

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 1886

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 25 November, 1886.

Questions.—Question without Notice—imported wooden railway gates.—Motion for Adjournment—Importing railway material.—Message from the Legislative Council—Fortitude Valley Railway.—Building Societies Bill—consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's message.—Motion for Adjournment—administration of insolvent estates.—South Brisbane Mechanics Institute Land Sale Bill—consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's amendments.—The Bowen Prospecting Association.—Administration of British New Guinea—committee.—Treasury Bills Bill—second reading.—Gold Fields Homestead Leases Bill—consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's amendments.—Crown Lands Act Amendment Bill—consideration of Legislative Council's amendments.—Message from the Legislative Council.—British Companies Bill No. 2.—Legislative Council's amendments.—Appropriation Bill No. 2.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. BULCOCK asked the Minister for Works—

1. Whether there has been a trial survey of a railway line made yet from about the Normanby station through Enoggera towards Samford?
2. Is it the intention of the Government to include in their future railway policy provision for the construction of such a line?
3. If the Government decide to stop the Northern Railway line at Hughenden, and appropriate the unexpended balance voted for that line towards the construction of a coast railway in the North, will they be prepared to deal similarly with the Southern and Western line when constructed as far as Charleville, and appropriate the unexpended balance voted for that line to the construction of a line in Enoggera towards Samford?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) replied—

1. Yes.
2. The future railway policy of the Government will be made known to the House at the proper time.
3. Until final decision has been arrived at on this question, I am unable to give the hon. member the assurance he asks for.

Mr. KATES asked the Premier—

Whether it is the intention of the Government to consider a certain petition presented to and received by this House on the 29th July last year, signed by 659 persons, who stated that they were acquainted with the particulars of the appeal case "Ransome v. Brydon, Jones, and Company," the result of which they allege to have been a miscarriage of justice, and praying the House to appoint a select committee to investigate the matter?

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) replied—

The petition referred to by the hon. member was brought under the consideration of the House on the 2nd October, 1885, when a motion made by the hon. member for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the allegations of the petition was rejected on division. The Government are not aware of anything to lead to the conclusion that a miscarriage of justice occurred in the case of Ransome v. Brydon, Jones, and Co., and do not think that any action could properly be taken either by the House or by the Government in the matter.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

IMPORTED WOODEN RAILWAY GATES.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I would like to ask the Minister for Works, without notice, a question in reference to a matter that has been reported to me. I have been informed that wooden railway gates have been imported by the Government, and I would ask whether it is a fact that gates of that description have been imported for the department?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not know that the department has imported wooden railway gates, but they

have imported American timber for the purpose of making railway gates. I objected to that very strongly, as it appeared to me that we have got timber in the colony capable of being manufactured into railway gates. The Chief Engineer assured me, however, that from the large span of the gates a peculiarly light timber was required, and that our timber was too heavy to be suitable for such a purpose. That was the information I received. Nevertheless, I came to the conclusion that we have timber adapted for making railway gates, and I put a stop to importing timber for railway gates altogether.

Mr. NORTON: It has been reported to me, not that timber has been imported for making the gates, but that cases of railway gates have been imported for the Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not aware that wooden railway gates have been imported. There may have been iron gates imported.

Mr. NORTON: No; wooden gates of Oregon pine.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Do I understand you to refer to wooden gates?

Mr. NORTON: Yes; gates of Oregon pine.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The timber has been imported, but the gates have been made here. I have, however, come to the conclusion that we have timber of our own suitable for the purpose, and have put a stop to the importations.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

IMPORTING RAILWAY MATERIAL.

Mr. ALAND said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to say a few words on this matter, and will conclude with a motion for adjournment. I think this is very much like a case of locking the stable door after the horse has gone. I am surprised at the remarks made by the Minister for Works. The hon. gentleman has now been in office three years, and during the whole of that time we have heard the same thing from him that he has told us to-day, that material has been ordered from home, and he has taken steps not to have any more brought into the colony. I think it is about the most monstrous thing we have heard in this House, that for making railway gates or any portion of railway gates we should send to America or England for timber. Then the Minister tells us that no more will be sent for. I say he ought to be seized with the working of his department. We have no need to import even iron railway gates. I am quite sure that when we add the cost of freight and insurance to the price of such articles it will be found that they can be made as cheap in the colony as they can be obtained from England or America. All that rough ironwork can be made quite as cheap here as we can import it; it is only the fine castings that cannot perhaps be made as cheap in the colony as they can be got elsewhere. I do not wonder that the ironworkers of the colony should wait on the Premier from time to time when such extravagant things are being carried out. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—It is a very great misfortune for the country that the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba is not Minister for Works. If the hon. member will permit me I will remind him that during the whole time I have been in the Works Department only once has this matter been brought under my notice. When the indent is sent home for material we generally order a large quantity, and when the matter now under consideration was brought before me

I at once declined to order any more timber from America for the purpose of making railway gates. But hon. members would imagine from the remarks made by the member for Toowoomba that I had been repeating this thing, that I had been going on for months and months ordering this timber from America. I deny it. I have taken special care from the moment I went into the office that any material that could be manufactured in the colony should not be indented from home.

Mr. NORTON: Except lamps.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member for Port Curtis reminds me that he approved of a large indent for ironwork, and it was not for bridges. The engineers, as a rule, are extremely anxious to send home for such work, as it saves them the trouble of designing; and I want it to be fully understood that I am alive to all these things, notwithstanding the censure of the hon. member for Toowoomba. I know that every Minister for Works, as well as myself, has great difficulty in getting the officers of the department to carry out his wishes; and there is always difficulty in endeavouring to force upon the officers of the department the necessity for getting the work done in the colony. For instance, in the case of the bridges required for the South Coast Railway, by getting the work done at home the Chief Engineer would be saved the trouble of designing and all the trouble and bother in the matter; but the Government have come to the conclusion that these works should be done in the colony, and I think the Government are fairly and justly entitled to the greatest consideration for the amount of work they have had done within the colony, and their departure from the practice of previous Governments in that respect. I am quite sure the hon. member, Mr. Aland, will, in his calmer moments, feel ashamed of the attack he has made on me to-day. I take this opportunity of saying that the hon. member is one of a company that contracts for ironwork, and there is no mistake about it the cloven foot will come out. I had no desire to refer to this, but the hon. member is one of that company, and I believe you are one yourself, sir, and the hon. member is endeavouring to bring grist to his own mill.

Mr. ALAND: Yes; for the good of the Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will say that the Toowoomba Foundry Company have done good work for the Government, and done it economically and cheaper than we could get it done elsewhere. I am very desirous indeed of seeing all the work done in the colony that can possibly be done here, and I do not think I deserve the censure from the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba that I got.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—We are all quite willing to give the hon. gentleman credit for trying to do his best to have the work done in the colony that can be done in it, and we are quite willing to believe his statement when he says he stopped the importation of timber for making railway gates; but the statement has been made to a member of this House, by a gentleman who saw these gates on board the "Jumna," that not only the timber but the manufactured gates have been imported complete, only wanting the heads to be put on. Although the Minister for Works may be quite correct in saying that he stopped the importation of American timber, it is quite possible that the order for these gates may have gone with the indent, for they would never have been sent out without an indent.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: All the American timber was ordered by the hon. gentleman's Government.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: We are all in the habit of hearing a good deal about Yankee speculators, but I do not think there are any of them so speculative as to send a cargo of railway gates to the Queensland Government, and marked "Queensland Government," unless they received an order for them. That is not likely. They are very acute, and too acute to throw away their money in that way, and the Minister for Works should make an inquiry into this matter. The hon. gentleman says he has great difficulty in getting the heads of the department to do as he wishes, and it is just possible that in this instance they have done more than he wishes, and he had better inquire if there is any truth in the report that has come to the ear of a member of this House. I am afraid it is an extremely likely report, as I do not think any man would invent a story about having actually seen those railway gates unless he did see them. As to American timber being ordered by the previous Government, that is too far-fetched, as the timber might have grown since the late Government left office; I do not think anyone will believe that statement. Whatever sins the late Government may have been guilty of they do not want to take upon themselves the sins of the present Government, and I do not think they are guilty of that sin. At any rate it would be well for the Minister for Works to inquire and see whether those railway gates have not been ordered without his consent. I never heard before of timber being imported for the manufacture of railway gates, and I should have thought we have good enough timber in the colony to make railway gates, and I believe all over the colonies they have been made from native timber. But this is even worse than importing the timber, because it is importing the manufactured article itself.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very glad the leader of the Opposition has referred to this matter, because it is only by referring to these things in the House that we may expect steps to be taken to prevent a recurrence of cases of this kind. Why we should send to America for timber to make railway gates I am at a loss to know, especially as we have timber of a far superior quality in this colony, and not much heavier than this Oregon pine. In the contract I had for the Maryborough and Gympie Railway, I know the whole of the gates were made of Queensland beech. It is quite possible the order for the gates referred to was sent to America without the knowledge of the Minister, as there have been scores of instances of the kind, but unless they are brought forward in this House they will be continually repeated. It is a great shame, while we have so many mechanics in this colony, that we should not only import timber of this kind, but that we should actually have such things manufactured out of the colony. I will take advantage of the opportunity to refer to another matter, as I think it should be continually kept before the Minister for Works, in the interest of the ironworkers of the colony. This House some time ago decided that our locomotives should be constructed in Queensland, and nothing in that direction has been done up to the present time. We see half-a-dozen of them on the wharf now, which means an expense of £15,000 to this colony, and we are assured that there are ten more to come. I think we have a right to see that the Government carry out the resolution passed in this House, and to see that at least they make an effort in that direction by calling for tenders for the construction of locomotives in the colony,

and see what difference there will be in the price as compared with the imported article. I do not think the hon. member for Toowoomba thought of his interest in the Toowoomba Foundry Company when he spoke. I believe he had a higher object, and spoke rather in the interests of the mechanics and ironworkers throughout the colony. I give the Ministry credit for what they are doing as regards the construction of iron bridges, and I hope they will follow up the good work by making some effort towards calling for tenders for the construction of the locomotives, which we shall so much require. We see on the wharf, and under order from home, locomotives to the extent of nearly £40,000, and I think it is time that should be stopped. Victoria has for many years had that sort of work done in the colony; New South Wales is now going to commence; and freetraders may say what they like, there is nothing for it but protection for the industries of these colonies.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I sympathise to a great extent with what has been said by the hon. gentleman who has just sat down. Now, with respect to these locomotives, it must be remembered that at the time they were ordered, no suggestion had been made, as far as I know, that they could be constructed in Queensland. The suggestion that they could be constructed here at a reasonable advance on their cost imported was only made lately. I should be very glad indeed to see locomotives made in Queensland, and I hope my hon. colleague the Minister for Works will see his way, when we require several more, as we must from time to time, to give the ironworkers and ironmasters of Brisbane an opportunity of tendering for them, to see if they can make them at anything like a reasonable advance on the cost of the imported article. By a reasonable advance, I mean 20 or 30 per cent.; I do not think we should be justified in paying double the price, but we might reasonably go up to 30 per cent. As to the railway gates, that, I believe, is a very small matter indeed. A mistake was made, but it is not likely to be repeated. I can assure hon. members of that. There is no doubt as to what my hon. colleague said—that there is in the department a very strong, persistent course of practice to get the work imported; and Ministers have to set their face against it as persistently. The Government are determined, as far as possible, not to allow anything to be imported which we can make in the colony. I can assure hon. members that every proposal for an indent from any department, for the importation of goods that can be made here, is very closely scrutinised.

