, at any rate, will be offered to going into committee and discussing the question more fully in connection with the details of the general government of New Guinea as proposed. I do not think it necessary to enlarge on the subject, and having expressed that feeling, I shall allow the matter to rest until the opportunity arises for discussing it in committee.

Question put and passed.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), in moving—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will admit of the reporting of resolutions of the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means on the same day on which they shall have passed in such committees; also of the passing of Bills through all their stages in one day—

said: Mr. Speaker,—I made this motion not formal with the view of asking permission to slightly amend its form by the insertion after the word "that" of the words "during the remainder of the session." This motion is simply intended to apply to the Appropriation Bill and Treasury Bills.

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

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.—SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES No. 2, 1885-6.

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

EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted for the service of the year 1885-6 a further sum not exceeding £663 10s. 9d. towards defraying the expenses in connection with the Executive Council, the Legislative Council, and the Legislative Assembly. Additional provision had to be made for the steamer fares of members of the Legislative Assembly on their periodical trips along the Northern coast.

Mr. NORTON said the sum of £217 was required for steamer fares, and a further sum of £370 for Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly. Was the latter sum all required for the Refreshment Room? He supposed the money had been spent.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the money had been spent. Some of it was required for the Refreshment Rooms, and some for gas.

Mr. NORTON: In consequence of the failure of the electric light?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes.

Question put and passed.

COLONIAL SECRETARY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that a further sum, not exceeding £74,845 3s. 11d., be granted for the service of the year 1885-6 towards defraying the expenses connected with the Colonial Secretary's Department. The principal items consisted of "advertising," £1,052, which had been expended in excess of the appropriation on the Estimates-in-Chief, and "census," £4,907. The gross total expenses connected with the census amounted to £17,327. On the Estimates-in-Chief, 1885-6, an appropriation of £5,000 was made; on the Supplementary Estimates No. 2, 1885-6, the sum of £4,907 12s. was set down; and on the Estimates-in-Chief, 1886-7, the sum of £8,000 was voted. Then in the Police there were certain small additional expenses, amounting to £2,198. In the Government Printing Department there was a considerable sum for the electric light installation. The expenditure in connection with the electric light was as follows:—Original contract—Lighting Assembly Chambers, dynamos, etc., £2,485; engines, £2,746; extras, £358; total, £5,589. The second contract—Lighting Council Chambers, £400; street tubing, £513; extra lamps, £115; total, £1,028. The total amount of the two contracts was £6,617. The original vote was £5,500, and £1,117 was now asked for to complete the total sum. That finished it up to 30th June, 1886.

Mr. NORTON: Does that make the lighting perfect?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said they lived in hope. The next large item was the purchase of the steamer "Albatross." The purchase money was £2,810, and the cost of fitting £306 8s. 8d.—in all, £3,186 8s. 8d., the amount now asked for. The defences of the colony represented £7,219 additional. That had been largely caused by the provision required for the immediate defence of the colony during the time of the Russian war scare. Arrangements had to be hurriedly entered into to provide for the defence of the colony as far as practicable, and the expenditure incurred represented a total of £14,555, which included £486 7s. 2d. for horsing guns and contingencies,

and £250 for ammunition and stores. Of that sum £11,560 had been already voted in the Estimates of 1885, and £2,995 was now asked for to complete it. Under the head of "Charitable Allowances," Brisbane Hospital obtained £5,834 7s. of additional appropriation for the year, under the following circumstances: On account of 1884-5 there were 7,333 pauper patients, and 5,362 emergent patients; total, 12,695 patients, at 3s. per diem, £1,904 5s. On account of 1885-6, 19,534 patients at 3s. per diem, £2,930 2s.; total claims, £4,834 7s. Special grant for furnishing £1,000; amount now asked for, £5,834 7s. There was £671 13s. 1d. in aid of schools of arts; £660 14s. 4d. to agricultural and horticultural societies; and £9,401 1s. 4d. was asked for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition. The original vote was £3,000, which with the vote now asked for made a total expenditure for the Exhibition of £12,401 4s. 4d. The awards to Pacific Islanders' employers amounted to £20,755 7s. 9d. That item had already been explained to hon. members by returns laid on the table of the House, and also by the appendix to the Auditor-General's Report, in which would be found the particulars of the awards. The total awards represented £19,664 3s. 3d.; assessors' fees, £344 8s.; Crown expenses, £546 16s. 6d.; total expenditure, £20,755 7s. 9d. He had briefly alluded to the larger items, and he would be glad to supply any further information hon. gentlemen might desire.

Mr. NORTON said he noticed from the Estimates-in-Chief that the Colonial Secretary's Department showed a considerable reduction over last year. The amount voted last year was £456,818, and they were asked for more than £12,000 less for the present year, notwithstanding that increased vote on the Supplementary Estimates. The Government would have to keep their eyes open if they were going to do that. In regard to the Government Printing Office, every time he passed the new office he wondered how the expenditure there would be kept down to what it had been. He presumed the old office would be used for some purpose, and the new one also, and yet the amount asked last year was £31,495, and for the present year only £31,920. The expenditure last year, without including the cost of the electric lighting, was more than was being asked for the current year. He supposed there would be some additional expense connected with the occupation of the two buildings, and the mere matter of removal would probably cost a considerable sum of money. He did not know whether it would all come out of that vote, but he would like to ask the Colonial Treasurer whether he was quite satisfied that the vote asked for the Government Printing Office, under the circumstances he had referred to, would be sufficient for the year?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could assure the hon. gentleman that the Government had not cut down the estimate. The estimate framed by the Government for the service of the year had not been in any respect cut down. The Government Printer had a knowledge of his requirements for the year in connection with the occupation of the new buildings. The hon. gentleman seemed to apprehend that the extension of the premises would require an increased number of employes, but that was not so; and he would also point out that the Lithographic branch now occupied a part of the new premises, having been transferred from the building on the Treasury square. They had been inconveniently crowded previously, and had really not had sufficient room to carry on their work. The cost of removal would certainly be very slight, as the new premises were merely an extension of the old building.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he did not see that because the employes of the Government Printing Office were provided with more spacious premises there would have to be an increase in their number. He was inclined to think, on the contrary, that an opportunity would be afforded to reduce the number of employes there, as there were at present so many that they were likely to get in one another's road. He would like some explanation of the little bill for advertising. £1,052 seemed a pretty considerable item, and he believed there was a good deal of unnecessary advertising on the part of the departments. He would like to know if the advertisement of the railway time-tables appearing in the back pages of the *Courier* and *Observer* every day was paid for?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said it must then be "padding"—filling-up stuff. It was about the most useful part of the paper, and would be more useful if the tables were correct, but, as a matter of fact, he understood they were not actually correct. He would like to know what the additional amount asked for advertising was for. Had it anything to do with the electoral rolls?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the money, as hon. members were aware, had been expended, and he understood the department had kept the advertising within its legitimate limits.

Mr. NORTON: Oh, yes, the strictest economy!

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the expenditure was chiefly incurred by the advertising of the electoral rolls, police notices, and other departmental notifications.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Does it cover the advertising of the electoral rolls?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it did not cover the expenses in connection with the advertising of the electoral rolls previously referred to in the House.

Mr. BLACK said that was just what he would like to get some information about. It was now a considerable time since the discussion took place on the publication of the electoral rolls, and he would like to know if the hon. gentleman could give the Committee any idea of the amount of the vouchers sent in for their publication?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. B. Moreton) said the total amount of the vouchers was not known at present as they had not all been sent in. The amount he had some time ago stated to the House was the amount which it was supposed would cover the advertising of the electoral rolls. Since then some of the amounts sent in had been reduced.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: What is *The Planter and Farmer* bill now?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the claim sent in from *The Planter and Farmer* office amounted to £505 12s., but it was not yet paid.

Mr. NORTON: Is it going to be paid?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is a matter for consideration.

Mr. BLACK asked if the hon. gentleman could give the Committee a little more information with respect to the claims made by the other papers—the *Courier*, for instance?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the *Courier* claim was for £301 4s.; the *Observer* claim £297 16s.; *Telegraph*, £164 4s. 9d. The advertisements in those cases were all authorised by the clerk of petty sessions in Brisbane, according to the Act.

Mr. DONALDSON: Including *The Planter and Farmer*?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, that was outside. Some of the advertisements in *The Planter and Farmer* were authorised by the clerks of petty sessions of Beenleigh and Cleveland.

Mr. NORTON: For how much?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not know the amount, but they authorised the publication of the rolls they compiled—the Cleveland, Logan, Bulimba, and Fassifern rolls.

Mr. NORTON: Who authorised the publication of the Darling Downs rolls?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that had not come into the office yet; but he had given instructions to complete the list as soon as possible.

Mr. BLACK said he would like to know something about the other papers—the *Southern World*, *Sandgate Directory*, *Zeitung*, *Leader*, and one or two others? As the hon. gentleman had the information, he had much better make a clean breast of it, as it would save the trouble of moving for a return.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the *Leader* claim was £100, and the *Southern World* £324 4s. 2d. That was the claim sent in, and some of the advertisements were authorised by the clerks of petty sessions of Cleveland and Beenleigh.

Mr. BLACK: There are yet the *Sandgate Directory*, *Zeitung*, *Evangelical Standard*—

Mr. DONALDSON: And the *Valley Screamer*!

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the *Valley* list amounted to £45, and he had authorised that himself.

Mr. NORTON said it was a pity the hon. gentleman had not more information to give the Committee, as they were dying to hear it. They could not wait until next session for the information, and the hon. gentleman might take pity on them and get it for them by to-morrow. As to the *Evangelical Standard* claim, there should be no difficulty in getting that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the original claim sent in from the *Evangelical Standard* was for £217, but it was one of the claims sent back to see what reduction would be made.

Mr. BLACK said they had got together a nice little amount of £1,941 known, and besides that there were yet the two *Sandgate* papers, the *Zeitung*, and a few more; so that when he mentioned that he had heard the claims would amount to about £2,500, it was evident his information on the point was pretty reliable. All the accounts from the country papers had to come in yet. He knew the Townsville papers got about £40 apiece, and that was really very modest compared with the reckless extravagance down here. However, the whole business would be a warning to the hon. gentleman to keep his eyes open in future and not allow himself to be hoodwinked, as he was sorry to say he had been. Did the hon. member for Cook desire to refer to any of the advertising items?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said they saw in those items the admirable way in which the Government sacrificed their own interests and the interests of their friends to their enemies. He did not see why the Brisbane Newspaper Company, Limited, should have £300 for each barrel—the morning and evening edition—while the *Telegraph*, which enjoyed a much larger circulation, should only get £164. He could not understand that distribution of favours at all. He thought the *Telegraph* should have had £600 for the one lot of advertisements—that would have been the more fair and more usual way of doing

business according to the customs of the country. However, he was most certainly of opinion that the clerks of petty sessions who authorised such expenditure as that incurred by inserting all those advertisements in *The Planter and Farmer* and the *Southern World* should pay something out of their own pockets for so great a waste of public money. He could not understand how it was possible that such expenditure could be incurred.

Mr. McMASTER said he would like to know from the Premier what progress, if any, was being made in the removal of the rifle range from Victoria Park?

The PREMIER said he thought he had stated on a former occasion that a new rifle range would be formed on part of the cemetery reserve at Toowong. The land referred to was divided by a road from that part of the reserve now used for cemetery purposes, and was not likely to be used for a great number of years. He had visited the place with officers of the Defence Force, and found it very suitable for a rifle range. He gave instructions some time ago to clear it and erect butts, and supposed the work was in progress. However, it would not take long to do the work.

Mr. BLACK said he would ask the Colonial Treasurer what was the total expense of the New Guinea business up to date, including the expenses of the Royal Commission, the cost of returning the islanders to their homes, and the amount of compensation paid by the Government?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the total expenses of the commission in connection with the return of the New Guinea islanders to their homes, and the charter of the steamer for that purpose, etc., represented £6,489 16s. The awards paid to employers, including the assessor's fees, represented £20,755 7s. 9d. The total amount, therefore, was over £27,000.

Mr. BLACK: Does that include the sum of £537 11s. 11d. for Royal Commission on New Guinea?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes; that is included in the figures I gave.

Mr. NELSON said he would like to know what gain there was to the colony in under-estimating the amount that was really required by the various departments for the year? Last year they voted the sum of £175,000 for endowments to municipalities and divisional boards, and they were now asked to vote for the same purpose a further sum of £23,783. The Treasurer must have known perfectly well when he brought in his estimate last year that £175,000 was not enough, as he could tell the amount required for that purpose to a nicety. For the present year the sum of £195,000 was voted, which was less than was actually paid to local authorities last year. Surely that could not be right; surely they were not going to pay less during the present year than they did in 1885-6. Then, again, with regard to the amount for steamer fares for members of the Legislative Assembly, that was never provided for, but was always placed on the Supplementary Estimates. There was also the item of £1,052 5s. for advertising. And that kind of thing had been going on for years. In 1884 there was a sum of £800 for advertising, and there was a considerable discussion on the matter on that occasion. The consequence was that the following year there was no supplementary estimate. But the Colonial Secretary had had a sudden relapse, and now they had an amount of £1,052 on the Supplementary Estimates. Again they found that in 1884 a sum of £2,500 was asked for "incidental and miscellaneous expenses." Of course, all hon. members knew that the votes they were now dealing with had

been spent, and the Government were asking to be indemnified for what they had done. The Committee complained of the £2,500 asked for in 1884. The following year that item did not appear in the Supplementary Estimates; but the Colonial Secretary had had another sudden relapse, and the amount now reached £3,207. The Government had spent that money, and the Committee could not help themselves; they must vote it. But he did not think that was a proper way of carrying on responsible government. When they were asked to vote an additional sum of £74,000 for one department the matter certainly required looking into.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the endowments to municipalities and divisional boards were, of course, paid under Act of Parliament, and whatever dimensions they might assume according to the rates collected during the year, provision had to be made for them. The hon. member was well aware that whatever amount might be certified to by the local authorities as having been received during the preceding year the endowment on that must be paid by the Treasury. In the meantime it was a mere matter of conjecture whether the provision would be suitable or not. He could only add, in reply to the hon. gentleman, that at the time the Estimates for 1885-6 were made out it was anticipated that the amount set forth in the schedule would be sufficient. For the present year there would probably be a small decrease upon the claim for assessments in consequence of a certain proportion of the health rate having been withdrawn from the endowment. He could not yet say what saving would be effected; but that was the reason why a decrease was shown upon the Estimates at the time they were framed.

Mr. NELSON said the Treasury and other officers seemed to have got into a rut, and nothing would take them out of it. It had become customary to always under-estimate certain votes, and the consequence was that the Committee were very much deceived when the Estimates were going through, as he had shown in regard to Schedule D. However, as the Treasurer had very well observed, it was a matter beyond their control, and unless they had further legislation they must pay that amount. They must pay the endowment shilling for shilling, or whatever it might be, according to the rates that the local governments raised as their individual revenues. What reason could there be for putting down an amount less than the Colonial Treasurer knew would be required? Last year the vote amounted to £200,000, and for the present year they had only provided in the Estimates for £195,000; surely that could not be right, unless the local governments were going to the bad, and their rates for the year were less than last year. Besides, they had gone through nearly half of the current financial year, and the Treasurer ought to know by this time.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The claims do not come in until January.

Mr. NELSON said they could find out what would be required. It was a moral certainty that £195,000 would not be sufficient. How did it happen that the amount for advertising was suddenly dropped, and that then the Treasurer came in with a supplementary estimate for over £1,000? That had not been explained; neither had the vote for "European cablegrams." He supposed that was included in "Miscellaneous Expenses." In 1884 that vote amounted to £2,600, supplementary, and the following year, owing to the criticism from the opposite side, there was nothing shown at all; the vote was a blank. Now they suddenly relapsed into £3,207. Of course, they could not

help voting it; but still it was doing away with responsible government, if the Government spent money and said there was no help for it. There were other things as well that he might allude to. The Auditor-General drew attention to the matter years ago, and it seemed a perfect farce to give a man £1,000 a year for giving financial advice, and not take it. The Government seemed to scorn it. Every year there was an item on the Supplementary Estimates for "Allowances to witnesses attending Supreme and Circuit Courts," which for the past year amounted to £1,118. Certainly it was getting a little less. Then there was a large item of "tidewaiters" in the hon. gentleman's own department. Every year they had to supplement the provision for that service to the extent of £3,000 or £4,000. Surely hon. gentlemen, in making up their estimates, could tell what the requirements of their departments would be; but that was never done. In 1884 the supplementary vote for that service was £5,000, last year it was over £4,000, and now it was nearly £3,000. It was a matter that required a little explanation.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the Supplementary Estimates were always of the character the hon. gentleman referred to, and it did appear singular that the requirements of the public service could not be exactly gauged. But such was the case. Additional expenditure was necessary, which could not be foreseen or accurately provided for at the commencement of the year. With regard to the Custom-house contingencies, that had been occasioned by the very large amount of Customs business last year, and he should be very glad to see the Customs business of such a character this year as to necessitate an even enlarged appropriation, as that would be an indication of prosperity. A considerable number of the tidewaiters employed had been supernumeraries, and the men were only engaged as emergency servants of the department. With regard to the fees for witnesses at the courts, of course the Government could not gauge the amount of legal business that would be transacted—the number of criminal and civil cases that would come before the courts—and they could not say what number of witnesses would have to be summoned. All those things were entirely beyond their control. With regard to the Supplementary Estimates, had it not been for four causes, they would have presented a diminished appearance, and he was in hopes that that would have been the case. Those causes were the Pacific Islanders' expenses amounting to £30,000, the Indian and Colonial Exhibition, the war scare, and the census. Those four causes certainly swelled the Colonial Secretary's Department by one-half of its requirements.

Mr. NORTON: You ought to include the drought.

Mr. NELSON said he made every allowance for those matters; but the Colonial Treasurer had not answered the point he raised. The matter had become systematic with regard to certain votes. Ever since he had been a member of the House, certain votes had invariably been under-estimated, and what the reason was he did not know. Did the Treasury or the public benefit by it? That was what he wished to ascertain. He did not allude to the Pacific Islanders' compensation. That was caused by Act of Parliament, and the Colonial Secretary had no option in the matter. The votes he alluded to were those for advertising and for miscellaneous expenses. Then the allowances to witnesses had always to be increased. There were one or two items that did give promise of reduction at one time, but it seemed they had relapsed into a worse state than before.

Mr. ALAND said he saw that E. E. Smith, late landing-waiter, Customs, had retired from the Superannuation Fund, and had had refunded to him £132. He presumed that money had been paid from the Superannuation Fund under the Civil Service Act, and he supposed that the amount had been legally refunded, but it did not strike him as being a correct thing to do. There was something wrong in the Civil Service Act if a Civil servant when he retired could claim the amount he had paid into the Superannuation Fund. There were other institutions that had superannuation funds, but which gave no such privilege. Suppose Mr. Smith had retired from the Civil Service a year or two ago through ill-health, he would then have received his pension. But he did not do so; he continued on. There was also a further sum down for him as a gratuity, but he (Mr. Aland) thought that such payments made from the Superannuation Fund were made on a wrong principle. The next matter he wanted to refer to was the item of payment for Government patients in the Brisbane Hospital, and he would like to be informed on what principle those patients were paid for—what patients they really were. The reason he asked was that, in Toowoomba, they had patients sent in to the hospital on the order of the police or police magistrate, and the hospital funds paid for those patients. Once they made an application to the Government for some allowance, and were told that as the Government paid a subsidy the hospital had to pay for the patients. He had known patients brought to the hospital in a dying state. They had died almost immediately after entering, and the hospital had had to pay for their burial. What he wanted to know was, on what condition the Brisbane Hospital received those patients, and what were Government patients?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would answer the hon. gentleman's first question, and the Chief Secretary would answer the second. With regard to Mr. Smith having been refunded the amount paid into the Superannuation Fund, he considered that that was a very good bargain for the Government. Mr. Smith, who was a very valuable and competent officer, had been twenty-four years in the service, and the amount of £132 having been refunded he relinquished all further claim on the Civil Service Fund. Had he continued in the service for another ten or fifteen years, he would have been entitled to a permanent annual retiring allowance of something like £300 per annum, and he would have increased the number of annuitants who appeared continuously in Schedule B, and of which the hon. member had complained on previous occasions. The Civil Service Fund was not regarded by the Government in the light of an assurance fund. It was not self-supporting in any way; on the contrary, the annual contributions did not hold out any promise of its ever being a fund of such dimensions that it would provide an income sufficient to meet the claims of annuitants, and therefore it was a matter for congratulation when officers chose to retire from the fund and not become claimants eventually. Hon. members were aware that in life assurance offices the surrender of a policy was at times very gladly accepted, and he might say that he should be very glad to see many of the older officers retire from participation in the fund, so that they would not become claimants in the future. Of course hon. gentlemen were aware that the whole of the officers in the Civil Service did not contribute to the fund. Only a certain few contributed, and therefore the fund was not self-supporting. It was the custom that should an officer retire in disgrace from the service, his contributions were forfeited; but when a gentleman retired volun-

tarily, it was usual to allow him to withdraw his contributions, which were certified to by the Auditor-General.

The PREMIER said, with respect to the Brisbane hospital, Government patients were paid for under these circumstances. A good many years ago the hospital in Brisbane was accustomed to charge for Government patients, but in 1881 or 1882, when Sir Arthur Palmer was Colonial Secretary, and when it was found that the hospital was pretty well in funds, he suggested that they should only make a charge for Government patients when they wanted the money. That arrangement was agreed to and continued for some years—until last year they did not make any charge. Government patients were patients sent in by the police magistrates or other Government officers, and included kanakas, and they were, in fact, pauper patients. Sometimes the patients were very numerous. Well, he was very loath to make any payment at all under the circumstances; but when the list was made out, and it was shown what the cost was, he could no longer resist, especially as a promise had been made that if the money was wanted it would be paid. The Committee first proposed to charge at the rate of 4s. a day, which the Government refused, and finally it was agreed to pay 3s. a day. Payment had since been made, as from the first of January, 1885, but no back pay had been given for any period before that date. The accounts had been kept regularly, but payment had been withheld. Under the circumstances, he did not think the Government could do anything else.

Mr. ALAND said he would like to know if all the hospitals in the colony were to be placed on the same footing. The stoppage of endowment on paying patients had very seriously crippled some of the country institutions; and he would like to have an assurance that all the country hospitals would be paid at the same rate as the Brisbane Hospital for pauper patients sent in by the police magistrate or any Government officer.

The PREMIER said he could not give a general promise of that kind, because he was not aware of the circumstances of different places. It might be that the Government doctor in a town was also the hospital doctor. Hospitals were charitable institutions which were not intended to be supported entirely by the Government. If he were to say that all patients sent in by the police magistrate or anyone else acting for the Government should be paid for by the Government, the result might be that nobody else would give orders for admission; the Government officers would be compelled, out of sheer humanity, to give orders for admission to prevent people from dying in the streets; and the Government would have to provide the whole cost. He did not think that was the spirit in which hospitals should be carried on. He thought, without laying down any absolute rule, that he might say the same rule would be followed generally in country places as in Brisbane, provided it was not abused. If an attempt were made to get all persons admitted on Government orders, it would be impossible to do it. It must be borne in mind that the payment came out of the pockets of the people; the Government did not pay it out of their own pockets. It came out of the Public Treasury, and it had first to be put into the Treasury. He was sure the country hospitals would do in the future as they had done in the past in relieving the necessitous and distressed; and when they were called upon to support an unusually large number of patients sent in by the Government, they would get relief from the Government if they were in want of money. Some institutions

had considerable sums to their credit, and he did not suppose they would call on the Government for more than was necessary to carry on the work.