Mr. SALKELD said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very glad that attention has been called to this matter, because I am persuaded that unless notice were taken of a matter of this kind it would go on.

The PREMIER: No, it would not.

Mr. SALKELD: I hope not. I was amused to hear the Minister for Works speak of the trouble he had to get the officials of his department to do as he wishes. No doubt he thinks he gets his own way, but really the chief officials under him get their way, though he does not know it. In the early days we had iron railway stations brought out on the recommendation of the officials. Common-sense people who objected to it were simply pooh-poohed; whatever their experience or common sense might be, it did not matter; the professional men must have their own way. Even now, I believe many things are imported for the Government, which, by the proper steps being taken, might be made here as cheaply, or more cheaply, and of better

quality. I think it was rather a pity that the Minister for Works should have alluded to the fact that the hon. member for Toowoomba was a shareholder in an iron company. I think it is very much to the credit of the hon. member that he should put his money into a thing of that sort and help our industries along. It seems as if the Minister for Works must have mixed with a bad lot somewhere; he seems to think that everyone looks to his own interest only, and is actuated solely by a desire to bring grist to the mill. That is a miserable sort of opinion to have. A gentleman told me only to-day that when he went to see the Minister for Works about a railway, the Minister at once came to the conclusion that he had some land on the line, and seemed very much surprised to hear that he had no land anywhere near it, and would not be affected in any way whatever—in fact, the Minister seemed to doubt in his own mind whether it was true. I hope, now that attention has been called to this matter, that the Government will exercise more careful supervision, and take steps to have more articles manufactured in the colony than at the present time. If they went about it with hearty goodwill they would find a good many things that might be manufactured in the colony with advantage.

Mr. SHERIDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I am quite sure it was a slip of the tongue that caused the Chief Secretary to say he hoped to see the locomotives in future manufactured by the ironmasters of Brisbane. I would remind the Chief Secretary that there are other ironmasters in the colony quite as capable of manufacturing locomotives as any in Brisbane. I have nothing to say against the Brisbane ironmasters, but I cannot sit still and hear other institutions ignored that have quite as good a right to get a share in the manufacture of the public property as anyone else. It gave me great pleasure to hear the Chief Secretary say that for the future he hoped to have locomotives and other material manufactured in the colony; and if that is carried into effect, I hope the other excellent foundries outside Brisbane will not be forgotten.

The PREMIER: Of course, that was a slip of the tongue.

Mr. KATES said: Mr. Speaker,—There seems to be a conspiracy this afternoon to attack the Minister for Works—he has been attacked in front, in the rear, and on the flank. When he says that the mistake of importing timber from America will not be repeated, I am sure he could say no more. All I can say is, that whatever fault hon. members may find with him, a more honest man they could not get as Minister for Works.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—Something very extraordinary must have happened to-day when we see the lion and the lamb lying down together. Perhaps the Warwick to St. George railway has something to do with it. One remark was made, sir, by the Minister for Works, which I do not think should be allowed to pass without further reference to it. The hon. gentleman told the House that the American timber for gates, which originated this discussion, was ordered by the previous Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BLACK: And consequently he inferred from that that he is not to blame for the importation of this timber. That is a most extraordinary statement. I can hardly realise it is possible that an order given for timber rather more than three years ago is only being executed now. Surely the hon. the Minister for Works, having had control of his department for three years, must know what the indents are. Surely

they are submitted for his supervision. He complains that he is unable to control his department; that while his officers are pulling one way he is pulling another.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I rise to a point of order. I will not allow the hon. member to put words into my mouth that I never used. I never said I was unable to control my department. I can control anyone, sir; and I hope the hon. gentleman will not misquote me.

Mr. BLACK: I say again, sir, that the hon. gentleman led me, at all events, to infer that he had lost the grasp of his department. That is tantamount to what he said. I would like to know, sir, who sends these indents home. Are they sent home without the hon. gentleman's knowledge? Here is a most extraordinary state of affairs. Why, Mr. Speaker, a little over twelve months ago the colony went to very considerable expense in preparing specimens of timber to be sent home to the exhibition to show the people there the value of our timbers—to show that we are actually in a position to export timber to England if necessary; and notwithstanding that, we now find timber imported into the colony from America, and the hon. gentleman knows little or nothing about it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know everything about it.

Mr. BLACK: That is a most lamentable confession. I can find some reasonable excuse for the Government in connection with the locomotives. They were probably ordered at a time when the different industries of the colony were prosperous—when there was no dearth of employment such as we find at the present time; but when it comes to importing gates, Mr. Speaker, it does not matter how prosperous the colony was, there is no necessity for sending to America for timber. It is possible that the timber may have been ordered for gates of a particular pattern, but surely the Works Department has enough ability in it to design some other sort of gates, which would answer the purpose equally well and which could be constructed of colonial timber. The hon. Minister for Works thinks he is entitled to great consideration for getting so much work done in the colony; but, sir, it is only very lately that the Government have taken the matter in hand in consequence of the agitation going on outside the House—in consequence of the number of unemployed going about the country just now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Do you suppose the Government take the slightest notice of what you say?

Mr. BLACK: Will the hon. gentleman keep quiet for a few minutes? He will have an opportunity of replying later on. He says he is fully alive to all that is going on. I doubt very much that he knew anything about these gates until the matter was referred to this afternoon.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know all about your actions, at all events.

Mr. BLACK: The hon. gentleman thinks himself very clever in his own department, but I can advise him to supervise his subordinates a little more than he is doing. They get at him, and although the hon. gentleman gives himself credit for Draconic severity, he, after all, is a very easy individual to mould, and the department is moulding him pretty well to suit their own purposes.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—This conversation is exactly after my own heart, and I should like to maintain it. There is something muddled about these gates, because we were told first that the timber only was ordered, and then that the gates came out.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : It grew into gates on the passage out.

Mr. W. BROOKES : Of course, if an order was given for timber to make gates the department at that particular time must have been in a very peculiar state. We might as well import timber to make chairs and churns, and a thousand other things that come from America. It is contrary to common sense to suppose that was the case. They can make these things in America, where they have the finest appliances in the world—from axe-handles upwards. We might just as well import the wood to make axe handles. Do we import the wood to make buggies? No; we import them ready-made, as we see them in any coachbuilder's shop. When the hon. the Premier was speaking it struck me that there was a little weak point in what he said. It is not often that that happens in anything the hon. gentleman says, and perhaps for that reason I ought to mention it. With regard to these locomotives, the hon. gentleman said that they were ordered at a time when no suggestion had been made to the Government that locomotives could be made in the colony. Very well; I trust, Mr. Speaker, that I shall not be pressing unduly against the Government when I say that I would prefer to regard it from this point of view: that it is the duty of the Government to see if these things cannot be made, and to get information from the manufacturers in the first instance. If it had not been for the agitation that had been started for the manufacture of locomotives in the colony, it appears that the Government would not have started them. That is my point. I think it is the duty of the Government to look after these things—that is, any Government, not this or that, either present or future, so that I would rather have had it put in this way: that the Government had taken the matter into consideration, and made inquiries to see whether or not locomotives could be made here. However, we need not dwell upon that. We are now told that everything that can be made in the colony will be made in it, and it is only fair to the Government to say, with reference to these locomotives, that they were ordered at a time when the Railway Department was very hardly pressed, and they were obliged to send the order somewhere. Of course, these circumstances have passed away, and I think it is only fair to say that the present Government during the last three years have had their eyes opened to the necessity of adopting this protective policy. There were some gleams of the said policy being adopted by the late Government. I have very little doubt that if the late Government had continued in office they would have been as protective as this Government. Any Government is bound to follow, more or less, a strong and decided movement of public opinion. But I am quite satisfied with things as they are going on now with reference to the acknowledgment of the value of the precepts of protection. With regard to departmental matters I do not think it fair to expect the Minister for Works or any other Minister to know absolutely everything, and a Minister has to fight against an enormous and almost unconquerable amount of *vis inertia* amongst the officers of his department. It will take some time, and require any Minister for Works to be particularly firm, before he clears out of his office this wretched tendency to send indents to England. That is what the hon. member for Ipswich was talking about. Hundreds and thousands of things are now sent for to England which could be made in this colony—all because it saves the storekeepers and clerks and others interested so very much trouble to send an order to an English manufacturer; and

it will take all that any Minister can do to stop this tendency. So far from attaching any blame to the present Minister for Works or Government, I can only say that what they have done so far has surpassed anything I ever expected to see from any Government. They are the best Government we have had, so far, on the protective line.

Mr. NORTON : More or less.

Mr. W. BROOKES : Of course, it is entirely a matter of degree. I do not mean to say that they have reached my ideal of what they ought to do, but they have done very well, and I think the colony, from one end to the other, is satisfied with what they have done in that direction. All we want is for them to go on on the same lines. As they proceed the light will shine more clearly, and the public will come to see it. All this talk about the unemployed arises from the large importation of articles into the colony which we could very easily have made in the colony. It does seem a pity that our skilled artisans should be wanting work, but, Mr. Speaker, I must confess I do not think the unemployed deserve quite so much attention as they are receiving. Let us take the case of a skilled artisan—say an engine-fitter. The cases of engine-fitters really starving from want of employment are very few indeed. I would like to see opportunities increase for finding men employment. I remember a long while ago a working brassfitter who had come out here and could find no work at all to do in Brisbane. Why? Because these protective ideas had not even been sown in the minds of the people of the colony. He was obliged to betake himself to Victoria.

Mr. NORTON : How long ago was that?

Mr. W. BROOKES : That was close upon ten years ago. Since then we have had the McIlwraith Government, and they did something. We know—at all events, I think I know—that they showed an inclination to take up the protective question whenever it seemed likely to be popular. The present Government have taken it up, and they have taken it up in a very satisfactory manner, and I do not think it is quite right to hunt and hound the Minister for Works in this way.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : I do not care about it.

Mr. NORTON : He rather likes it.

Mr. W. BROOKES : As for saying he has no grasp over his department, it is nonsense. There has never been a Minister for Works with an equal grasp, and he has certainly shown a way of dealing with land or railway deputations. Nineteen times out of twenty, when land or railway deputations have waited upon him, when the Minister for Works has put the question to them, "Have you any land that will be improved in value by this railway?" the question has gone straight home. Very few indeed have been able to say that they were perfectly disinterested. I know of an instance where a person went, I think, by himself to the Minister to apply for some railway. The Minister said, "How much land have you in the neighbourhood?" and the question irritated the gentleman so much that he took his departure promptly, and that deputation, if so it may be termed, closed. There is a good deal of selfishness knocking about, no doubt, but when we advocate the protective system we do not defend selfishness.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : Oh ! oh !