Mr. ADAMS said the Chief Secretary had told them the money had to come out of the Treasury. Well, if there was to be a general fleecing of the Treasury, the country hospitals had as good a right to fleece it as the Brisbane Hospital. If the pauper patients in Brisbane were paid for, the same should be done in the country. There was, no doubt, something in what the hon. gentleman said about all the patients being admitted on the police magistrate's order, if they were paid for by the Government; but it must be remembered that the subscribers to an institution had a certain amount of pride in being able to give a ticket now and again, and that pride would be sufficient to induce them to give a ticket to a suffering neighbour rather than allow him to go to the police magistrate for one. But he did think what was sauce for the goose should be sauce for the gander—what was given to the Brisbane institution should be given to the institutions generally.

Mr. SMYTH said he thought the Brisbane Hospital had special claims over other hospitals; it was a general hospital rather than a local one. He knew in his own district that people came to the hospital sometimes, and, after staying there for a while without getting any better, they were recommended to come to the Brisbane Hospital, because, as there were so many medical men in Brisbane, and such a good staff of surgeons, they would have a better chance of recovery. If there was going to be any of that general plunder of the Treasury spoken of by the hon. member for Mulgrave, there was another vote that wanted looking after—the benevolent vote. He hoped that next year that would be completely wiped out, and that instead of the money being distributed very unfairly as it now was, it would be given in the shape of subsidy.

Mr. McMASTER said he was very glad the hon. member for Gympie had given his view of the Brisbane Hospital—that it was more of a general hospital than a local one. Many of the persons who were sent in by the police magistrate came from the country, and had to apply to the police magistrate because they knew nobody who could give them a ticket. Cases came not only from Gympie, but from beyond Gympie. He could inform the hon. member for Mulgrave that they came even from Bundaberg, and beyond Bundaberg. He (Mr. McMaster) had had applications from Charters Towers to get persons into the Brisbane Hospital. He did not think country members would object to the Brisbane Hospital getting a few hundred pounds for Government patients. It was entitled to all it got; in fact, he thought it was kept on a very short allowance.

Mr. ADAMS said the hon. member was perfectly right in saying that people came all the way from Bundaberg to the Brisbane Hospital; but any person who came down from Bundaberg had to get a cheque for £3 to pay for admission, besides which the Bundaberg people paid the steamer fare. It was perfectly true that patients would come to Brisbane from Bundaberg, but the people there were generous enough to give each of them a cheque for £3 to ensure their admission into the hospital. Perhaps some hon. members might be surprised to hear that sick people from the North often went into the Bundaberg Hospital, and they were not admitted as paupers paid for by the Government, but by tickets from subscribers. The Brisbane Hospital received £1,000 where other similar institutions in the country received £50. He did not see why Brisbane should be so unduly favoured. Equal

justice should be done to all, or if any exception was made it should be made in favour of the seaport towns, where people were constantly coming by sea, and where they often fell ill and had to throw themselves upon the charity of the people. He was happy to say that the country people were charitable, subscribed liberally to their local institutions, and were able to give the poor patients a ticket of admission to the hospital without calling upon them to pay for it.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he had had a good deal to do with hospitals in his day, and knew very well how they were worked. The Maryborough Hospital, which he knew best, gave infinite satisfaction, and the committee were well pleased with the manner in which they were treated by the Government. He had known no single instance where, when Government aid was asked for, it had not been at once forthcoming. In all his experience he had always found the Government ready and willing, no matter what the circumstances of the colony might have been or which ever party was in power, to render assistance when it was required. He had not known of a single case where it had been absolutely refused. It had been very justly and properly stated that the Brisbane Hospital stood in an exceptional position owing to the large number of country patients who made use of it, and it was only right and fair and kind and benevolent on the part of the Government to do all they could for the benefit of the poor unfortunate patients.

Mr. MACFARLANE said it was only to be expected that the assertion of the hon. member for Gympie that the Brisbane Hospital should be an exception should find favour with the Brisbane members. It was a fact, however, that patients actually went from Brisbane to the Ipswich Hospital—they wanted change of air—and it was well known that that was a very well conducted institution. But it got no Government bonus; they got nothing from the Government; all the money was required for Brisbane. It was a shame that Brisbane, with a population of 60,000, should raise such a miserably small amount of money to support its hospital. They were doing a little better now—long might it continue!—but if the country people had supported their hospitals in the same way that the Brisbane people had done, they would have been in a very much worse position than that in which they now were. No doubt the Brisbane Hospital occupied an exceptional position, because people falling ill in the country districts would naturally prefer, for many reasons, to be removed to the metropolitan institution; but there were other large and well-conducted hospitals in the colony, which were quite as fully entitled to grants for Government patients as the Brisbane Hospital was. Last year a very large number of outsiders entered the Ipswich Hospital from Brisbane, and he hoped that when Ipswich required help of that kind, the Government would not be so stingy as it had been in the past; and that remark would apply, not to the Ipswich Hospital only, but to all similar institutions in the colony.

Mr. HAMILTON said that his experience as to the liberality of the Government to country hospitals was very different from that of the hon. member for Maryborough. He need only refer to the case of the Cairns Hospital. Under ordinary circumstances the money subscribed by the people of Cairns, supplemented by the Government subsidy, was quite sufficient to meet the wants of the people of that town; but at present, on account of the railway being made through some very scrubby country, there was a large amount of sickness among the navvies and others employed on the line, and the consequence was that the strain on the hospital was greater than

it could bear. He had on more than one occasion applied for an increase of the pauper allowance, and the reply he got was that there was no money available, and unfortunately the request could not be entertained.

Mr. ANNIEAR said he agreed with the hon. member for Gympie that the Brisbane Hospital occupied a very exceptional position. A great many people from the country entered it without having to pay the three guineas spoken of by the hon. member for Mulgrave. They were always able to obtain tickets of admission—he had seen it done scores of times—from the tradesmen of Brisbane. Only within the last few weeks he had seen men admitted from New South Wales, and several from the Logan railway works, and not one of them had to pay the three guineas, which seemed, according to the hon. member for Mulgrave, for some reason or other, to be demanded from patients coming from Bundaberg.

Mr. S. W. BROOKS said that, in spite of anything that might be said to the contrary, they must fall back upon the fact that the Brisbane Hospital occupied an exceptional position. As in other things, so in sickness, there was a tendency to gravitate towards the metropolis, and a very large number of outside sick people found their way into the Brisbane Hospital. As to the amount paid—3s. per day—he could say without the slightest hesitation that it did not cover the expenses of the patients. In the matter of the refund made to Mr. Smith, he might remind the hon. member, Mr. Aland, that there was a certain other fund on precisely the same footing; that was the worn-out ministers' fund in connection with the Wesleyan Church. A minister who resigned got a refund of the payments he had made to it.

Mr. STEVENSON said that he also was of opinion that the Brisbane Hospital occupied an exceptional position, but it was exceptional in this: that it required a far greater amount of the public money than any other hospital in the colony. It was quite true that it was the metropolitan hospital, and that it received a great many country patients, but the way in which it was supported by the people of Brisbane was, as the hon. member for Ipswich had said, a disgrace to the city. If it was supported in anything like the way in which the country hospitals were supported, according to their relative populations, it would be in such a position that it would not require so much Government support. But it had always been pampered by the Government so much that the people sat down quietly and said, "Oh, it's not necessary to subscribe to this hospital; the Government will find the money." That was just the position the Brisbane Hospital was in, and he was perfectly satisfied that if the people subscribed in anything like the proportion that country hospitals were supported, that hospital would not require so much spoon-feeding by the Government. It was just the same as everything else connected with Brisbane; they depended on the Government for support. He said it was disgraceful, considering the large population of Brisbane, that the Brisbane Hospital should require so much Government support. It ought to be better supported by the people who generally required to make use of hospitals. It was a matter of regret that not only in Brisbane, but in all parts of the colony, the people who most required hospitals were those who were most backward in subscribing to them. There were men all over the country who thought nothing of "knocking down" their cheque for £40, £50, or perhaps £100, and he had found it a hard job on stations to get 10s. or £1 out of them at shearing time for the hospital. If they were made to depend more on themselves, and there

was less doling out of money by the Government, it would be far better for the hospitals and far better for the men themselves.

Mr. GROOM said he understood the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, to state that men employed on the Logan railway had come in and applied to him for admission to the Brisbane Hospital.

Mr. ANNIEAR: From New South Wales, and from railways too.

Mr. GROOM said he did not think that was at all creditable to the contractor for the Logan railway, unless a different system prevailed down there to that which prevailed in connection with most of the railway contracts he was acquainted with, and which had been in existence ever since railway construction was first commenced in the colony. When Peto, Brassey, and Betts started the construction of the line from Ipswich to Toowoomba, they deducted from each man's wages 3d. per week; they had a very large number of men in their employ, and that amounted to a considerable sum in the course of the month or year. They had the privilege of sending patients to the Toowoomba Hospital; an order from them was quite sufficient to entitle the patient to admission: and from time to time the committee of the institution received from that firm sometimes £80, £90, and as much as £100. In fact, when balancing their accounts, in connection with railway works in this colony a year ago, they discovered that there was £140 due to the Toowoomba Hospital, and £140 due to the Ipswich Hospital, for patients sent to those institutions, and the committee of each of those hospitals received a cheque through Mr. R. Ballard for the amount. At the present time Mr. McBarry, who had the contract for the extension of the railway to Crow's Nest, adopted that principle; he deducted 3d. per week from his men, and the hospital committee had received two cheques of £20 each from him for patients admitted to the institution. An order from Mr. McBarry was quite sufficient to admit a patient. Mr. Garget, who had the contract for the Beauraba branch, followed the same practice, and the committee had also received a cheque from him. The men themselves did not offer the slightest objection to the deductions. They regarded it in the light of a donation. They did not like to be admitted into the hospital as paupers, and the sum they contributed out of their wages every week gave them the right to be admitted to the natural resort provided for cases of that kind. They paid the contribution cheerfully for that purpose. He did not at all object to the amount contributed to the Brisbane Hospital, but he might say this with regard to the patients from various parts of the country seeking admission to that institution: He did not know what was the experience of other hospital committees, but he had been connected with the Toowoomba Hospital for about a quarter of a century, and the result of his observation and experience was that there was a certain floating population which lived almost entirely in hospitals. When a man, for instance, left the Warwick Hospital, he would come down and get admission to the Toowoomba Hospital; then he would get into the Ipswich Hospital, and so on until finally he was admitted to the Brisbane Hospital, and perhaps, at last found his way to Dunwich. There was a floating population of that kind always going from hospital to hospital, so that he did not attach so much importance to the statement made respecting patients coming from all parts of the country to the Brisbane Hospital. Of course, a large city like Brisbane must necessarily have a larger number of hospital patients than

country districts, but if the Government paid for patients in one institution he did not see why they should not pay for them in others. He might here mention a case which his hon. colleague knew perfectly well. A man was found by some school children in a paddock about two miles outside Drayton lying in an insensible condition. He was taken to the Toowoomba Hospital and treated for about nine days for heart disease. He said he would like to go towards Tenterfield, where he had friends, and started walking in that direction, but two days afterwards he was found again in the identical same paddock in an equally insensible condition. He was again taken to the Toowoomba Hospital and died in the course of two days. The committee of the institution had to bear the expenses incurred for the support of that man. They made no claim on the Government, because they received an intimation three or four years ago that those persons must be provided for out of the funds of the institution, and they regarded it in the light of something in return for the endowment they received from the Government. Many cases of that kind occurred in the country districts. If the Brisbane Hospital was paid for such patients as he had mentioned, he thought some measure of justice ought to be dealt out to country institutions, because whenever they made application to the Government for assistance for additional buildings, or other works of that kind, they were invariably told that there was no money. The Toowoomba Hospital committee was obliged to make application the other day for assistance owing to the large number of persons coming in from the different railway contracts. The institution had no accommodation for the nurses, and one of the female wards had to be used as quarters for them. The committee, therefore, pointed out that a building for nurses was absolutely necessary, and proposed that if the Government would give, say £400, the committee would undertake to vote £200 out of their slender resources towards putting up nurses' quarters. In reply, they received an intimation that there was no money available. In the early part of the present month the surgeon-superintendent addressed the following memorandum to the committee:—

"GENTLEMEN,

"Owing to want of nurses' rooms the female wards have been occupied by the nurses, and there is now only one ward available for female patients. Should any women or children suffering from infectious or contagious disease apply for admission, I should be glad to know where you would wish them placed.

"Your obedient servant,

"S. FLOOD, M.D.

"Surgeon Superintendent."

The reason why Dr. Flood made that application was, that a woman had been admitted into the hospital suffering from erysipelas. Of course, hon. members knew that persons suffering from a disease of that kind could not be admitted into a ward containing a number of other patients. The ravages of that disease through the admission of one person into the Melbourne Hospital had been so great that it almost led to the pulling down of the whole building, because the disease had been scattered broadcast through the admission of that one case. Hon. members could understand the difficulty Dr. Flood was in in dealing with a case of that kind. As long as justice was meted out fairly to all hospitals the committee of the Toowoomba Hospital did not complain; but they did complain when they found such very large sums placed on the Estimates for the Brisbane Hospital and they could not get assistance even to the extent of £400 for buildings that were urgently required,

on the ground that there was no money. Hon. members must understand that hospital committee-men gave their services gratuitously; they did not reap any benefit whatever from it, but undertook the duty purely for the benefit of the public. He thought a fair case had been made out why assistance should be given to the Toowoomba Hospital for the purpose of erecting nurses' quarters; and that it was not too late, even now, in view of the circumstances of the case, for the Government to render the assistance the committee had asked for. The committee were quite prepared to spend £200 out of the funds at their disposal, and only asked for £400 from the Government for the purpose of erecting the necessary buildings. He was happy to say that the system of female nurses adopted in the Toowoomba Hospital had so far proved very successful. The committee had tried the experiment on the principle of Florence Nightingale's female nurses. They had a staff of trained nurses, which they obtained from the Alfred Hospital in Sydney, and the system had proved very successful indeed. The patients were better treated, the surgeon was better able to carry out his duties, and altogether the system had proved very beneficial, and they did not wish anything to happen to cause any alteration from that system. The Committee would see from the letter he had read that the claim was not made as against what was received by any other institution. He was prepared to vote the amount set down for the Brisbane Hospital; but he thought a spirit of justice should actuate the Government in dealing with country institutions making applications for support in good faith.

Mr. ANNEAR said he did not wish to be misunderstood in reference to the reply he made to the hon. member for Mulgrave. He knew of two men who were sent in to Brisbane by the accountant employed on the railway contract on the Logan, the contractor being absent in Sydney. The accountant wrote to him (Mr. Annear), and he wrote to the secretary of the hospital explaining that the contractor subscribed to the institution. The young men were admitted without a fee of three guineas, showing that men were received into the hospital from country districts without fees. He was aware that every railway contractor subscribed to the hospital; he was also aware that the contractor for the Logan Railway subscribed, and that the patients sent by him would be paid for.

Question put and passed.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted for the service of the year 1885-6 a further sum of £2,148 7s. 3d. in connection with the Administration of Justice. The principal items were for the travelling expenses of the Supreme Court Judges, and allowances to witnesses. The expenditure for the year on account of travelling expenses was £985 18s. 6d., of which sum £581 was expended in the Northern circuit. The amount for allowances to witnesses was an item that could not be forecast.

Mr. NORTON said he had a matter to bring under the notice of the Government. He met a man in the street a little while ago whom he had known for the last twenty-five years—a man who had not done very well in the world. He had a couple of children in the orphanage, and was summoned for neglecting to maintain them. The man was employed somewhere on the Western line, and he was brought before the court at Roma, and remanded to Brisbane, where it was found that he had no money. That might have been found out in the first instance, without bringing the man to Brisbane.

He was dismissed that morning on the understanding that if he got work and became able to contribute towards the support of his children in the orphanage, he would do so. It was unreasonable that a man should be brought away from his work for no other object than to find out that he could not assist in the maintenance of his children; and he mentioned the matter in order that such a thing might be avoided in future. He had suggested to the man that he should go to the Works Office and represent the circumstances under which he came to Brisbane, with the view of getting a free pass to the place from which he came.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not know the case to which the hon. member referred, but he could inform the Committee that the department had to take strong measures in some instances in order to get the maintenance contributions paid. Probably the man in question never signed the original maintenance order. Whenever the department took action the warrant had to be issued in Brisbane, and the person against whom proceedings were taken had to come to Brisbane on that warrant. The case could not be heard up-country when all the evidence was in Brisbane. It was all very well to say that the man could not pay up there, but how was the department to know that?

Mr. NORTON: He could not pay here either.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said there might be cases in which the man who could not pay would have to go to gaol.

Mr. NORTON said he would give the name of the man to the hon. gentleman. He knew the whole circumstances of the case, and he thought the man very much to blame for being in the condition he was; but the fact remained that his children were in the orphanage, and that he was unable to contribute towards their maintenance. He knew it was sometimes necessary to compel people to pay when they were in a position to do so, but when a man was unable to do so, he thought some power should be given to the police to ascertain the circumstances without taking him a long distance from his work, and after all finding that he could not pay.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that probably the money had been demanded repeatedly, and the man had paid no attention to those demands. He was satisfied that if the man had shown a willingness to pay, or had written down to say that he could not pay, ulterior steps would not have been taken.

Mr. NORTON said he hoped the Minister for Works would give the man a pass back to where he came from.

Mr. SMYTH said he wished to refer to a great hardship which many people suffered, and which might be remedied. It often happened that no bill was filed in the case of persons committed for trial, but the fact was not made known till just before the date appointed for the sitting of the court. In the meantime solicitors and barristers were engaged, and witnesses brought long distances probably, and after all it was found that they were not required. He thought that in many cases that might be avoided if it were intimated as soon as possible that no true bill would be found. He knew of a case himself. A man was defending his own life, and in doing so killed the other man, and was committed for trial on a charge of manslaughter. In fact, he knew of two cases in which the Attorney-General might have informed the parties concerned whether they would be tried or not.

The PREMIER said that the practice was that as soon as the Attorney-General or the

Crown Prosecutor had made up his mind that there would be no prosecution it was made known to the party. If that were not done it would lead to unnecessary expense to the Government. But sometimes it was necessary to wait for further information, as there might be flaws in the evidence as taken in the police court which might be afterwards supplied. Of course, he could not refer to any particular case, but he knew for a fact that the cases were disposed of as soon as possible.

Question put and passed.

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted for the service of the year 1885-6 a further sum of £119 6s. 11d. for Public Instruction.

Question put and passed.

COLONIAL TREASURER'S DEPARTMENT.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted for the service of the year 1885-6 a further sum of £11,801 15s. for the Colonial Treasurer's Department. The principal item, under "Miscellaneous Services," was refundments, £1,387 10s. 10d., which sum was required on account of the adjustments of the Postmaster-General's account with the United Kingdom and the other colonies. £1,488 6s. 6d. for exchange and commission was necessary on account of inscription of stock by the Bank of England and commission on the sale of loan, particulars of which he had given when the principal vote was under discussion. Under "Customs" there was a sum of £375—a gratuity to Mr. E. E. Smith on retiring from the Customs. Mr. Smith was twenty-four years in the Customs Department, and during the whole of that time he had had no leave of absence. He was a very excellent officer, and the Government considered that he was well entitled on retirement to a sum equivalent to leave of absence. There was a sum of £2,888 8s. for tidewaiters and incidental expenses. The original vote of £6,000 had been expended, and the increased amount was occasioned by the increased business at Brisbane, Townsville, and the principal ports. Against that expenditure, however, the department had lapsed votes for £1,200, which would reduce the over-expenditure to £1,600. Border Customs Patrol, general contingencies, £999 13s. 4d., which was required for forage during the drought. On distillation £1,168 was occasioned by the large number of prosecutions during the year for revenue purposes. The fines which were paid into the consolidated revenue amounted to considerably more than the whole expenditure. £2,753 had been expended on harbours, lighthouses, and pilots beyond the parliamentary appropriation, of which £2,100 was required for an extra stock of mineral oil purchased during the war scare, and for a double supply of kerosine purchased owing to a vessel long overdue from New York and thought to be lost turning up safe.

Mr. NORTON asked if any portion of the fines in the revenue prosecutions was paid to informers or revenue officers, or were the whole of the fines paid into the consolidated revenue?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that in no case did the revenue officers on the Civil list get any part of the fines, but in some cases where information was afforded by outside people, a moiety of the fine was, on the recommendation of the department, paid to them.

Mr. ALAND asked if any gratuity had been given to Mrs. Wotton, the widow of the late Samuel Wotton, who met with his death while working on board the "Nautilus"?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought something had been done; but he would make inquiry, and give the hon. gentleman the information to-morrow.

Mr. ALAND said he hoped the Treasurer would take the case into his serious consideration. He would call his attention to a paragraph in the petition connected with the case:—

"That by the evidence taken at the inquiry aforesaid it was disclosed that, in the opinion of some of the most important witnesses therein examined, the work upon which the said deceased was employed at the time that he sustained the said injuries was most dangerous and impracticable, and should not have been attempted under the circumstances, and the said deceased, who had been for many years in the service of the department aforesaid as a dredge hand, undertook the said work against his own wish, but in obedience to the orders of the master of the 'Nautilus.'"

That was, he thought, a very important paragraph. He presumed it was true, seeing it was based on evidence taken at the inquiry concerning the man's death. He wished the Colonial Treasurer's attention drawn to that because he saw throughout the vote several gratuities, and if gratuities were the order of the day for the widows of Civil servants engaged in clerical work and the Telegraph Office, then the poor men who were only getting 36s. a week ought to be taken into consideration as well as the others.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: So they are when the case is represented to me.

Mr. JORDAN said the case referred to by the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Aland, was a very sad one. A petition had been received by the House from the widow of that poor man who had lost his life in the Government service. Mrs. Wotton had eight children, five of whom were under eight years, and she was in a very destitute condition, and in a delicate state of health. He did not claim that she should receive special consideration, but they should all jealously guard the sacred right of petition which existed in every British community where there was parliamentary government, and he did not think any petition of that kind should be passed over without due consideration. He thought Mrs. Wotton's was a very distressing case. They had passed an Act by which they made employers liable for any fatal accident or any serious injury received from defective appliances or flaws in machinery which should not have been allowed to exist in their establishments, and he could not see why that should not apply to the Government service. He thought the representatives of the people in that Committee should take care that the Government were reminded of their equitable obligations in such cases, as they certainly were equitable. Here was a man who had been eleven years in the Government employment. He was engaged on board the barge "Nautilus," a hopper barge, for taking the silt away from the dredge "Octopus," which was at work on the bar of the Brisbane River. It appeared that it had been known for some time that the appliances for emptying the barge were defective, but, nevertheless, that state of things was allowed to exist. He did not say who was to blame, but some Government official was to blame, and he supposed it was the master of the barge. It was known that the hinges of the door of the after hopper were defective. When partially filled it was found that the silt was escaping, then the fore hopper was filled and the barge proceeded to the place where the silt was usually discharged. He thought it was stated in the petition that it was usual, when discharging, to anchor. That was not done, and that, he supposed, indicated carelessness. The first hopper was discharged by the use of the brake on the winch as a safeguard. Then when they came to discharge the after

hopper which was partially emptied, the silt having escaped, the master of the dredge thought it unnecessary to use the brake. That poor man was put, with one or two others, to use the winch without the brake. He objected to that, as he was satisfied it would endanger his own life, but he was ordered to do it. It was the case of a man employed by the Government to work machinery that was known to be defective. He was compelled to do certain work and seemed to have protested against it, and he lost his life in consequence of being compelled to do that work, which he felt to be dangerous and improper. His widow had since appealed to the country in a legitimate way by petitioning the House. As the hon. member for Toowoomba had said, they passed gratuities for the widows of persons who occupied a higher grade in the Government service. Two or three cases of that kind had appeared on the Estimates, and yet they were in danger of passing over that very sad case of the widow and destitute children of a poor man who lost his life by being compelled to do some dangerous work he should not have been asked to do.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That has not been determined yet.