Mr. W. BROOKES : We do not, indeed. There seems to be something humorous in that remark. It is just as humorous as this, that I prefer my own children to anybody else's. Is that

humorous, or is it an instinct of human affection? And on a wider platform, I prefer to find work for the people in the colony than for the United States, or Birmingham, or Germany. That is all. I am very glad that the Minister for Works was able to say what he did. Of course, there are things he does not understand, but we cannot blame him for that; he cannot know everything; but this I will undertake to say, that since he took charge of the Department of Works it has been better managed than it has ever been managed since Queensland became a colony.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not know who the anonymous member is who espied those railway gates on board the "Jumna," but the whole thing strikes me as being a sort of a "storm in a teapot." The gates are there, and nobody knows how they came, or by whom they were ordered; and the Minister is being bullied on both sides of the House because he does not know everything about every indent which is sent home from his department. The Minister for Works occupies a position which gives him many opportunities of benefiting his friends, if he chooses to do so; and no doubt he has made many enemies by not benefiting his friends and their brothers and cousins and aunts, and all their relations. For my part, I congratulate the Minister for Works on the fearless way in which he has carried on the management of his department, and not allowed himself to be got at by railway contractors and people of questionable character, and even by members of this Assembly. I have seen a good deal of that in my time in Queensland, and I am very well satisfied with the way in which the Works Department is being carried on, and hope it will continue. I daresay the hon. member for Ipswich would like to have a hand in the control of the Ipswich workshops. He finds that he has not been able to shove his "tommy-shop" friends into them as he would like; he finds the Minister has too tight a grip of his department. There are many men, no doubt, who grumble at the way in which the department is at present conducted, but I, for my part, congratulate the hon. gentleman on the way in which he has, as a rule, conducted it.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—It is rather a fortunate thing that this debate has taken place before the House adjourned for the recess. So far as it has gone, the discussion has been rather a useful one. I am not at all surprised that your hon. colleague should have got up and spoken as he did. In a colony like this, where there is an immense supply of timber, and where the timber trade is in a very depressed condition—a state of things very largely owing to the competition of American timber—it is not surprising that hon. members, having the interests of the colony at heart, should object to the Government actually importing wooden railway gates from America.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Why did you not discover that?

Mr. NORTON: I think I discovered it. The hon. gentleman claimed just now that he had control over everything; but I do not think he has control over himself sometimes from the remarks he jerks out. The hon. gentleman has had an opportunity of saying what he wanted to say, and he might have given us some information instead of making rude remarks, as he has certainly done upon more than one occasion to-day. In regard to these gates, I say again that I think it most fortunate that the matter was discovered at the present time. They were not ordered by the late Government, nor was the timber from which they were made. They must have been ordered by the hon. gentleman himself. There is no reason

to doubt that they were. My reason for saying that they were not ordered by the late Government was that before the late Government left office, and before I accepted office, there was a number of American pine logs in the railway yard that had been lying there for a long time, simply because they were only used for a particular purpose. That timber lasted for a very long time, and I do not know who ordered it. Very probably it was ordered by the hon. gentleman when he was in office before. At any rate it was not ordered during the time I was there, and I suppose it kept the Government going until the hon. gentleman ordered, not the timber, but the ready-made gates. I do not suppose the present Government are so superior in regard to their actions, in connection with what can be made in the colony, to the previous Government. I would ask hon. members to look not only at this town, but to other towns in the colony, and the workshops that are now engaged in contracting for rolling-stock. Who started them—was it the present Government? No; when the present Government came into office the Minister for Works began to get railway rolling-stock made in the Ipswich workshops, which had previously been made under contract by those very firms that are now scattered all over the country. My friend, the hon. member for Townsville, initiated that system, and it is a system that does great credit, and I am sure one which he will get credit for in every part of the colony. The Minister for Works must know quite well that three years ago there were serious complaints made by contractors that work was being made in the Ipswich workshops which had ordinarily been made by them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is very good work done in the Ipswich workshops.

Mr. NORTON: Very good work indeed is done there—excellent work—and it is all the better, because the timber is kept a long time, and is well seasoned. That would, of course, account for the work being done there standing well. But, at the same time, I say we have no right, having initiated a system which everyone admits to be a very good one, of giving employment to numbers of contractors in every large town in the colony, to have that work done in the Ipswich workshops. In doing that the hon. gentleman is acting diametrically opposite to the principle he now advocates; and I am glad this discussion has taken place, although I do not want to throw too much blame upon the hon. gentleman in connection with it, because I believe the indent was signed by him without his knowing that the gates were included in it. I think it will make him more careful in connection with matters of that kind.

Question put and negatived.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

FORTITUDE VALLEY RAILWAY.

The SPEAKER: I have to report that I have received a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that the Council approve of the plans, sections, and book of reference of this railway.

BUILDING SOCIETIES BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S MESSAGE.

On the motion of Mr. WAKEFIELD, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into committee to consider the Legislative Council's amendments in this Bill.

On clause 26, which the Council had amended so as to provide that a registered society may receive deposits on loans at interest "for a term not less than two months"—

Mr. WAKEFIELD, in moving that the Assembly do not insist upon their disagreement to that amendment, said he regretted that the Legislative Council could not see their way to forego their amendment in the clause, as it would restrict the operations of building societies very much, and he believed that at no very distant date it would be necessary, from the large scope building societies were assuming, to omit the restrictions. But rather than see the Bill thrown aside, as there was a number of good clauses in it, he thought they had better accept the amendment.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was glad his hon. friend had taken the course he had, because he considered the Bill in itself a very good one, and one that would give a certain legal standing to those societies which they did not at present possess. He had no hesitation in expressing his opinion that not only that restriction, but the limitation as to deposits, would be entirely swept away, and greater confidence would obtain in building societies at no very distant date. He could only attribute the present narrow feeling to the fact that certain terminable building societies in the colony had at an earlier time obtained an unenviable notoriety, and seemed to be badly managed. He considered that the amendment was unnecessary, but as he did not wish to see the Bill lost after their labours he thought the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill had done well to accept it, even with the restriction imposed by the Legislative Council.

Mr. ALAND said he did not feel disposed to allow the remarks of the hon. the Treasurer to pass unchallenged—that terminable building societies had attained an unenviable notoriety in the colony. He thought the Treasurer should not be so sweeping in his remarks. He knew that in the town in which he lived there had been six terminable building societies. The sixth was now in its fourth year; and those six societies had worked admirably. Every one connected with them had been satisfied—not the slightest hitch had taken place, or loss been incurred, and all had worked well within the time in which those societies did work out. He did not think because the hon. gentleman had a fad for those permanent building societies, and wanted to create them into large financial institutions, that he should talk so sweepingly about terminable building societies. He thought the permanent building societies were travelling considerably beyond their record; that they were really engaging in matters they ought not to engage in, and that they were going altogether too far. He thought it was a mistake to legislate for them to be allowed such privileges.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee did not insist on their disagreement with the amendment of the Legislative Council.

The report was adopted, and, on the motion of Mr. WAKEFIELD, it was ordered that a message be sent to the Legislative Council intimating that the House did not insist on their disagreement with the Legislative Council's amendment on the Bill.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

ADMINISTRATION OF INSOLVENT ESTATES.

Mr. HAMILTON: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move the adjournment of the House in order to bring under the notice of hon. members what I consider on the face of it to be a great injustice. I think some inquiry, on account of the peculiar

circumstances of the case, should be made by the House into it. It appears that in 1867 a person named James Young Bonar was adjudicated insolvent. At that time he had a number of properties about Brisbane valued at £4,000, which are now estimated to be worth £100,000. At that date he mortgaged a portion of his estate for £900 to Mr. Cribb; and on the 29th January last year an advertisement appeared in the papers, inserted by the official assignee:—

"To-morrow.—Equity of Redemption.—By order of the Official Assignee.—All the Official Assignee's right, title, and interest, if any, in the following insolvent estates:—Frederick Bauer, J. Wybonar, A. J. Kosvitz.—James R. Dickson and Co. have been favoured with instructions, by the Official Assignee (Alex. Raff, Esq.), to sell by public auction, at their mart, Queen street, on Friday, 30th January, at 11 o'clock.—All the Official Assignee's right, title, and interest, if any, in the insolvent estates of Frederick Bauer, J. Wybonar, A. J. Kosvitz.—Terms cash."

It appears that the J. Wybonar in reality referred to J. Y. Bonar, and the right, title, etc., was sold for £1. Now, I saw an account of this in *Figaro* a year since, and I took no notice of the matter. But subsequently I saw it referred to again in that paper, and I heard that the widow, after seeing the notice referred to in that particular publication, came all the way from Maryborough with his heir, her son, to ascertain if she could come into possession of this property, which is said to be worth £100,000. This poor woman, who is, I believe, penniless, made inquiry, but could not get any satisfaction whatever.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The article was written by you.

Mr. HAMILTON: That is just as true a statement as is ordinarily made by the Minister for Mines. Day after day, when asked questions in connection with his department, subsequent information proves that his statements have not one atom of truth in them. I do not mean to accuse the Minister for Mines of having been guilty of untruth but of ignorance of his own department, and, of course, he makes these misstatements in ignorance. I know nothing about the affair. I was not going to take any action in the matter, believing that another hon. member was going to bring it up; but when I heard that that member was not going to bring it before the House, and when I heard that this widow of a man worth £100,000 was walking about the streets starving and could not get any information, I thought it my duty to bring it before the House. After this article appeared, Mr. Goertz, whom we all have heard of, remembered that he was a creditor on this estate, and he wrote to Mr. Raff, who had been official assignee, and under whose instructions the sale of the estate took place, protesting as a creditor to the transfer of any property in the Bonar estate, as the sale had not been advertised as directed by law, and because he, as a creditor, had not received legal notice. In reply to that, Mr. Raff wrote to the following effect:—That, so far as he was aware, there was no property in the estate, and that it had been merely sold *pro forma* to close matters; that at the time of the insolvency Pickering was official trustee; that the only secured encumbrance on the estate amounted to the £900 represented in the mortgage to Robert Cribb; that the creditors not buying the estate so as to divide it, Robert Cribb foreclosed, and that, after foreclosing, Robert Cribb sold it to his son, John Cribb. Now, I am not versed in law, but I believe that in a case of that kind, when a person mortgages property to another for a debt, the mortgagee has three processes by which he can satisfy that debt. One is to sell the property under the mortgage, upon which he must give the mortgagor any surplus that remains after satisfying his own

debt. Another process is to enter possession, receive the rents and profits, and sell when a favourable opportunity takes place, giving the surplus to the mortgagor. The third process is foreclosure by order of the court, in which case he takes the property for the debt, a certain time being given to the mortgagor to redeem the property—I believe three or four months generally. If he does not take the opportunity during that three or four months to redeem, then the right of redemption is gone, and, therefore, there is no equity of redemption to sell. The fact of the official assignee advertising last year—eighteen years after the insolvency—the sale of the equity of redemption, proves that no foreclosure had taken place, which is now said to have taken place, or that the official assignee was wasting Government money in advertising the sale of an equity of redemption when there was none to sell. On that account I think an inquiry ought to take place regarding this matter, to see whether, when the official assignee advertised the equity of redemption for sale, there was anything to sell. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—It is very absurd to bring forward a matter of this kind at the end of the session, when there is no means of ascertaining whether the statements made by a member are correct or incorrect. I believe the whole case is entirely imaginary. I believe that the equity of redemption of the property of a man named Bonar, who became insolvent many years ago, was put up for sale by auction, and bought for £1. I believe that was so; but the important fact is that, a mistake having occurred in the advertisement, the sale was cancelled and the £1 was returned, so the matter is now exactly as it was when the man went insolvent in 1867. It is simply a mare's nest: there is nothing in it. If anybody was entitled to the property, or if there were any creditors in the estate, they could assert their rights, as the agreement to buy was not carried out in consequence of the mistake in the advertisement.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I remember hearing something about this case about eighteen months ago. It occurs to me that, as the matter now stands, the official trustee will still have power to deal with the property. I should like to know how it really stands at the present time.