Mr. JORDAN said that appeared in the evidence at all events; but he was not complaining, he was simply hoping that the Colonial Treasurer would bear in mind the remarks of the hon. member for Toowoomba, and that the case of that widow would receive his consideration. He hoped some further expression of opinion would be given by the Committee on the case to fortify the Colonial Treasurer in what he was sure would be his desire, to do justice in that particular case.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought the first question that should arise in the minds of any hon. member in connection with the case of Mrs. Wotton would be as to whether any application had been made to the Government to consider the circumstances of the case, and then whether such consideration was denied. That struck him as the first position which ought to be taken up by advocates of Mrs. Wotton's claim, and he had to say that no such application had been brought under his notice as head of the particular department in which her late husband was employed. No such representation had been made to him, and the sole intimation he had received had been in connection with the petition which the hon. member for South Brisbane requested the House to receive, and which was received accordingly. He could assure hon. gentlemen who had interested themselves in the case that now the matter had been brought under his notice and discussed, it would receive full consideration from the department and the Cabinet, and he had not the slightest doubt that substantial justice would be done to Mrs. Wotton if the circumstances of the case were found to be such as the petition represented them to be. He considered that any delay there might have been in dealing with the case had arisen from the fact that no application on the subject had been made to the department in which Mrs. Wotton's late husband was employed. However, he thought it very injudicious that the claims of widows or others who might be sufferers from an accident occurring to a person in the employ of any of the Government departments should be ventilated or advocated in Parliament before the department had itself taken the matter into consideration, or before it had been asked to consider the matter. He could quite understand the warm advocacy of the hon. member for South Brisbane if further consideration by the department had been refused in that case, but he must repeat

that the matter had not yet been brought officially before the department, and when it was it should receive every consideration. He did not think it was right that his hon. friend should make statements to the effect that the man met his death through the negligence and default of those who employed him. That had not been proved. The proper thing to have done would have been to call for the papers, and to have moved a resolution thereupon, but he deprecated any action being taken in anticipation of the Government taking the whole circumstances into consideration. Those most interested in the case ought to have urged the woman to have applied to the department for full consideration of all the circumstances of the case before petitioning the House. Possibly Mrs. Wotton was ill-advised, but it certainly would be subversive of all discipline if every person who met with an accident in the service of the department were to petition the House before the department was applied to. With all respect to the earnest exhortations of the members for Toowoomba and South Brisbane, the head of the department would doubtless be in a better position to judge of the merits of the case than they could possibly be in the mere information contained in a petition, and the proper thing was for the head of the department to have the whole matter under consideration, and then if any injustice was done the House might be appealed to. He would promise that he would investigate the whole of the circumstances, and if Mrs. Wotton was not satisfied with what he judged fair in the matter, he would place the papers before his colleagues.

Mr. ALAND said he knew nothing more of the case than appeared in the petition and in the evidence taken before the magistrate, and of course did not know whether the facts stated were correct. What induced him to bring the matter forward was that Wotton died on the 28th May, and he expected to have seen something down on the Supplementary Estimates for the widow. He did not altogether agree with the Colonial Treasurer. He thought that the head of the department, knowing that the poor woman had suffered severely by the loss of her husband, should have made it his business to seek out the merits of the case and provide her with means. He did not know whether any investigation had been made, but he rather supposed not. Wotton was only a poor fellow working on the dredge; he died, and nothing further was thought of the case. It was because he saw a chance of it being overlooked that he brought the matter forward.

Mr. JORDAN said he wished it to be understood by the Committee that he took it for granted that the case as stated in the petition was correctly stated. He could not vouch for the facts, but the petition having been presented, he thought he was quite in order in calling the attention of the Government to it, in order that some relief might be afforded. However, as far as he was concerned, he was very much gratified with what had fallen from the Colonial Treasurer.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that a sum not exceeding £5,014 4s. be granted for the Department of Public Lands.

Mr. NORTON said, while they were on that subject, he would like to refer to a deputation that waited on the Colonial Treasurer yesterday or the day before in connection with the timber trade. He was not prepared to say whether all the statements then made were absolutely correct, but still they knew that there was a great deal

of foundation for complaints, and he was going to ask the Minister for Lands if, under the circumstances that had been represented, and under the circumstances known to exist—namely, the great depression in the timber trade and the large number of men out of work in consequence—he would take into consideration during the recess the advisability of altering the regulations. He was informed that a large number of men had been discharged from some of the timber mills in different parts of the colony. A gentleman who was in town lately told him that he had discharged some forty men, and that in his district large numbers of men had been discharged from other mills. Now he thought, when such matters were known, and when a deputation waited on the Colonial Treasurer asking him to impose a heavy duty on imported timber, that it was time to consider the objections which had been raised to the regulations and see whether they could not be met. The great objection he had heard was that the regulations were harassing to trade—that in many respects they were so—and he was quite sure the Minister for Lands must know that many of the complaints made to him were not groundless, and that the result of imposing a royalty upon timber had not benefited the Treasury to any great extent, because nearly the whole of the money collected was re-expended in payment of wages to men for looking after the timber trade. Under the circumstances, therefore, he should like to hear from the Minister for Lands whether he would reconsider the regulations during the recess, and if possible simplify them, and also remove the royalty altogether.

Mr. ADAMS said before the Minister for Lands replied he should like to say a word or two. There could be no doubt that the present regulations were most harassing to the timber trade. At the present time timber-getters cut their timber and paid the royalty, but the timber lay on the ground for frequently a long time, as they would not take it at the mills. It might be urged that the timber-cutters were too numerous, but that was not the case. In many mills, when they were cutting soft timber, the mill-owners would not take hardwood, and the consequence was that they would not advance the money to pay the royalty until they were prepared to take the timber. It would be better for the mill-owners and for the men if a heavier license were imposed in place of the royalty. He trusted the Minister for Lands would consider the matter, and if possible remove the royalty.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said it was all very well for the leader of the Opposition to attribute the depression in the timber trade to the imposition of the royalty; but that was not the cause of it, and the removal of the royalty would not remove the depression. The difference between the royalty and the prices at which the mill-owners were competed with by foreign timber was so great, that the royalty was a mere nothing in comparison. He believed that the mill-owners had insisted upon making such enormously large profits that they had actually killed their own trade. New South Wales could supply hardwood, free on board, at 12s. a hundred, whilst here they had to pay 20s. for it. Perhaps the New South Wales timber was better in a few localities, but on the whole it was not better, and it was not more convenient to the mills than here. As for the friction that arose in the first instance on the imposition of the royalty, that had almost entirely disappeared, and he had heard no complaints for a long time. Everything worked smoothly enough since the system had come to be understood. At first there was a little friction, because men as a

rule did not like anything they were not used to, and of course the timber regulations imposed restrictions; but there was no difficulty now. The rangers and land commissioners understood their duty, and met the timber-getters half-way in almost every case—unless there was any attempt to evade the law, and then of course they came down on them, and very properly so, for the protection of those who were honestly engaged in the trade. As things stood at present, the removal of the royalty would serve no purpose whatever. If the mill-owners would set to work in a proper spirit to meet outside competition, he believed they would be very well able to compete with anybody, considering that there was a certain amount of duty on timber. The amount of the royalty certainly did not make much difference.

Mr. NORTON said he did not wish for one moment to be understood to mean that he thought the imposition of the royalty, or even the restrictions placed on the trade, were the causes of the great depression in the timber trade at the present time. That depression was largely due to the general depression which was spread all over the colony, and which naturally decreased the demand for timber. Two years ago there was a great deal more building going on, and a great deal more work in connection with the plantations, than there was now; and, of course, the slackening of the demand for timber caused a deal of depression. The depression was also increased by the large importations of timber from foreign countries. Very likely the mill-owners to a certain extent injured their own trade by the high prices they were demanding some time ago, when there was a great demand for timber throughout the colony—so great that the mills could not supply it, though they were employed day and night. Most people, when the demand was greater than the supply, were very much inclined to run up the price, and that was what the timber-getters did. Now that was over, and the timber-getters found it was they who had to pay the royalty and the charges in connection with it. If it were the mill-owner who paid it would not matter much; but it was really the lumberers—the men engaged in cutting and drawing the timber. Of course he (Mr. Norton) and others had foreseen that from the first; but the men themselves did not realise it so much as they did now, when they found that the demand had been reduced, and the mill-owners having a supply of timber on hand, of course were not prepared to give big prices—in fact, they were reducing the price. The men engaged in the work received far less for the timber they cut, and at the same time found less employment, so that it came very hard on them. The removal of the royalty and of the restrictions as far as possible would be a benefit to those men; it would at any rate enable them to get a better price for the work they did. If the hon. the Minister for Lands had not heard any complaints about the regulations he (Mr. Norton) had; and he would remind the hon. gentleman that it was not always those who talked least who meant least. It was very often the men who did not say much who felt their grievances most. Of course, some time ago, when there was a good deal of discussion about the subject, it was partly political, and partly because of the dislike to a new imposition; but the stage of excitement had passed by, and now it was that the effect of the extra charges put on the timber was really felt. The men bore it simply because they had to bear it. Last session a motion was brought forward by the then leader of the Opposition, condemning the regulations, but of course the Government having a majority were easily able to defeat it; and of

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course when a matter had been settled in that way in the House, the men outside who suffered were not so likely to keep on talking over their grievances as they were before. They saw that the matter was disposed of, and felt that it was no use making another attempt till a more favourable time came. That was the position they were in now. They knew that a very large number of men connected with the timber trade had been turned out of work. How they were employed now he was not aware. Some of them were perhaps without employment of any kind, and others were no doubt doing odd jobs whenever they could get them. If the royalty was removed, which, after all, was not worth collecting, the restrictions of which the timber-getters complained would be very much lessened. Other complaints that had reached him were that they were obliged to give notice when they were going to draw timber; they had to state the particular time and place, so that some one should be there to see how it was drawn, and so on. Those were what the men called harassing restrictions, and harassing restrictions always set men's backs up; and just now, when they were harassed in that way, and trade at the same time was depressed, they felt it very much more. He would suggest to the hon. member, in a friendly way, that it would be advisable, considering the present depressed state of the trade, to dispense with the royalty and make the regulations work as smoothly as possible in order to give every facility to the men to carry on their work. The reason why the Americans were able to place their timber on the market at so low a price was partly owing to the absence of restrictions in America. They simply paid a license for the land they occupied for getting timber, and beyond that, he believed, there were no regulations or restrictions whatever.

Mr. S. W. BROOKS said the Under Secretary for Lands in his report referred to the urgent necessity that existed for the construction of a strong-room for the security of the records of the office, and pointed out the immense loss to the Government and inconvenience to the public that would ensue in the event of their destruction by fire. Was it intended to construct such a room?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied that no steps had as yet been taken to provide such a room. There could be no doubt that a very serious danger existed, and the necessity of having a strong-room built for the purpose had been apparent to him ever since he had been in the office. He had had the matter under consideration and intended to provide a room in which the records could be securely kept.

Mr. BLACK said that last year the Minister for Lands spent £3,401 in advertising, and yet there were complaints from all parts of the colony that land offered for selection was not sufficiently advertised. For the present year only £2,700 was asked. How did the hon. gentleman intend to deal with the advertising in his department when the amount asked for was so very much below what was expended last year?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the matter of advertising was one over which he had not until recently exercised much personal control. But, judging from the lines on which it had been previously conducted, he was perfectly convinced that a great deal of the money spent in advertising was absolutely thrown away by the department. It was almost impossible to lay down any rule by which the expenditure for advertising could be kept within reasonable limits. Advertisements had been inserted in papers where they could do no possible good. However, he had now taken the matter into his

own hands, and intended to decide upon the newspapers in which advertisements should be inserted, and the number of insertions in each newspaper. He hoped by that means to keep the expenditure within reasonable bounds.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he would suggest to the hon. gentleman that the headings to the Government land sales advertisements should be made more striking; they should be displayed somewhat after the fashion in which the auctioneers drew up their advertisements. He would not go so far as to suggest that placards should be printed; it would be enough to make the headings of the advertisements more attractive. If that was done there would be a better attendance at the sales, and the people would bid more readily. The Government were considerable losers by not properly advertising their land sales.