The PREMIER: As it was.

Mr. NORTON: Yes, but that is as it ought not to be. An insolvent estate ought to be wound-up within a reasonable time, so that if there are any creditors they may receive the benefit of it.

The PREMIER: If there are any creditors who have any claims on the estate, the matter can be dealt with by the Government, on application, if there is anything to wind-up.

Mr. NORTON: The Government may not know anything about it. I think that attention having been called to the matter, it is desirable that there should be some inquiries made, and that if there is anything in the estate to deal with it should be disposed of. I believe there are some members of the family of the insolvent now in Maryborough. It seems to be an extraordinary case.

The PREMIER: It is a mare's nest.

Mr. NORTON: I do not think it is all a mare's nest, and I think it would be well if there was some inquiry into the matter.

Mr. CHUBB said: Mr. Speaker,—The case seems to be this: that in the early days of the

colony when a man became insolvent, some person was, by order of the court, specially appointed official assignee in the estate under the then insolvency law, and he remained official assignee until he was discharged from his duties. As Mr. Pickering was one of the official assignees he was, by order of the court, appointed official assignee in this estate. When he died Mr. Raff, who succeeded him, was appointed official assignee, I believe, in all the estates in which Mr. Pickering was assignee at the time of his death. Then the new insolvency law came into force, and an officer was appointed, called the official trustee, in whom the property of insolvent estates is vested by order of the court. The estate under discussion remained in the hands of Mr. Raff, and, as he wanted to close it up in some way, he sold whatever interest there might be in the properties. According to the paper quoted by the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Raff stated that the mortgagee had taken possession of the property many years before and realised upon it, so that if there was anything to sell it must be the equity of redemption, and that might not be worth a pin's head. Possibly it was advertised simply as a formal matter to get rid of the equity of redemption, if any, and enable Mr. Raff to close the estate. It is probable that Mr. Cribb, or whoever was the mortgagee, had realised on the security in a legal method and left nothing for anybody else.

Mr. FRASER said: Mr. Speaker,—I knew Mr. Bonar very well, and I know this property very well, but I should not have spoken on the question were it not for two or three exaggerated statements made in connection with the matter by the hon. member who has brought it before the House. The hon. member represented Mrs. Bonar as walking the streets of Brisbane penniless. I know that lady, and I am happy to say that she is not penniless, but independent. She came to Brisbane to investigate the matter that has been brought under our notice; she received all the assistance that was necessary, and found that there was nothing in the estate. But the member for Cook further said that this property was worth £100,000. That is not correct. If all Mr. Bonar's property had been left intact up to the present day, at the highest calculation, it might not be worth a quarter of £100,000. I know the property very well, and simply rose to give this information. What the legal position of affairs may be I do not for one moment pretend to say, but I think it would be unfair to let it go forth to this House that the property has been dealt with as alleged, or that the widow of the insolvent is destitute, when the facts are far otherwise.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—It is all very well for the Premier to say that this is an absurd affair, a mare's nest; it is perfectly impossible for anyone to prove that unless an inquiry is made into the matter. The hon. gentleman also objected to the matter being brought forward at the end of the session. I was told that a member on the other side of the House had promised to bring the affair forward, but as he has not done so I have felt it my duty to bring it before the House. The hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Fraser, stated that Mrs. Bonar is not penniless, and that the property is not worth £100,000. But that has nothing to do with the merits of the case, even if the statement is correct. I have, however, heard that it is not correct; that, unfortunately, Mrs. Bonar is not in a very good position, and is consequently not able to pay a lawyer to get satisfactory information about the matter. There was, it appears, a mortgage on the property to the extent of £900, and the hon. member for South Brisbane said the property is worth £25,000.

Mr. FRASER: No; I did not say it was worth £25,000.

Mr. HAMILTON: The hon. member said it was worth a quarter of £100,000.

Mr. FRASER: It might not be worth a tenth of that.

Mr. HAMILTON: It appears, at any rate, that it is a case in which some inquiry should be made to see whether any injustice has been done. The hon. member for Bowen stated that the equity of redemption was probably advertised *pro forma*, and that there was probably nothing to sell. If that is so, it was an utter absurdity to advertise it. When a foreclosure is made by order of the court about three or four months is given to the mortgagee to redeem the property, and if he does not take advantage of that time and redeem it, his right to redeem it is gone and there is no equity of redemption. If a foreclosure did take place in this case, it is simply absurd to talk of selling the equity of redemption at a time when the power of redemption had expired fifteen or sixteen years ago. If the official assignee believed that a foreclosure took place fifteen or sixteen years ago, it is absurd that the funds of the Government should be wasted in advertising the sale of an equity of redemption which did not exist, and I consequently think I am justified in asking for an explanation of the matter.

Question put and negatived.

SOUTH BRISBANE MECHANICS INSTITUTE LAND SALE BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the motion of Mr. ALAND, the House went into committee to consider the Legislative Council's amendments in this Bill.

On new clause 5, as follows:—

"It shall be lawful for the said corporation to raise from time to time upon the security of the land to be so acquired by them as aforesaid such sum or sums of money as may be required for the purposes of the said corporation, but so as that the total sum or sums so raised shall not at any one time exceed the sum of two thousand pounds"—

Mr. ALAND said the amendments which had been made by the Legislative Council consisted of two new clauses, and the first of them gave the corporation of the institute power to borrow a sum not exceeding £2,000. When the Bill was previously before that Committee, an objection was raised by some hon. members to the corporation of the institute being given such a power. At the inquiry before the select committee on the Bill, one or two of the witnesses who were examined said it would be advisable that such a power should be granted, and he presumed their wishes had been in some way or other conveyed to the gentlemen in another place, and that was the reason why they had inserted the new clauses. The facts of the case were somewhat like these: The committee or corporation of the institute had already purchased a piece of land at a cost of something like £1,000. They were now saddled with the purchase of the new piece of land, and had not been able yet to sell the old piece, and it was very possible that as the land market was now in rather a flat condition it would be some time before they could advantageously sell the piece of land of which they were now seized. Having purchased the new piece, it was absolutely necessary they should have the money in order to complete the purchase. He did not think the Committee would like several gentlemen to be held personally liable for the purchase they had entered into on behalf of the institution; and, under the circumstances, he was disposed to accept the new clause, and therefore moved that the new clause 5 be agreed to.

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The PREMIER said the question ought to receive careful consideration. They were asked by the new clause to authorise the trustees of public lands to mortgage their property. By the Act of 1869 they were not allowed to do so. By the exercise of such a power the North Brisbane School of Arts had virtually lost their land. They were now asked to allow the trustees of the South Brisbane Mechanics' Institute to borrow to the extent of £2,000, which was a considerable sum. They wanted to be allowed to raise money to pay for the land they had purchased before they received the proceeds of the sale of the land granted by the Government, but he did not think the clause proposed would give them the facilities they desired. The land they were authorised to mortgage by the clause was the land to be bought with the proceeds of their existing land, and if hon. members would look at the 3rd clause they would find that after the corporation had sold their existing land and paid the expenses of the sale, they were to apply the proceeds of the sale to the purchase of other land in a more convenient situation; and when they had done that, then the new clause inserted by the Legislative Council would permit them to mortgage the newly purchased land. So that what the trustees desired would not be effected by the new clause at all. The most convenient way, he thought, would be for the trustees who were now personally responsible for the purchase of the new land to complete the purchase of it by raising money, as the institute could not buy the land until they had the money to pay for it, and then they would not want to mortgage it. The new clause would not help them in any way, because it only enabled them to mortgage the new property after they had paid for it.

Mr. CHUBB: After they have obtained a legal estate.

The PREMIER said that after they had got a legal estate, bought the land, and got a clean title, then the clause enabled them to mortgage it. That was certainly not the intention of the trustees. He therefore thought it better not to accept the clause. The second new clause was, of course, all wrong in detail. The question required careful consideration.

Mr. CHUBB said that if they once made a precedent by giving the power asked for, they could hardly refuse to grant it afterwards to any other institution. Once open the door to it, then good-by to the restriction. Besides, that clause would not give the power the institution wanted; it would give power to mortgage the land they were going to buy, not what they had at present. There was nothing to prevent those who had already had the land from mortgaging it, and the members of the institution might relieve them from their personal liability.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was averse to the principle of allowing the trustees of such institutions as schools of arts to mortgage the property, and run the risk of, at some future time, losing it altogether. The Chief Secretary had pointed to the case of one body, at any rate, which had lost property through having power to incur a responsibility of that sort.

Mr. GROOM said he thought it would be much better for the members of the institution if they could do without borrowing altogether, even if they had to put up with a building of a less pretentious character than they proposed to have at present. There was a standing monument in the city to the imprudence of giving such bodies power to borrow, in the site formerly occupied by the Brisbane School of Arts. The land with the building on it was sold for £4,000, and the site was now worth £60,000.

The Toowoomba racecourse, in consequence of such a power to mortgage, had passed entirely out of the hands of the people, and exactly the same thing had occurred with the Ipswich racecourse. He knew, and his hon. colleague knew, of a school of arts which at the present moment had a loan round its neck, strangling it; the annual interest was a burden on the unfortunate members, and they hardly knew what to do. The land in that case was given absolutely in trust for a school of arts, and for no other purpose; but by some means it was brought under the Real Property Act and the trust destroyed, and it was now in the hands of a corporation, who had the school of arts entirely at their mercy. At any moment they might exercise their power, and sell the property over the heads of the members. That showed the great necessity for caution in such matters. He thought, under the circumstances, it would be better to let the Bill remain as it was sent to the Legislative Council, limiting the extent of the borrowing power to £500, which the members of the institution could see their way to reduce, rather than increase it to £2,000.

Mr. FOXTON said there was one argument in favour of allowing the institution power to mortgage. When the original power was given them to mortgage up to £500, the property was probably not worth one-tenth of that amount. It was in evidence before the select committee that the allotment at that time was not worth more than £40, yet they had power to borrow up to £500; now the property was worth from £8,000 to £10,000, and they asked leave to borrow £2,000.