Mr. GROOM said that if the Minister for Lands would adopt the course he had indicated few or no complaints would arise in the future. What he had to complain of with regard to advertisements was that the provincial Press was sacrificed for the sake of the metropolitan journals. Land sales in outside districts were frequently advertised in journals which those interested in the sales could never possibly see. He would give a modern instance to show how the Government land sales were advertised. He would mention no names, but would say that there was a land sale to take place on the 7th December at a certain town.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Call it Eden.

Mr. GROOM: One of Charles Dickens's Edens, if hon. members liked. An advertisement appeared in the local paper intimating that the sale would take place on the 7th December, adding, "For particulars see the *Government Gazette*." He would ask the Chairman whether, if he were advertising a land sale, he would advertise it in that fashion? No doubt the Chairman would reply that that style of advertising would answer neither himself nor his clients. Looking just now at the *Town and Country Journal* lying on the Library table, he was glad to find that the Lands Department had begun to make use of that paper, which had a circulation within this colony of 10,000 copies. There was an advertisement in the *Town and Country Journal* informing the people of New South Wales and elsewhere what lands were open for selection in all parts of the colony of Queensland. That was a sensible advertisement. That journal had a large circulation, and probably went where no Queensland newspaper had ever penetrated, and to advertise in it would be productive of a considerable amount of good to the colony. If a district where a land sale was to be held possessed a newspaper, the sale should be advertised in it. That was all the provincial Press asked for. Often advertisements, costing pounds upon pounds, of land sales to be held in far-off country districts, were inserted in metropolitan journals which were never seen in the district at all. But the new system under which the Minister for Lands would take the advertising into his own hands, and name the journals in which land sales should be advertised, would meet all objections. If the hon. gentleman did that, he would be able to remove the objection sometimes heard as to the apparent parsimony which existed with regard to advertising Crown land sales.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he did not see any apparent parsimony that existed in advertising Crown land sales or anything else. But he would point out one improvement which might be carried out with excellent results; and that was to issue posters, as the auctioneers

in Brisbane and everywhere else did when they were going to offer land for sale by auction, calling the attention of people to the sale. He believed that would be much more efficacious, and much more economical, than any amount of advertising in the newspapers. Really the force of that sort of advertising was very much exaggerated and over-estimated by members of that Committee. If a good, substantial property was to be sold, well, "good wine needs no bush"; and when good land was offered for sale it needed very little advertising. The Government would get their money for it whether it was advertised abundantly or not. Of course, newspapers were always anxious to get their share of the plunder out of the business, and really there was no necessity for it. If a few handbills or posters were put up in the vicinity of the land or in the town where it was to be sold, all the public who were likely to bid or to buy would be quite sufficiently apprised of the fact in that way, and it would be a much more economical form of advertising than advertising in newspapers. They suffered quite sufficient from the amount of blackmail that was levied upon them by the Press at the present time without giving it additional facilities for doing so. If additional information was to be given to the public, let them distribute copies of the *Gazette* containing those advertisements gratuitously.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he might state for the information of the hon. gentleman that the plan of putting up posters was now adopted by the Lands Office. They were printed at the Government Printing Office, and put up in some conspicuous place in the locality where the land to be sold was situated.

Mr. JORDAN said, at the risk of displeasing one of his constituents, the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Lumley Hill, he would say a word or two in favour of advertising. A case in proof had come under his own observation. Not many months ago, while staying at a place not very far from Brisbane, he was told by an old resident that some land was to be offered for sale. Shortly afterwards he met a man riding through the bush, who came up and said, "I have bought this land, and bought it very cheaply, too." He mentioned the price, which was very low. That was some land that he (Mr. Jordan) was on the look-out for, and he said, "Why didn't you tell me it was for sale?" and the man replied, "Of course, I didn't want you to know." The fact was it had not been properly advertised. The advertisement had appeared in the *Gazette*; if it had appeared in the *Courier*, he (Mr. Jordan) should have been so much poorer as far as money was concerned, but so much better off if he had got some of that land at a fair price, and the Government would have been so much the better off by getting a fair price for the land, instead of its being sold as it was at very much under its value. Posters might be very good in the immediate locality, but if lands offered for sale in places near Brisbane were advertised in the newspapers it would bring many purchasers from the city to buy; and posters would not be sufficient. He did not think they could dispense with advertising in newspapers in the immediate vicinity of land to be sold.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said it was surprising to him the wonderful amount of support the Press got from its varied sort of hangers-on—if he might use the expression—contributors and others who had an interest in journals. No doubt they had very great interests at stake—those who supplied those 15s. a column leading articles—and they were all upon their tails directly anything was said which had a

tendency to check the excessive expenditure that had been going on in the way of Government advertising. It was just the case of the silver-smiths of Ephesus over again. The craft was in danger. "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." "The power of the Press is wonderful," "The efficacy of the Press in advertising is something extraordinary." For his own part he had very little time to waste by reading advertisements in the newspapers, and thought they must be very idle people who could afford the time to read the whole paper through every morning, advertisements and all. The importance of the Press in connection with advertising was very much exaggerated.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he could confirm the statement made by the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Jordan. The land he referred to was worth more than double the price paid for it; in fact, some of it had been sold for more than double the price paid at the Government sale, and that a very short time afterwards. That was entirely through the sale not being properly advertised.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said, according to the arguments of some hon. members, land sales should be advertised in four or five papers, because if they were published in, say, the *Courier*, *Telegraph*, or *Queenslander*, a man might say he did not see that paper, that he took some other, perhaps the *Evangelical Standard* or the *Quiver*. He could only say that if the department was to advertise all land sales in every newspaper published in Brisbane, he should have to ask for four or five times the amount voted for advertising. He thought that inserting a short advertisement and putting up a few posters at the Land Office, where people could get detailed information as to the land for sale, was all that was required.

Mr. ADAMS said no doubt, as far as Brisbane and provincial towns were concerned, posters might do very well, but he thought that in addition to posting them in the locality they should put them on the back of the Crown lands ranger, and let him ride all round the country, so that the people might see when and where the sale was to take place. People who lived in towns were not the only persons who wished to purchase land; it was generally those who lived in the country who desired to do so. He had called attention to that once before in that House. The practice in the outside districts was to insert a short advertisement stating that a land sale would take place on a certain day, and that particulars would be found in the *Government Gazette* of a certain date; but it was not everybody in those districts who could see the *Gazette*. They had not the same facilities as people living in Brisbane or other towns, who had only to go to the Land Office to get the required information. And yet some people travelled 40, 50, and even 100 miles to purchase land at Government sales. A short time before he came to the House a land sale was advertised at Bundaberg; a short notice appeared saying particulars would be found in the *Government Gazette*. There were no posters—not even on the back of the Crown lands ranger—and the consequence was that very few people attended the sale. He knew that several people purchased land at that sale who would not have done so had it been fully advertised. He was perfectly convinced that the Government, in place of saving money by keeping advertisements out of the local papers, lost a great deal more than the cost of the advertisements by the low price obtained for the land.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he had yet to learn that there was a lack of circulation of the *Government Gazette*. There were plenty of justices of the peace in the colony—any amount

of them, and plenty of *Government Gazettes* were circulated "free gratis and for nothing" through them. The justices of the peace all got *Gazettes*.

Mr. S. W. BROOKS: If they apply for them.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he believed a complimentary copy was sent to all the magistrates of the territory gratis. If they did not apply for it they could not have much interest in the business; and he could only think the *Government Gazette* was not of much value if they did not apply for it. But so far as an advertising medium went, he could point out to the Colonial Secretary and to the Government that if they had a few copies nailed up in conspicuous places, like the post and telegraph offices, in the outside townships, especially when there were land sales on, the people who had any interest in the district could always ascertain for themselves when land was for sale. He did not think there was any use in going to any extravagant expenditure for advertising in the local papers under those circumstances, when they had got such facilities of their own which cost a considerable sum of money to produce.

Mr. JESSOP said he did not think the Government were justified in advertising in every paper, but he was sure that hon. gentlemen must know that people in the bush got all the information in the world from the local papers. There were plenty of people who never came into town except to a land sale. They could not come into town and wait at the post office until a land sale notice was put up. He would like to see the Government advertise more.

Question put and passed.

PUBLIC WORKS AND MINES.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted for the service of the year 1885-6 a further sum of £4,211 2s. 8d. to defray the expenses of the Department of the Minister of Public Works and Mines. That increased appropriation included £1,005 for quarantine station at Magnetic Island and £1,700 for additions to stores.

Mr. HAMILTON said that some time since Mr. Jack was preparing a geological map of the colony in which the various mineral fields were depicted in various colours. He would like to know if that map was ready yet, because if it was he would suggest that the Minister for Mines should get copies of it and send them to every public institution on the various gold-fields.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the map would be printed and circulated as soon as possible. It was a very large map, exceedingly useful, and showed all the various mineral fields—coal, gold, tin, etc., in different colours.

Mr. NELSON said that the Minister for Works had spent £4,211—if he understood the accounts—without authority, and he now came before them for indemnification. But he had carried forward the enormous sum of £76,351, which he did not spend, although he had authority to spend it. What was the reason of that? It seemed rather curious that when they authorised him last year to spend £76,351 more than he spent, he could not find occasion to spend it. He had carried that sum forward on the presumption that he had contracts for the whole of that amount. There was a long list of buildings, but were all those contracted for, and were they in operation now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had no power to expend money for any other purpose than what it had been voted for by Parliament. He was surprised at the hon. member

professing to quote a lot of figures. The hon. member knew perfectly well that when a sum of money was voted by Parliament for a special purpose it could not be used for anything else. He had no power to transfer money from one vote to another. In those items there was not sufficient in the Estimates-in-Chief, and the consequence was that they had to be provided for in the Supplementary Estimates. It would be very convenient indeed if he had the power to transfer a portion of money voted by Parliament for one purpose to something else.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was pleased to see that the Minister for Works had placed the papers in connection with the tenders for the railway lamps on the table as he had promised. He found that the lowest tender in that statement, in a letter written by Mr. Curnow, the Commissioner for Railways, to the Minister, was 22 per cent. above the price of the English article. Now, when they took into consideration the very restricted conditions under which those tenders were to be performed, he thought that tender might very well have been accepted, seeing it was only 20 or 22 per cent. above the English article as imported here. He was quite certain that any English firm asked to tender under the same conditions would have tendered at as high a rate as the lowest tender sent in; and he hoped that upon an occasion of that kind again, when lamps or anything else in the way of railway material was to be made, they would be made in the colony if possible. He hoped the Minister for Works would be very careful before he sent home an indent, if the local tenders were so little above the English price.

Mr. NELSON said he would like to get an answer from the Minister for Works with regard to the sum of £76,351 12s. 9d. that was carried forward, and how he assumed the authority to spend that sum. The Auditor-General did not allow him to do so, so far as he (Mr. Nelson) was aware. That was what he wished the hon. member to explain; he was only quoting his own figures.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there were items put down for the purpose of erecting buildings for which there was no appropriation made. They were works of urgent necessity, and, of course, the money was expended. It was not possible to spend money voted for one purpose by Parliament for any other purpose than that for which it was voted. The only way the works could be carried out, seeing they were urgently required, as in the case of the quarantine station at Magnetic Island, was to perform the work and get the money put down on the Supplementary Estimates. The same remark applied to all the other items.

Mr. NELSON said he did not know where the hon. gentleman was quoting from.