The PREMIER: No; on the new land.

Mr. FOXTON said the new land would be made of the value of the old land by the erection of improvements to the extent of the proceeds of the present site. It could be fairly assumed that when they mortgaged it for £2,000 they would have assets to the extent of £8,000 or £10,000, and that was a sufficiently wide margin to make it certain that the property would never fall into the hands of the mortgagees. The reason why other properties which had been alluded to had fallen into the hands of the mortgagees was that the borrowing power was unlimited, and the trustees borrowed to the full value of the securities. The amount for which the Brisbane School of Arts was sold was the highest price that could be obtained at that time, so that in that case they had mortgaged right up to the hilt. In the present case, such a thing as that would be impossible unless property in South Brisbane depreciated to one-fourth of its present value. At the same time, he did not see how the clause was going to help the trustees out of their trouble with regard to paying for the present land; while, as had been pointed out, there was nothing to prevent their mortgaging as soon as they got the freehold.

The PREMIER said what was proposed was to give them power to borrow money on the new land. If they did borrow the money it would be a continuous burden. But he thought they should not depart from the policy of the Trustees of Public Lands Act of 1869, and that trustees of public lands should not be allowed to borrow money at all. The other system was tried up to 1869 with disastrous results, and a rule introduced. He did not see why the rule should be broken through because of the importunity of one particular institution. It should be clearly understood that when public land was given for purposes of that sort, it should not be dealt with by mortgage. He thought it would be better to negative the clause altogether.

Mr. ALAND said he believed that what the corporation wanted was very well understood; but whether the clause met the case or not he did not know. It appeared to be the opinion of the Chief Secretary—which, he need not say, was a very valuable one—that it would not meet the case. Under that clause the trustees wished to mortgage the property they had bought to the extent of £2,000 in order to pay for the purchase of it; then to sell the old property, and out of the proceeds to put up the necessary buildings, so that when the whole business was complete they would have a burden of £2,000. He thought they might amend the clause by making it read, "the land now possessed by them."

The PREMIER said he did not see anything to prevent the society from buying as much land as they liked at the present time and doing what they liked with it. But if they bought land with the proceeds of the present property they must not mortgage it.

Mr. NORTON: That is what they want to do.

The PREMIER: After buying a new property with the proceeds of the present trust property, they wanted to mortgage the new property, and that was what they ought not to be allowed to do. He thought for every reason the clause ought to be disagreed to. It did not in the least degree carry out what the trustees wanted, and would not be of the slightest use to them.

Mr. NORTON said a gentleman connected with the South Brisbane Mechanics Institute had explained to him that the object in view was to erect a good building, and furnish it with all necessary material for such an institution, and that unless they were allowed to borrow they would not have sufficient money from the sale of the present site for that purpose. He understood that the sale of the present land would be sufficient to pay for the land they had bought, and to erect the buildings, but that they would not have enough to purchase the furniture and books required, which would cost a considerable sum. That was the object of asking for the power to borrow. The unfortunate part of the business was that the hon. gentleman who was most intimately connected with the whole matter was tied down, as it were, in the Chair.

Mr. FOXTON said he quite agreed with the general principle, that it was inadvisable that bodies of that sort should have power to borrow, and he thought there was a good deal in the argument that no exception should be made in the case of that particular institution, notwithstanding that they had already had power to borrow. He had pointed that out to show that they merely asked for the same power in an extended form. The difficulty now was that certain gentlemen, without any view to personal gain, had secured a most eligible site immediately at the rear of their present building, and had rendered themselves personally liable to the extent of £2,000 for the purchase money. That would be no very great hardship if the provisions of the Bill were put into operation at once, and the present site was sold forthwith; but the difficulty arose as to what arrangement was to be made for the payment of the purchase money for the new site between the present time and the time when the old building might be sold. It might be two years hence, and in the meantime those gentlemen would be personally responsible through having come forward in the public-spirited manner they had. That was a position from which they should be relieved.

The PREMIER: This clause will not cover them,

Mr. FOXTON said he admitted that; but if the clause were negatived another might be introduced.

The PREMIER: You cannot do that.

Mr. FOXTON: Well, they could amend the clause so as to enable the trustees to mortgage the present site to the amount of £2,000.

The PREMIER: You could do that.

Mr. FOXTON said he saw no reason why it should not be done. There was no risk whatever in it. The trustees would be creating an indebtedness to the extent of £2,000; but they had an estate which was worth a great deal more than £2,000. The site was secured at a time when land was not so valuable as it was now, and he had no doubt that the gentlemen who had come forward in that public-spirited way could realise a very handsome profit on the purchase if they were so disposed; but they were not, having bought the property for the purposes of the institute. No risk whatever would be run by allowing them to borrow on their present property for the purpose of purchasing the other property, which, by the way, adjoined it.

Mr. NORTON said his impression was that they wanted to sell the present property, and wished to borrow on the new site. But the Bill did not provide for that.

Mr. ALAND said it appeared that the clause did not express what they wanted—that was, to sell the present property to pay for the new site, and to mortgage the new site to the extent of £2,000.

The PREMIER said if they could only discover what was wanted he would be very glad to assist in granting it. Perhaps it would meet the case if the clause was amended to the effect that power should be given to borrow on the land they now held to the extent of £2,000, and that the money so raised should be applied in the manner and for the purposes specified in the 3rd section of the Bill—that was, the purchase of land and erection of buildings.

The new clause 6, as proposed by the Legislative Council, was ultimately amended to read as follows:—

It shall be lawful for the said corporation to raise from time to time upon the security of the land comprised in the said deed of grant, No. 3916, such sum or sums of money as shall not exceed the sum of two thousand pounds, and any money so raised shall be applied in the manner and for the purposes prescribed by the third section of this Act.

New clause, as amended, put and passed.

Mr. ALAND moved that the proposed new clause 6 be disagreed to, there being now no further necessity for it.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the first new clause of the Legislative Council with amendments, and had disagreed to the second.

On the motion of Mr. ALAND, the report was adopted, and the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council with a message intimating that the Assembly agreed to one of their new clauses, with amendments, and disagreed to the other because, in view of the proposed amendments in new clause 5, it did not appear to be necessary to provide for the assent of members in the case of a mortgage any more than in the case of a sale.

THE BOWEN PROSPECTING ASSOCIATION.

Mr. CHUBB, in moving—

That in the opinion of this House, the Bowen Prospecting Association is entitled to the remainder of the subsidy unpaid upon the £200 subscribed and expended by the association in prospecting for gold—

said: Mr. Speaker, — In moving the motion standing in my name, I hope to induce the Minister for Works—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, you won't.

Mr. CHUBB: I hope to induce the Minister for Works, now that the close of the session is near, to look upon this matter in a more reasonable light than he has previously done. The last working day of the session affords the hon. gentleman a fitting opportunity to be at once just and generous. He has just succeeded in carrying the most important part of his railway policy, and certainly ought to be in a favourable mood to receive the proposal I have just made. The other evening when a proposition was made by an hon. gentleman on this side of the House for a vote to be put upon the Estimates for prospecting, I had occasion to go at considerable length through the whole question, and I do not propose to go over that ground again. Hon. members, no doubt, heard what I said, or have read *Hansard*, and they will recollect the history of the transaction, which is briefly this:—Some gentlemen at Bowen were anxious to get up an association to prospect for gold, possibly with a view to their own benefit, and they asked the Minister for Works to subsidise the subscriptions that they gave in the proportion of £2 to £1, which was the rule ordinarily adopted. The hon. gentleman said yes; but before doing so he required a list of the persons who were forming the association. Well, sir, that was furnished to him. That list gave the names of twenty gentlemen, residents at Bowen, not one of whom was a miner, and not one of whom had the slightest intention of going mining himself. The hon. gentleman had all the information as to the party who were getting up this business and who were subscribing their money. Certain correspondence passed between the spokesman of the association and the Mines Office, in which an intimation was given that the department would subsidise their subscriptions at the rate of £2 for £1 for the "equipment and rations." Those were the terms used in a previous part of the correspondence. The party themselves were to subscribe £200 and were to be subsidised by another £400. But, Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact they have actually spent £500 of their own money, irrespective of the portion of the subsidy which they received.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know it.

Mr. CHUBB: The information can be furnished at any time the Minister wishes; but he has never asked for it. They spent not only the sum which they had agreed to spend, but more than double that amount, irrespective of the amount of subsidy they received. They received a telegram from the Under Secretary to the effect that the department would subsidise them at the rate of £2 to £1 for equipment and rations, and that any further outlay would be subsidised at the same rate. The exact words are—

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

From that telegram and from having no information on the subject, there being no regulations in the Mines Office as to what the money was to be spent upon, they at once got under way in the way I have described. They sent out a prospecting party, and paid high wages, perhaps higher than necessary. But the fact remains that they spent the money in good faith, believing that it would be subsidised in the way in which they expected: that was, if they spent £600 on the undertaking, they would get £400 back from the Minister, and upon that sup position

they sent out this party, who were out, I believe, altogether some four months, before they were disbanded, the expense being £503, which, Mr. Masterton says in his letter to me, is irrespective of the additional £194 which the Government had already paid. The list of wages for the four months they were out came to about £60 per month, or £240. If you deduct that money altogether, from the £503 that they spent, there is nearly £250 left, which was spent upon equipment and rations, the particulars of which can be furnished to the Minister, if he wishes to see them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The accounts may have been "cooked."

Mr. CHUBB: Surely the hon. gentleman would never suggest that the members of the association would "cook" their accounts! In addition to that, the plant, when the party was disbanded, was sold, and fetched, according to a memorandum I have, £67. I honestly think the Government are entitled to take credit for what the plant fetched, or if they are not entitled to take credit for the whole of the £67, they are entitled to at least two-thirds of it, that being the proportion in which they contributed. That would, in round numbers, reduce the claim of the association to £150, and I think the Minister could, under the circumstances, with a very good grace, consent to give them that amount, subject to being satisfied that the association have really spent the money they say they have. If they can show satisfactorily that the money has been *bona fide* spent under the impression that their expenses would be subsidised, they have a fair claim to receive that money. The hon. gentleman, the other night, in his reference to prospecting parties, read out from a schedule a list of rations, which I believe did not apply to the Bowen prospecting party.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, it did.

Mr. CHUBB: However, whether it did or did not, I was informed by the Under Secretary some time ago that they had a great deal of trouble in connection with some vouchers sent in by a Mr. Mulligan years ago, but which, in the long run, were paid by the department, although they contained items just as objectionable as appear, according to the Minister, in these accounts of the Bowen party. I did not see the document, but I was told that it contained some very objectionable items. But two wrongs do not make a right, and because Mr. Mulligan had his objectionable vouchers paid years ago is no reason why this association should have theirs, if objectionable, paid. I base my claim upon this: that the party were misled by the telegram that said that any further outlay would be subsidised at the same rate. They thought they might employ men at ordinary rates of wages, and they incurred the expense. It is a case in which the Minister might gracefully say—"Well, you did wrong; you ought not to have done it. I did not intend to authorise that. You fell into a natural error; but, having spent the money, I will give you money up to the amount to which the Government have agreed to subsidise the association." On this ground, I ask the Minister to give me an assurance that that view will be adopted and the amount paid.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—This is a very small matter, and what I desire to say is this: that I could not be guilty of making the proposition that the hon. gentleman attributes to me. The idea of subsidising any party going out prospecting for gold, the leader of which was paid £13 per month, with all the luxuries I described the other night! Why, sir, that is absurd! The other men were paid 7s. 6d. per day, and I do not suppose that they cared whether they found

gold or not. The leader of the party received £13 per month and the working men were paid 7s. 6d. per day with rations—those luxuries, those jellies and jams—which I have described. Under those circumstances, do you suppose that these men were going to find gold? because if they had made a discovery their business would have been at an end. I believe the principle laid down, I think by the hon. member for Townsville, was this: That a party which equipped themselves with tools and horses to go out to prospect were subsidised by a sum which was charged to account for such things as saddles, Californian hats, serge shirts, moleskin trousers, and other necessaries; but no wages were to be paid. I think it was a fair thing for the Government to feed and clothe them if necessary. But the Bowen party was an entirely different affair. They got up an association and subscribed money. Mr. Masterton, as leader of the party, put himself down at £13 a month, with preserves, and all the etceteras. Why, they lived like fighting cocks! Do you suppose they were anxious to find gold? The expedition would have lasted till now if the wages had been paid. I say that the proposition made to the Bowen association was that the Government would subsidise them in the shape of assistance with tools and rations, but they never promised them to pay wages.

Mr. CHUBB: Not in words.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member knows as well as I do that the Government never promised them wages. However, it is a small matter. I might give the money as a matter of charity, but no one will get me to admit that I have been in error.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; never. I will take very good care of that. Although there was allusion made the other night to the party at Maryborough being paid so-and-so, all I can say is that the Government is always being robbed and plundered. But if the Government contribute a sum of money in good faith for a certain purpose, and that money is diverted from that purpose to something else, I cannot help that. This is a small matter—a matter of charity—and I will only agree to it on those grounds. The party were clearly and distinctly told that the Government would only subsidise them in the shape of tools and rations. But everything connected with Bowen has an offensive smell about it—taking it all through. I think it ought to be impressed on the member for Bowen that the people there are capable of doing anything. I am very sorry for them. It is one of those places which are finished. Bowen is finished. I believe that if the Bowen people had asked at the proper time the railway out west would have started from there; but that time has gone. The fact of the matter is that there are only a few old fossils there. All the men have cleared out and only half-a-dozen fossils are left, and there is no mistake that these half-dozen fossils are represented by the hon. member for Bowen, and I don't believe he will get another constituency to elect him. However, to end the matter I will so far consent to pay this balance out of charity, though I will not supervise the account again. I took exception the other night to £5,000 being voted for prospecting, not on the ground that it was not a good thing to do, but because it throws a tremendous responsibility on the Minister. I have had a good deal of experience with that £100,000 that was voted by Parliament for bridge purposes. It has embarrassed me very much. I have tried to do my best to appropriate that money to the best advantage; but it has given me tremendous anxiety. This £5,000 moved for

the other night was to be put at my disposal, so that I might subsidise prospecting parties. I do not want to do that. The only way, in my opinion, in which these matters can be carried out is by payment by results—if a goldfield is discovered, then we should give a reward. I think hon. members agree with me generally that it is not desirable or discreet to place £5,000 or £6,000 at the disposal of a Minister to distribute. I do not want it: it has harassed me. I am not quite so bad as the hon. member for Stanley, who said he could not sleep. I can always sleep: that does not trouble me. But it causes a great deal of anxiety. A Minister is never blamed for carrying out an Act of Parliament, but if he has discretionary power he is blamed for what he does, whether it is right or wrong. That is my whole objection to this £5,000 being voted by Parliament and placed at the disposal of the Minister for Mines to make ducks and drakes of if he likes. The only way those matters can be dealt with is by paying by results. If a goldfield is discovered give the discoverers a handsome reward.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I must take some blame to myself in this matter which was brought under the notice of the Colonial Treasurer and myself when at Bowen. I then undertook to see my colleague the Minister for Works on the subject, and to go into particulars with him. I was under the impression I had done so, and that it had all been settled, until the hon. gentleman brought it up in the House the other night. I not only thought I had done so, but I also thought that the whole matter had been amicably settled. Of course, that was a mistake on my part, and I take that amount of blame to myself. I think it is quite clear that the Minister for Works never authorised the payment of anything except for rations.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: That is what he intended to do.

The PREMIER: No; what he personally did. The Under Secretary certainly made the statement in his telegram of the 12th of March, that—

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

That was not authorised by the Minister, but it was sent by the Under Secretary. Of course, if the people acted upon that, they are entitled to some consideration up to the time when they were informed that that was a mistake, which appears to have been about three months later. I think myself that in respect of all the money they fairly expended on the faith of that promise they are entitled to get the promised subsidy. What that sum is can be ascertained by examining the accounts, and I suppose it will come to about the amount stated by the hon. member, and he may be satisfied that no injustice shall be done to the association. I again express my regret that I quite forgot to consult my colleague as I promised.

Mr. CHUBB said: Mr. Speaker,—After the way in which the motion has been received by the Minister for Mines and the Premier, I will, of course, ask leave to withdraw it. An assurance has been given that the matter will receive the consideration of the department, and that the association will be paid such sum as they are fairly entitled to. I think, however, that the Minister for Mines might certainly have spared the use of the term “charity,” because it was in no sense on the ground of charity that I was asked to bring the matter before the House. The gentlemen who requested me to bring it forward

did so because they think they are entitled to the money; they are not gentlemen who would accept charity. I need not mention their names. They are all well known, and many of them are officers high up in the Civil Service. Of course, the Minister must intend that remark as a joke. I take it as a joke, as a bit of humour, as I am quite sure the hon. gentleman did not mean it seriously. With the permission of the House, I will withdraw my motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ADMINISTRATION OF BRITISH NEW GUINEA. COMMITTEE.

On the Order of the Day being read, the House went into committee 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 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.”

The PREMIER said that on the previous day, in moving that the House go into committee to consider the resolutions, he briefly stated what he had to say on the subject. The only other matter that had occurred since then was that to which the attention of hon. members generally had been called by a cablegram appearing in the Press that morning, stating that the Imperial Government felt some difficulty about the short time of the guarantee—namely, five years. That point was referred to in the letter he addressed to the Administrator of the Government on the 20th May last, in which, after pointing out the proposals which had been agreed to by the three colonies concerned, he made the following observations:—

“Your Excellency will observe that the terms for which it is proposed that the guarantee should be given is five years. This term was agreed upon after full discussion. I do not think that the other colonies would be disposed to join in a longer guarantee, and they prefer that the guarantee to be now given by Queensland should be for the same term for which they are willing to contribute. I have no doubt that before the expiration of that period many of the uncertainties now surrounding the matter will be removed, and that there will be no difficulty in entering into such fresh arrangements as circumstances may then show to be most expedient.”

He was of the same opinion still; he thought that many of the uncertainties which now existed would be removed in five years. If they had a good man in New Guinea they would soon know a great deal about the country. They would have explorations conducted on rational principles; they would learn what the interior of the country was like, how far it was practicable to have settlement on the coast, and what revenue they were likely to get from the country. That, he was sure, could be ascertained in five years; but suppose the Imperial Government were of opinion from previous experience in tropical countries that the time was too short, and they were not prepared to adopt the proposals of the colonies unless the time was extended to, say, seven years, he did not think

that should stand in their way. For his own part, he thought it was understood all along that Queensland would not care if it had a greater burden thrown on it with the understanding that it should have substantial control of the expenditure. Under those proposals, Queensland had absolute control over the expenditure, except in the case of two or three salaries, so that he did not see that there would be any danger if the period were made ten years as suggested in his original proposal in the memorandum of the 30th of March. Of course, the Government would not make that concession unless it was found to be absolutely necessary, because they were bound to consult and act with the other colonies. But he thought that if the other colonies were willing, for the sake of bringing about a settlement of the matter, to extend the time, there ought to be no serious objection on the part of Queensland. He himself thought that five years was long enough; but if it were a question between extending the term for a year or two, and having no Government in New Guinea for another year, he was of opinion that it was better to take the former alternative. It was proposed in the 2nd paragraph of the resolution not to limit their action to the proposals as they now stood, but to allow such modifications in detail as might be mutually agreed upon. He now formally moved the motion standing in his name, and later on might propose an amendment.

Mr. NORTON said that, when the Premier yesterday gave notice of the resolutions which he now asked the Committee to agree to, he stated that the course it was proposed to take was a somewhat unusual one. The hon. gentleman, in asking Parliament to adopt that unusual course, thought it desirable to refer to what took place outside the colony to find a precedent for the action he proposed to take. Now, the action in that matter certainly was an unusual one, and in connection with it he (Mr. Norton) thought, under the circumstances, it was desirable for hon. members in that Chamber to refer to the action of Queensland and of the Imperial Government in regard to New Guinea. In March, 1883, the late Government authorised Mr. Chester to go over to New Guinea, hoist the British flag, and to annex New Guinea, as far as they had the power to authorise the annexation, and make it a British possession.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was the cause of all the trouble.

Mr. NORTON said that in taking that action he did not mean to say that the Government had not exceeded their powers. They had undoubtedly exceeded their powers, but in doing so they were seeking not merely the advantage of Queensland and Australia—they were seeking the interests of the British Empire in general. When the action taken became known to the Imperial authorities, they demurred, and would not consent to what had been done here; but there were indications at one time that the Imperial Government would have consented to the annexation—that was to say, if the late Governor, Sir Arthur Kennedy, had lived to represent matters to the Imperial authorities as they really were. After months of consideration, it was decided to refuse to acknowledge in any way the action of the McIlwraith Government in that matter; but after some further consideration it was eventually decided, towards the end of 1884, to proclaim a protectorate over the southern portion of the island. What was required was that the whole of the island unclaimed by any European power should be annexed by Great Britain, and the consequence of taking only a portion of it resulted in the thing they most desired to avoid being done, and a foreign power laid claim to a portion of