The CHAIRMAN: From page 9.

Mr. NELSON said he did not object to that at all—that was not the question. The hon. gentleman was altogether astray; he was asking him about the balance unexpended.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there were no unexpended balances there. It was utterly impossible to make the hon. gentleman understand. All money which had been appropriated, if not spent before the 30th of September, lapsed and went back into the Treasury.

Mr. NELSON said he understood that some votes lapsed and others were carried forward. He was very anxious to understand the matter, but it was beyond his comprehension.

It was not apparent to people of ordinary intelligence and of small calibre like himself. He had a great deal to learn before he would be able to become a statesman like the Minister for Works; but what he wanted to understand was this: He saw from a return placed before him that the Minister for Works had taken authority to carry forward no less a sum than £76,351 12s. 9d., and he (Mr. Nelson) wanted to know where he got the authority. If he were going to spend that amount during the present year out of the revenue of the current year there was no statement of it in the Estimates, and there was no provision in the Audit Act that he knew of. Contracts not actually in hand, or signed and agreed to, before the 30th of September last could not be gone on with and paid for out of that sum. Was that the case with all of those which he saw in that list?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said those items to which the hon. member had referred were all attached for expenditure. They had all been sanctioned for expenditure and carried forward, and did not represent any part of the vote which was then under consideration. The whole of the amount carried forward by his hon. colleague, amounting to £76,351 12s. 9d., arose partly, from roads and bridges, £7,401; £55,000 from buildings, £5,391 from mines, £3,371 from the maintenance of the permanent way on the Southern and Western Railway, which was the only item carried forward from railways. The item for which additional appropriation was asked was for wages in the locomotive department on the Northern railways, the sum being £101 0s. 4d. The original appropriation for the locomotive department was £10,269, which had all been expended, and in addition to that £101 0s. 4d. was further required. Again, in the stores department the appropriation was £6,769 4s. 4d., the whole of which had been expended, and in addition £1,084 4s. 4d.; so that the present votes in the Secretary for Public Mines and Works Department in no way interfered with the sums which had been lapsed from the year 1885-6.

Mr. NELSON said he was extremely obliged to the Treasurer for telling him what he knew before, and what anybody could see; but he would not answer the question asked. He (Mr. Nelson) wanted to know what authority the Minister for Works, acting in collusion with the Treasurer, he supposed, had for carrying that amount of £76,351 12s. 9d. forward? Was there any authority in the Audit Act or other Act for expending that money during the present year, or which they were going to spend, he supposed? There was no provision for it in the estimated revenue, unless they were going to put on some additional taxation. He wanted that question answered.

Question put and passed.

POST OFFICE.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted for the year 1885-6 a further sum of £1,595 for the Post Office Department. The largest item in the vote was £1,540 for the purchase of land in Fortitude Valley for a post office. As hon. members were aware, that was the purchase money of a second block of land in the Valley. The first was charged to the loan vote, which appeared on the last Loan Estimates for the post and telegraph office.

Mr. NORTON said he had a grievance to bring forward with regard to the Post Office, and that was in connection with the postal charges upon reports sent home weekly or monthly, as the case might be, by companies here having

their head offices in London. Only recently those reports were sent home, and charged for at packet rates, but within the last few weeks those companies had been notified that they would in future have to pay letter rates. In one case he knew of four packets that were sent by one company through the Post Office, and were stamped, as they always had been, at packet rates, the value of the postage on the four packets amounting to 5s. 4d., and they were subsequently notified by the department that they would be required to pay the ordinary letter rates. The difference to the company was that instead of having to pay only 5s. 4d. they were required to pay £3 2s. Considering that the regulations had not been altered, there must have been some want of information in the office as to what the regulations were before that time, or else there must have been some mistake. He believed that in the postal regulations provision was made that bankers parcels and insurance companies' reports should be charged at packet rates. In the case of other companies, it appeared that according to the regulations they might legally be charged letter rates for similar matter, but that had not hitherto been done; and the company he referred to, having always paid the ordinary packet rates, were somewhat surprised at being called upon to pay £3 2s. instead of 5s. 4d. on their weekly packets. They complained to the Under Secretary of the Post Office, and shortly after they received a notification through the Post Office to the effect that the Under Secretary was directed to inform them that the Postmaster-General regretted that their request to have their reports and returns treated as printed matter at packet rates could not be complied with. The matter, he thought, required some explanation, because, no doubt, there were other companies interested than the one to which he had referred.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the amount of non-paying postal matter was a subject that had long engaged the attention of his hon. colleague the Postmaster-General, and he was sure, after the discussion that had taken place the other evening—when the Postmaster-General's estimates were under consideration—on the non-paying carriage of newspapers and other matter, it should not be wondered at that the Postmaster-General, when he found a very considerable annual loss accruing in his department, should be particularly jealous of augmenting the matter sent through the Post Office at reduced rates which did not pay. The Postmaster-General, having had the matter under consideration, submitted the whole position to the Cabinet, and it was considered that those reports, whether written, printed, or in multigraph form, emanating from private or semi-public companies—progress reports of the management of those institutions, and matters which possessed no public interest, and which were not intended for public information—should come under the category of letters. The matter was fully discussed, and it was considered that they did not in any way come within the definition of packets carried at a reduced rate, and which were defined as follows:—

"1. Bankers' packets (in covers open at the ends or sides, securely tied, and the contents legibly endorsed thereon, signed by an officer of the bank), containing notes, orders, cheques, pass-books, returns or other periodical statements, sent by or to any bank or banker. (Registered parcels containing notes to be completely enclosed in a strong cover, and the words 'bankers' packet' marked legibly on cover, signed by an officer of the bank.) 2. Packets containing process or proceedings or pleadings in any court, briefs, cases, and instructions for counsel, and their opinions thereon respectively, deeds, affidavits, policies of assurance (including documents of insurance not being of the nature of a letter)"—

he called special attention to the words "not being of the nature of a letter"—

"letters of attorney, depositions, or recognisances. (Title deeds may be posted by the Registrar-General in fully enclosed canvas-bound covers, but must be endorsed 'Title Deeds' by an officer of the Registrar-General's Department.) 3. Packets containing patterns or samples of merchandise not having a value of their own, apart from their mere use as patterns or samples, and either unenclosed or enclosed in transparent bags, or in bags tied round the neck so as to be easily loosened and refastened. 4. Packets containing prices current and catalogues. 5. Packets containing Acts of the Queensland or Imperial Parliament, or printed 'Votes and Proceedings' of either House thereof, respectively, or vouchers, or returns, or copies of returns, made by or to any officer in the public service. 6. Packets containing medical diplomas, certificates (partly written and partly printed), writing paper, envelopes, script, pamphlets, maps, plans, specifications, music, photographs (on paper), magazines, reviews, placards, almanacs, prospectuses, paintings, engravings, printers' proofs, or periodical publications, other than newspapers. 7. Packets containing printed or plain books. 8. Printed circulars and circulars produced by the papyrograph, velocigraph, multigraph, or any other process by which a number of *fac-simile* copies can be made, may be sent by post as town, country, or foreign packets, within the meaning of the Postage Act of 1871; provided they are open at the ends or sides, or in covers open at the ends or sides, and the contents legibly endorsed thereon. 9. Packets containing seeds in transparent bags or papers, tied so as to be easily loosened and refastened, not exceeding sixteen ounces in weight. 10. Divisional board notices of valuation, and of rates and receipts for rates, open at end or sides, and contents stated thereon."

He had read the definitions at length, because none of them dealt with the documents which were sought to be carried by post at packet rates. They were progress reports in some cases issued by the managers of sugar plantations, and in other cases emanating from the directorate of steam companies, and intended for the information of their London offices, or directorate, or proprietary, and were therefore not of the class of pamphlets or publications contained within the definitions he had read. It was unfortunate if the difference between the packet and letter rates were as great as the hon. gentleman stated in the cases he mentioned—and he was not in a position to controvert his assertion—but he must impress upon hon. gentlemen that the Post Office Department was not paying, and a very large amount of postal matter was carried at a loss to the taxpayers of the colony; under those circumstances, and while the definitions he had read were so extensive as to include all matters of public interest, private individuals must be bound by the regulations.

Mr. NORTON said there could be no doubt whatever about the rates charged. They were referred to in the letter to the Postal Department, and there was the difference between 5s. 4d. and £3 2s. That was not denied by the department, but it was simply said that the request could not be complied with. He was quite aware of the position the hon. gentleman took up, that private correspondence should be charged the full postal rates, but he would point out that an exception was made in regard to insurance companies. The regulations said:—

"Policies of assurance including documents of assurance not being of the nature of a letter."

Well, he could not understand on what grounds the exception had been made in the case of insurance companies, as they appeared to occupy exactly the same position as the companies to which he referred. Take the case of a large shipping company. They were just as much a public company in the widest sense as insurance companies, and there appeared no reason for the distinction. He would point out to the hon. gentleman that the regulation would interfere a great deal with business, and he might tell him

that the effect would be that those companies would either send their parcels as cargo, or else send them to Melbourne to be posted there. From Melbourne they would go as parcels, and it would be somewhat strange that people living and trading in this country should have to send to Melbourne to have their parcels posted and carried to England on account of the new arrangement made by the Post Office here.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he did not think the arrangement could be called new. If the department had been carrying correspondence hitherto at the packet rate through inadvertence, they were right in correcting the error. The definition in regard to insurance policies was "policies of assurance (including documents not being of the nature of a letter)." Now, he took it that the reports to which the hon. gentleman referred were of the nature of letters.

Mr. NORTON : No.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said, at any rate that was the impression he had from the information obtained from the hon. Postmaster-General. They might be called reports, but they were certainly used in substitution of correspondence, and therefore answered all the requirements of letters. They were, in fact, weekly or monthly letters written or in multi-graph form for the information of private local boards, and were not matters of public interest. Therefore, he could see a wide distinction between such reports and insurance reports which were for the information of the public. If insurance companies adopted the same mode of procedure and transmitted instructions to their agents in the form of reports, then they would be similarly dealt with. As to sending the parcels to Melbourne to be posted, he did not think there was much fear of that, as the Victorian Government would speedily realise the character of the communications and would impose full postal rates. However, as the hon. gentleman had brought the matter before the Committee, it would be his duty to represent to the Postmaster-General what had been said, and if he considered the merits of the case warranted it, he would bring it before the Cabinet for reconsideration.

Mr. NORTON said he was glad to have the assurance that the matter would be brought under the notice of the Postmaster-General, but he would point out that the Colonial Treasurer was wrong when he said that the packets he referred to contained reports. They were communications for the information of the head offices at home, and contained accounts supported by vouchers.

The PREMIER : They were written letters.

Mr. NORTON : No, they were not.

The PREMIER : They were communications in writing and not in print.

Mr. NORTON said he did not think they were in print. They were weekly accounts supported by vouchers. He was not saying that the Government were not entitled to charge a higher rate. He believed they were ; but the question was whether, having hitherto charged the lower rate, it was well to make such a change in the rate as represented by the difference between 5s. 4d. and £3 2s. That was a very great difference, and he would ask the Government to consider whether it would not be advisable to alter the regulations in order to meet such cases as he had brought forward.

The PREMIER said the fact was that the whole of the Postal Act wanted reconsidering. There were a great number of curious anomalies, and a number of things that ought to be done and could not be done as the law stood. Those matters had been under the consideration of the

Government before and during the session, and they hoped to have been able to bring in an amending Bill that session. The Government would certainly consider the Postal Act during the recess, and bring an amending Bill before Parliament next session.

Mr. NORTON said the Government had the power to consider the regulations and make any change which was in accordance with the Act.

Question put and passed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted for the year 1885-6 a further sum of £503 19s. 4d. to defray expenses in connection with the Auditor-General's Department.

Mr. NELSON asked if they were to have a new Audit Act next session ?

The PREMIER said the Government hoped to have an amendment of it ; they would make no promises.