the island. The next action of the British Government was to appoint a High Commissioner, who came out, as everyone had reason to suppose, with a full knowledge of the powers conferred on him, but when he came out his object appeared to be to discover what powers he had; and he believed General Scratchley terminated his life without ever having discovered what powers he possessed or what powers he did not possess. After his death another gentleman well known to them all was appointed to take his place, and he seemed to have made the discovery that he had no powers at all. So that they had at length advanced to a certain stage in regard to that particular appointment. The first commissioner appointed was occupied during the time his life lasted in endeavouring to find out his powers, and his successor had advanced a stage and discovered that he had no powers at all. About the end of last year the Imperial authorities seemed to think it desirable to properly annex the portion of New Guinea proclaimed under British protection. That matter was then under consideration, and he believed that up to the present time the authorities at home had not yet made up their minds as to whether they should formally annex the protectorate or not; so that the whole business connected with New Guinea, so far as the home authorities were concerned, was one of vacillation and indecision. The people of Australia and of this colony in particular could have nothing to say favourable to the action of the Imperial authorities in connection with that island. Our wishes they had professed to consider in every possible way, and they might be considering them still—just as they professed to be still considering the form of government which should be adopted for the part of the island annexed. He could only say—and he was sure hon. members would bear him out in the statement—that the whole of the island not in possession of the Dutch should have been taken by Great Britain, and had that been done long before this some form of government would have been established there that would afford security to the lives and possessions of persons going over there from Queensland or any of the other colonies to engage in trade. Up to the present time there was no Government there whatever. Though nominally there was a Government, so far as the protection to life and property was concerned he was justified in saying there was no sort of government whatever. The Premier yesterday had referred to the fact that South Australia had withdrawn from the agreement by which she was to provide a certain amount of funds required for maintaining the protectorate. For his part, he was not in the least surprised at the retirement of South Australia from the agreement, because the people of that colony must have felt, as the people of all the colonies felt, that for all the good done in New Guinea by the expenditure of the £15,000 a year, they might just as well have sent over painted wooden dummies and stuck them up in the country; and they would have been just as effective as the symbol of British authority in the shape of officers who were powerless to do anything. He was quite sure the people of Australia generally were exceptionally disappointed at the inaction of the British Government in connection with that matter, and for that reason he believed there was a disposition on the part of members of the Committee to support the Government in their action in endeavouring to bring about a settlement of that question with the home authorities. Because of that feeling there was a disposition to help the Government in the proposal they now brought forward, and to give them powers not usually given on other than

very special occasions indeed. As he observed yesterday, he did not consider it desirable to look for precedents in other countries when they had an emergency case before them which alone ought to decide the expediency of taking such action as was proposed. For his part he was quite willing to support the Premier in his proposals. So far as the form of government to be adopted was concerned, that sketched out would be a fairly workable one, though the expense might need keeping somewhat under. At any rate he was quite sure that, with the management of the affairs of the island in the hands of the Queensland Government alone, the expense would be very much less than under the present scheme. In the question of cost, they had, of course, to consider the joint action of the other colonies. At the present time Victoria and New South Wales had each undertaken to pay a share of the £15,000, and of course they would have to be considered in anything done in the matter. It was just possible that if the continued state of uncertainty lasted those colonies would also draw back from the agreement, which was made only on the condition that the payment of the amount from each colony was to ensure the preservation of order, and the establishment of good government for the protection of life and property, and not for the purpose of defraying the salaries of officials, who were kept on the island in idleness, and without power to do anything whatever. He thought that when that Chamber was willing to grant to the Government the power which they asked, it was a proof that the gentlemen in that Chamber at any rate were prepared to do their best to bring about a settlement of that question. All that had been done—what little had been done—by the Imperial Government, had not in any respect satisfied the wishes of the people here; and if they used words of resentment in speaking of the inaction of the Imperial Government, there was ample justification for it. It was because that feeling of dissatisfaction existed that there was perhaps a greater reason for acceding to the proposals of the Chief Secretary, and showing in that way that in spite of all that had taken place, in spite of the long delay in acceding to the people here—they were still anxious to show their *bona fides* with respect to the annexation of New Guinea and the establishment of some good form of government. The hon. gentleman spoke of extending the term of proposed guarantee from five to ten years. Well, that was a matter which required serious consideration. It was suggested by the hon. gentleman to the other colonies that the £15,000 should be guaranteed for ten years, but to that both New South Wales and Victoria demurred. The hon. gentleman seemed to think he could secure their consent to the proposition now; still it was a matter of doubt, and as the Governments of the other colonies had objected decidedly to giving the guarantee for more than five years he thought they ought to be guided by that, and not extend the time.

The PREMIER: I proposed to do it with their consent.

Mr. NORTON said he quite understood that, but as the other colonies had expressed themselves very decidedly it was scarcely fair for that House to take such action as would again place the matter before the other Governments, asking them to reconsider what they had done and admit that in their previous decision they had made some mistake. The other colonies had acted with a desirable amount of caution, and Queensland should do the same. In agreeing to that motion they were going a long way to prove to the Imperial Government that they were

desirous of bringing about a better state of things, and that was all that ought to be asked of them. Apart from that the taxpayers of the colony had a right to expect that they would not give the guarantee for a longer term than was necessary. No doubt before the end of the five years they would have an opportunity of judging whether the form of government established in New Guinea would be sufficient or the purposes required; and if so, he did not think there would be any reluctance to renew the agreement for any term that might be necessary. At the same time he thought that if a reasonable form of government was established there, before the five years expired the greater portion of that £15,000 a year ought to be raised in the new colony, and the Australian colonies largely relieved of the expenditure.

The PREMIER: No doubt of that.

Mr. NORTON said the doubt was that the Imperial authorities might insist upon having full control of the settlement over there.

The PREMIER: Then we do not give any guarantee.

Mr. NORTON said that if they did not insist on full control, they might insist on a larger control than the colonies desired to give them. What he desired was that the colonies should have the control as much as possible in their own hands; acknowledging, of course, every power which the Imperial Government ought to have, but at the same time claiming that from their more practical form of government—certainly more practical than that of the Imperial Government in the Crown colonies—they were more in a position to know how to manage the affairs economically. The proposal was that Queensland should have a larger share in the government of New Guinea, and he would not object if Queensland had the whole management. He would not object to revert to what was proposed in the first instance—throwing the whole of the responsibility on the shoulders of the Queensland Government, and treating the island as portion of Queensland. For his part he would not oppose the motion, but he did not think the Committee would consent to extend the term for which the guarantee should be given. Five years was as much as it was desirable to ask, and as much as it was desirable that they should give.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought the Premier had chosen the right time, and had put in the right form the proposals for overcoming the *vis inertiae* of the Imperial Government with regard to New Guinea. It was a matter they all deplored that, after the overtures made by the Imperial authorities had been so cordially responded to by the different colonies, so much valuable time had been lost, and that the Imperial authorities should treat with such apparent indifference the interests not only of New Guinea, but of the whole of the Australian colonies in connection with that island. He was not at all surprised that both the Press and the people of Australia should be unanimous in their disapproval of the delay of the Imperial statesmen in dealing with the interests of Australia and New Guinea up to the present time. Considering the ready manner in which the associated colonies—by which term he meant the colonies which had volunteered to become joint contributors to the cost of establishing a Government in the protectorate of New Guinea—considering the ready manner in which they came forward and contributed substantial sums of money—any excuse whatsoever for delay on the part of the Imperial Cabinet had been entirely removed; and it was very much to be deplored that the Government of Great Britain should not have kept better faith with the colonies

that spontaneously agreed to interest themselves in a matter in which several of them, he might say, had a very remote interest. It might perhaps lead to a better knowledge of the basis on which the debate should proceed if he informed the Committee of the amounts that had been contributed by the respective colonies under the agreement which the Parliament of Queensland had ratified by the New Guinea and Pacific Jurisdiction Contribution Act of 1884. From accounts which had been recently prepared by the Auditor-General, who had been requested by the Imperial authorities, as hon. members were aware, to audit the accounts of New Guinea, it appeared that the following colonies had contributed the sums he would mention. From the 20th November, 1884, to the 1st June, 1886, Victoria contributed £9,386 17s. 4d.; New South Wales, £8,169 8s. 8d.; New Zealand, £2,668 18s. 9d.; South Australia, £3,049 3s. 2d.; Queensland, £2,326 7s. 6d.; Tasmania, £1,232 5s.; Western Australia, £323 13s. 6d.; and Fiji, £100; total, £27,256 13s. 11d.

Mr. NORTON: And what have we got?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: And what had they got in return, as the hon. gentleman said? The Imperial Government had made no sign whatever in ratification of the action of the contributing colonies; and was it any wonder that colonies such as South Australia, which was placed at immense distance geographically from New Guinea—a distance which in Europe would be considered so remote as to wholly dissociate them from all interest in a country so remote—was it, he said, any wonder that those colonies had become tired of contributing when they saw no response whatever made to their very liberal contributions? Bearing in mind that that £27,000 had been contributed for the establishment of government in New Guinea on the faith of the representations made by the Imperial authorities, was it at all astonishing that the colonies had got tired and sick of the matter, and that they felt sufficient justification for receding entirely from the contract into which they had entered? But he was very glad to think that the colonies were actuated by a stronger spirit of federalisation and a stronger spirit of unanimity in endeavouring to see proper government established in New Guinea. From the correspondence the hon. the Premier had laid upon the table of the House it would be seen that the older colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand had agreed to become contributories to even a larger extent—to the amount of £5,000, if necessary; while Tasmania, Western Australia, and Fiji would, doubtless, contribute up to their responsibilities under the population basis in maintaining for a certain number of years the contributions they had already paid. The proposed resolutions of the hon. the Premier, while committing Queensland to an enlarged expenditure, which of course would give her a correspondingly larger voice—a distinct voice—in directing and controlling the affairs of New Guinea, would not materially commit the older colonies to any further contributions beyond their present responsibilities. That should be understood, because it would be hardly fair to ask those colonies—which had contributed so handsomely during the last two years, and which were still willing to contribute up to £5,000 per annum—to exceed that very largely. Therefore, the proposed resolutions would only commit New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand to the following extent: During the past year New South Wales had contributed £4,084 14s. 4d., or within about £900 of the limit to which that colony would be committed under the resolutions. Victoria

had contributed £4,693 8s. 8d., being about £300 within the limit that she would probably be called upon to contribute under the resolutions. New Zealand had contributed £2,668 18s. 9d.; so that those three colonies would not be called upon under the resolutions to contribute very much more than they had done to the maintenance of government in New Guinea; South Australia had also contributed during the past year £1,524 11s. 7d. He was quite sure that the other colonies would readily continue their contributions, provided they saw a prospect of some result accruing therefrom; but it was only reasonable to expect that they were becoming sick of contributing to a seemingly aimless object, such as had been the case during the last two years. When it was borne in mind that they had contributed £27,000 without even a semblance of authority having been established in New Guinea up to the present time—without the safety of British subjects setting foot on the territory being in any way provided for, and without even an attempt having been made to maintain jurisdiction—it was certainly time that something was done, and he did not see what further could be done at present than in the concrete form in which the hon. the Premier had put the resolutions before the Committee. It would doubtless be a matter of satisfaction to the other colonies to know that such unanimity on the subject prevailed in Queensland; and he was very glad indeed that the Premier of Queensland had taken the initiative, and had by those resolutions placed the line of action proposed to be adopted in such a tangible form that the British Government would at any rate see that no further delay need arise so far as the colonies were concerned, but that, on the contrary, everything that could be done, or ought to be done, by the colonies had been anticipated by the colonial legislatures. He was sure the action they took that evening would be confirmed by all the colonial legislatures he had referred to, and that it would be highly approved of by the Federal Council. He was not disposed at all times to concur in the general censure of the manner in which Imperial affairs were conducted. At that remote distance from the centre of government it was not easy for them to judge of the embarrassments that surrounded British statesmen. The Empire was a wide one to govern. The statesmen of the mother-country had the reputation of a thousand years to maintain and defend; and doubtless there were considerations which pressed upon them to which they in the colonies were strangers. At the same time, however, when considering the action taken by the colonies, and the interest which had been excited in colonial affairs at home recently, he thought time might have been found for the consideration of the present position of New Guinea, especially when the maintenance of the establishment had devolved altogether upon the colonial exchequers. He thought at the time that the Imperial Government stipulated for the guarantee of contributions to the extent of £15,000 by the colonies that it was a very paltry matter for Imperial statesmen to trouble over. It was altogether *infra dign.*, indeed, unworthy of the grandeur of the mother-country, that a comparatively paltry sum of £15,000 should be made an essential in the undertaking; and he still thought that those cablegrams which they saw in the newspapers to the effect that the subject of permanent contributions by the colonies was under the consideration of the Cabinet was putting the question in a position much below its great importance to the integrity of the empire. The colonies had shown no reluctance at once to enter into a financial agreement with the mother-country for the maintenance of government in New Guinea, and he was sure that if even a larger

sum than was required at present was asked from the other colonies they were so desirous of securing the possession of New Guinea by the Imperial authorities that they would have no hesitation in acceding to a very much larger demand. He did not altogether hold with the hon. the leader of the Opposition that it was necessary that Queensland should have the entire control of New Guinea. He would much prefer that the Imperial authorities should maintain control over it as an independent colony. That, however, was a matter which was somewhat beside the present question. The adoption of the resolutions did not necessarily involve the annexation of New Guinea by Queensland.