Mr. NELSON said they could not go on with the present system more than another session. The Government would then pass an Act binding their successors, if they would not bind themselves. Before their term of office expired they would pass an Act to bind future Treasurers.

The PREMIER : We hope to do so.

Mr. NELSON : That is their policy ; they will not be bound themselves, but they will bind their successors.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman had seen the correspondence laid on the table about the proposed amendment of the Audit Act. Well, the Government contemplated amending the Audit Act in that way—that was to say, asking the House to do it. It would be very convenient that the Auditor-General should make a report to the House upon the same accounts as the Treasurer published annually. There was no reason why he should not make another report as well, later in the year. That amendment was one of the things the Government hoped to do next session ; of course, it was impossible to say what they would be able to do.

Mr. NELSON said that was just what they heard when the Government first came into power. The hon. the Treasurer then told them exactly what the Premier had told them now. He severely criticised the present system—of course, it was a cheap thing to do then, as it was an attack on the previous Government.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : Not at all.

Mr. NELSON : The Treasurer said that in the very first Budget Speech he made, and he believed the hon. gentleman meant it too.

Mr. NORTON : Oh dear, no !

Mr. NELSON said the accounts of the Works Department were too much for the hon. member. They would not stand daylight. The hon. member promised to put the accounts in such a way that he who ran might read. Both sides of the House knew that the Treasurer was the depository of the whole of the honesty of the present Administration.

Mr. NORTON : Oh, no ; the Minister for Works.

Mr. NELSON : No ; the Treasurer. They all knew that he was very energetic—that if he had a fault it was superabundance of zeal for the public service ; and he had been trying to carry out that reform during the whole of his period of office, but had not been able to do it. When was it to be done ?

The PREMIER : Not this session.

Mr. NELSON: Probably not next session. The following session would be the proper time, because it would bind the successors of the present Government to act honestly, and do what they could not do themselves. At any rate, he (Mr. Nelson) would back them up in binding anybody that came into office afterwards, so that things should not be carried on as they were now—most extraordinary accounts presented that nobody could understand. The accounts should be put before the public, so that anyone of ordinary capacity could understand them.

Question put and passed.

LOAN ESTIMATES.

DUPLICATION OF BRISBANE AND IPSWICH LINE.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted by way of loan the sum of £50,000 as an additional amount for the duplication of the line from Brisbane to Ipswich. Hon. members had already been told in the Financial Statement of the short appropriation on loan which had been made for that line, and also for the lines from Mackay to Eton and Hamilton, and Ravenswood Junction to Ravenswood; and it was with a view to obtaining parliamentary sanction for the whole expenditure that the present estimate was submitted to hon. members. Hon. members would be aware that it was not intended to pass a Loan Act in connection with that amount at the present time, but temporarily to provide it out of the consolidated revenue, to be recouped, if necessary, by Treasury bills. He trusted there would be no necessity for the issue of those bills, although formal authority would be asked immediately for their issue, if necessary.

Mr. NORTON said he would like to know whether £50,000 would be sufficient for the purpose. The former appropriation was £85,000, and that made it £135,000. He thought they were told some time ago that £140,000 had been already spent, and they were still spending on the line; so that if any more money was required they might as well know at once what they would have to pay.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said before the estimate was printed the Railway Department were consulted and requested to state the fullest extent of their requirements in connection with those services, so that there might be no further vote required. That was the estimate received from the Railway Department.

Mr. NORTON said he would like to know whether the estimate was made by the Chief Engineer or by the Minister; because the Minister made the estimate of £85,000 on his own account. He would not take the Chief Engineer's estimate, and that was the result.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the information was derived from the Commissioner for Railways direct, who, he believed, obtained it from the Chief Engineer.

Mr. NORTON said he understood the Government intended to ask the authority of the House to issue Treasury bills. He presumed they would not be placed on the market?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

Mr. NORTON: They would be merely like IOU's put into the cash-box to represent cash taken out?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. NORTON said that if the Government thought there would be any necessity to place them on the market, he hoped that before doing so they would obtain the sanction of the House.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was intended to ask the sanction of the House for

authority to issue them, and the Treasury bills would doubtless be provided for in the future loan estimate. There was not the slightest intention to issue them. Indeed, to do so would be very imprudent, as it might have a damaging effect upon the credit of the colony. Still he was not authorised by the Government to give any undertaking to that effect. Should any unforeseen circumstances arise, the Government might exercise the power with which Parliament entrusted them. But he himself should strongly oppose the issue of Treasury bills at present, when they had such a considerable amount of their Loan Fund to operate upon.

Mr. NORTON said the Colonial Treasurer suggested not long ago that it might be desirable to issue Treasury bills if the revenue did not come up to what was anticipated. Knowing that hon. members naturally felt some little apprehension in granting that authority to the Government. He could assure the hon. gentleman that if it was intended to place them on the market the motion would meet with a great deal of opposition. But they might rest satisfied with the hon. gentleman's assurance that to do so would have a damaging effect on the credit of the colony. From what fund, he would like to know, had the money been derived that had been overspent on those works—from Loan Fund or from consolidated revenue?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the money had been taken from that portion of the Loan Fund which had not yet been expended. The statement made by him as to the issue of Treasury bills referred to a purely hypothetical case. What he said on that occasion was that if certain financial results did not accrue from the policy of the Government under a certain measure and within a given time it might be desirable to issue Treasury bills. That was before the last Loan Act was passed, under which they were in the enjoyment of a large amount of money, which relieved them from any probability of the issue of Treasury bills. It would be a suicidal policy for the colony to issue those bills; still he was not authorised to make any promise, and he intended to ask for authority to issue them, without, however, the slightest intention that they should be issued.

Mr. NORTON said that assurance was satisfactory as far as it went. The amount now asked for, in all £123,000, was to be taken from loans authorised for other works by the Loan Act of 1884, and therefore those works would have to wait until the passing of another Loan Act before they could be completed.

Mr. NELSON asked why the amount asked for was so small when the financial adviser of the House, whom they retained at a very large salary, informed them that they had actually overspent £323,000? Where was the other £200,000?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the entire over-expenditure on railway construction from loan was represented in that estimate of £123,000. The hon. member, in referring to the Auditor General's report, had been led into a misconception of a very natural character, arising from this circumstance: A large quantity of rails arrived periodically from England. It was not certain at the time that they arrived for which particular railway they might subsequently be used. Pending that, they were debited to a loan suspense account. Consequently that account appeared always debited with the value of the rails. Subsequently it was re-credited by the transfer of the rails to a particular vote. That was how the £200,000 to which the hon. member referred was accounted for.

Mr. NELSON said £200,000 was an enormous sum to be invested in rails. They must be intended for renewals, not for construction. It was utterly impossible that so large an amount could be spent on rails alone.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Rails and other railway stores generally.

Mr. NELSON: And sidings, and buildings, and any mortal thing. There were £200,000 spent which the Committee knew nothing about.

The PREMIER: You know nothing about it.

Mr. NELSON said he did not intend to inquire, although he could easily get the information from the Chief Engineer. All he wanted was that the thing should be put before them in such a way that an ordinary individual like himself could understand it.

Question put and passed.

MACKAY RAILWAY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £63,000 be granted, by way of loan, for Mackay to Eton and Hamilton Railway (additional).

Question put and passed.

RAVENSWOOD RAILWAY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £10,000 be granted, by way of loan, for Ravenswood Junction to Ravenswood Railway (additional).

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the Chairman leave the chair and report the resolutions to the House.

Mr. NELSON said he would like to know from the Colonial Treasurer if he was going to introduce any further estimates to supplement the vote for the present year?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Not at present.

Mr. NELSON said he asked the question because it was evident that the votes already passed would not be sufficient, and surely it was now the duty of the Treasurer to bring before the Committee some supplementary estimates for the current year, 1886-7. That had been the usual practice, and unless it was done they would be quite in the dark as to what might happen during the recess. They were now through nearly six months of the current year, and unless the Treasurer was satisfied that he had got sufficient money—but it was evident that he had not sufficient—

Mr. BLACK: They'll pay it out of loans.

Mr. NELSON: Surely that was not a proper way of conducting business. Supplementary estimates should certainly be introduced to cover the £30,000 for interest that had been taken out of the Loan Fund.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Paid long ago.

Mr. NELSON: Unless they brought in another estimate for that purpose the colony would be discredited in the eyes of the whole world. He quoted some time ago the case of a canal company in England that had to get an Act of Parliament passed to enable them to do what the Government had done here by Executive minute. It was utterly illegal; in fact, contrary to all the Acts they had on the Statute-book. He believed the Premier said on that occasion—he did not hear him, but it was in *Hansard*—that that was part of the bargain made with the English investor; but he (Mr. Nelson) had never been able to see that it was so. He had seen no statement put before the English investor cautioning him that he was to be paid his interest

out of his own money, which was the case in the present instance. He looked upon it as one of the most serious things that could happen to the colony that when they floated a loan they should pay the interest due to the people who supplied them with money out of their own money. The £30,000 to which he referred was due on the 1st July last, and why not bring in further supplementary estimates and charge it, as it ought to be charged, to revenue? Even if there had been a statement published—of which they had received no notice, and which had not been placed before them—cautioning the public in England, he still believed that it was *ultra vires* for the Governor in Council to pass such a minute. They had no right to do so. Every Loan Act that had been passed, including the Act of 1884, expressly stated that the interest on the money borrowed was to be paid out of the consolidated revenue. There was no getting over that. It would be far better for the credit of the colony if the Government now brought in a further supplementary estimate charging that £30,000 to the consolidated revenue instead of taking it out of loan as the Governor in Council had done. What right had they to do any such thing? Where did they get their authority for doing it? There was no bargain made either with the colony or with the English investors that they were to be paid that interest out of their own money; and he was quite sure that when the fact became known at home it would act in a most prejudicial manner on the interests of the colony.

Question put and passed; the House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the resolutions passed in Committee of Supply.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the resolutions be now adopted.

Question put and passed.

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

LIQUOR BILL.

The SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that I have received a message from the Legislative Council, stating that they have agreed to the Legislative Assembly's amendment on their amendment, and to the consequential amendment on the Liquor Bill.

BRITISH COMPANIES BILL No 2.

The SPEAKER: I have also to report to the House that I have received a message from the Legislative Council, stating that they have agreed to the British Companies Bill, with the amendments indicated in the accompanying schedule in which amendments the Council invite the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the consideration in committee of the Council's amendments was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

GOLD FIELDS HOMESTEAD LEASES BILL.

The SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that I have received a message from the Legislative Council, stating that they have agreed to the Gold Fields Homestead Leases Bill, with the amendments indicated in the accompanying schedule, in which amendments the Council invite the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the consideration in committee of the Council's amendments was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

CROWN LANDS ACT OF 1884 AMENDMENT BILL.

The SPEAKER: I have also to report the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that the Council have agreed to this Bill with amendments indicated in an accompanying schedule, in which amendments the Council invite the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS, the consideration in committee of the Council's amendments was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

WAYS AND MEANS.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of Ways and Means.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1886-7, a further sum, not exceeding £1,683,436, be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1885-6, a further sum, not exceeding £100,902 4s. 10d., be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1886-7, a further sum, not exceeding £123,000, be provided by the issue of Treasury bills.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the resolutions to the House; and the resolutions were adopted.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that Bills be brought in founded on the resolutions.

Question put and passed.

TREASURY BILLS BILL.

FIRST READING.

The COLONIAL TREASURER presented a Bill to authorise the issue of Treasury bills, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed; and on the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 2.

FIRST READING.

The COLONIAL TREASURER presented a Bill to authorise the appropriation out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of certain further sums towards the service of the year ending on the last day of June, 1887, and of the year ended on the last day of June, 1886, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed; and on the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker, — I move that this House do now adjourn. To-morrow, we propose, after the private business, which is not very long, to take, first the consideration in committee of the resolutions about New Guinea; then the second reading and committee of the Treasury Bills Bill; after that we will deal with the measures sent back from the Legislative Council; and then with the Appropriation Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at half-past 9 o'clock.