Mr. NORTON: That is done with.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: But not by Queensland. The so-called annexation of New Guinea by a former Government was one of the curiosities of history, which need not, perhaps, be further referred to on the present occasion. All were unanimous in the opinion that New Guinea should be brought under British jurisdiction, and he should be much better pleased, and so, he believed, would a large number of his fellow-colonists, to see New Guinea subject to the jurisdiction of Great Britain than that of any one of the Australasian colonies. But that was a matter of opinion, and need not be taken into consideration that evening. He should not have referred to it had it not already been brought forward by the leader of the Opposition. He hoped that when the resolutions were wired home, and when it was known to the Imperial authorities that they had been accepted with unanimity by both sides of the House, they would take the question at once into consideration and bring it to a speedy settlement in the direction which all the colonies desired.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that in discussing the resolutions before the Committee it was quite unnecessary to go into the history of the New Guinea question. The history of the question had passed through its first, if not through its second, stage, and no good purpose could be served by reciting the history of its annexation. But they were all agreed, he thought, that it was desirable to pass unanimously the resolutions as they appeared on the paper. Indeed, there would have been very little discussion upon them had it not been for the intimation of the Premier that he intended to amend them in such a way as to give the Government authority to guarantee a longer term of the agreement than five years. It was desirable, he fully admitted, that the resolutions should be carried unanimously, but they would scarcely be carried unanimously if the Premier insisted upon getting authority to extend the term of agreement. He, for one, should strongly oppose it, for several reasons which he would state briefly. First, to bind the colonies to any agreement—whether that or any other—for any period over five years, was too long. The colonies were progressive, not only materially but in ideas, and the ideas of the people were constantly changing. Governments also were constantly changing. Every other year, and sometimes twice in one year, different Governments were formed, and they had different objects in view; and it was a serious thing to bind a people down by a guarantee, respecting which their opinions might have completely changed before the time of the guarantee expired. If the jurisdiction established under the five years' guarantee in New Guinea was good it could be renewed. If it was not generally approved of it could be done away with. That was one reason why he objected to extending the term of five years. Another reason—and he thought it was also a very good one—was that it was very

probable that before five years were over there would be two colonies in Queensland instead of one. Therefore no attempt should be made to bind what would be another colony—for it would be to a certain extent, if not wholly, bound by the agreement made with the other colonies—for a longer term than five years. Those were two very substantial reasons, to his mind, for not extending the guarantee. He willingly agreed with the resolutions as they stood, but with the amendment indicated by the Premier he certainly could not agree. As far as the government of New Guinea was concerned, he, of course, possessed no information.

The PREMIER: It will be substantially the same as that stated in the proposals.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he should be very unwilling to give the Imperial Government control over the colony of New Guinea, while the Australasian colonies provided the money to carry on the government.

The PREMIER: No; we shall stick to these proposals.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that in any case the control should be in Australia, and for that reason also the term should not be extended beyond five years. But he was quite certain that if the Premier intended to introduce any such amendment it would meet with serious opposition. Then, again, it was scarcely likely that New South Wales and Victoria would agree to the extension. The question appeared to have been already discussed by the Premiers of the three colonies, for the 6th paragraph of the hon. gentleman's letter of the 20th May to the Administrator of the Government of Queensland was as follows:—

"Your Excellency will observe that the term for which it is proposed that the guarantee should be given is five years. This term was agreed upon after full discussion. I do not think that the other colonies would be disposed to join in a longer guarantee, and they prefer that the guarantee to be now given by Queensland should be for the same term for which they are willing to contribute. I have no doubt that before the expiration of that period many of the uncertainties now surrounding the matter will be removed, and that there will be no difficulty in entering into such fresh arrangements as circumstances may then show to be most expedient."

He did not think they should attempt in any way to force the hand of the Premiers of the other colonies who had come to an agreement with the Premier of Queensland. The Committee ought to give what was asked for by the resolutions, and no more; and he hoped the hon. gentleman would not attempt to get the Committee to agree to the amendment he had indicated.

The PREMIER said he was rather sorry to hear the hon. member express that opinion, because, although authority to bind the country for an extended term would not have made any practical difference, it might have facilitated the settlement of the question. Still, he admitted at once that the arguments the hon. member had made use of were very strong. He himself thought that five years was long enough, and he knew that in the other colonies they entertained that feeling very strongly. It was certain that in less than five years they would know exactly what the form of government of New Guinea was going to be, and if the proposed scheme proved successful there would be no difficulty whatever in continuing the guarantee if it was required. By that time, if New Guinea was worth having at all, it would probably be self-supporting to the extent of such a government as might be found necessary for it. But at present they did not know what that government would be. Under the circumstances, and considering how the hands of the Government

would be greatly strengthened by the sympathy with which the House received, and the unanimity with which it passed, the resolutions, he should not propose any amendment. What he had said earlier in the debate was in order that it might be considered; he did not formally move any amendment. He had no desire to move any amendment which would not be accepted unanimously by the House. The House had exhibited an unbroken unanimity up to the present time in all that had been done on that question by the Government, and he thought it was very desirable that that unanimous consent should be continued. The Imperial Government could hardly, he thought, in the face of a resolution of that kind, adopted by both Houses, refuse to deal with the matter somewhat on that footing. He said both Houses. Hon. members would recollect that he had intimated on the previous day that it would be desirable to ask the Legislative Council to concur in the first of those resolutions. He now understood they had already passed a resolution to that effect, authorising an address to the Administrator of the Government, intimating their assent to the proposals. One other thing he wished to say. The hon. member for Townsville (Mr. Macrossan) had said that those proposals might be modified. When the expression "modifications in detail" was used in the resolutions it meant trifling modifications. The principle that the Australian Governments were to have the control specified in those proposals was understood to be essential, and not a matter of detail. That was a matter on which the Government most certainly would not give way.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that when reading the telegram from London that day—"The Cabinet hesitates to give a decision with regard to New Guinea government question It strongly objects however to the limited duration of the guarantee"—the idea struck him that the Cabinet or Government that hesitated was lost. They certainly would give way.

Question put and passed.

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

TREASURY BILLS BILL.

SECOND READING.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in moving the second reading of the Treasury Bills Bill, said: Mr. Speaker, — In rising to move the second reading of this Bill, I may say it is introduced with the view of permanently obtaining and placing on record the sanction of the House to the loan votes for over-expenditure on the duplication of the line from Brisbane to Ipswich, £50,000; the Mackay to Eton and Hamilton line, £63,000; and the Ravenswood Junction to Ravenswood, £10,000; amounting in all to £123,000; which were passed last evening. It has been the practice in former years to obtain a mere vote of the House, sanctioning a certain amount of expenditure to be placed on a future loan estimate; but it has been held by the Cabinet that such a vote, unless supported by a Bill, would lapse with the rising of the House, and that there would be no permanent authorisation of the House to that amount of expenditure. The present Bill is introduced to sanction permanently that expenditure, and while the Bill, from its length—containing, as it does, thirteen clauses—may appear formidable, it is not the intention of the Government to issue the Treasury bills sanctioned by it. These Treasury bills or the amount of them will be made good either from another loan estimate, or, let us hope, from an improved state of the consolidated revenue. I make this

explanation because hon. gentlemen appear to have imagined that this is an insidious design on the part of the Government to immediately place on the market Treasury bills for £123,000, in addition to the sale of the loan stock they can operate on. I wish to relieve their minds of this apprehension, and with this explanation I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. NORTON: Mr. Speaker,—I would like once more to have the assurance of the Colonial Treasurer that it is not the intention of the Government to part with these bills, and that they simply intend to retain them. They could not issue them without the authority of the House, after the statement made by the Minister for Works that they never diverted money from the purpose for which it was voted. If the Government intend to issue the bills, they will meet with opposition—

The COLONIAL TREASURER: And deserve to meet with opposition.

Mr. NORTON: They will deserve to meet with opposition if they intend to dispose of them in any way other than keeping them in the Treasury. That being the case, it is unnecessary for me to detain the House. Let me say, however, that I regret exceedingly that it has been found necessary, in two of those lines particularly—namely, the line from Brisbane to Ipswich and the line from Mackay to Eton—to spend larger sums of money than were authorised by this House. I would point out to the Minister for Works that it would be very desirable to give every consideration to any proposal which has been made, or is likely to be made, in connection with the Mackay Railway, with the view of enabling it to bring in something more in the shape of revenue. I am quite sure that the country will not be satisfied to allow a line like that to be, not only unremunerative, but an absolute tax on the colony.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—I can assure the hon. member, as I have already promised the member for Mackay, that I will do all I can to meet the planters, and will give them every facility to carry their produce on the railway.

Mr. NELSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I quite approve of the course taken by the Colonial Treasurer in getting the authority of Parliament for the expenditure of money, although that money has been sometime ago expended. We are now sanctioning what has already been spent by the Government. The point that strikes me in connection with this matter is that the Treasurer simply gives us his assurance that he is not going to use the Treasury bills which he is empowered by this Bill to issue. There is nothing in the Bill to that effect, and of course no such provision could be inserted in it. We are therefore simply trusting to the man. We do not know that an honest man like the hon. gentleman is always going to be in the Treasury. There may be some ruffian there from this side of the House who will not acknowledge such a promise.

The PREMIER: Will you give us a promise for yourself?

Mr. NELSON: I will not. I have as strong a regard for the Treasurer as any hon. member in the House. But I say we are trusting the man; we are not doing anything that is very constitutional; we are simply putting implicit faith in the Hon. Mr. Dickson. We do not expect that the hon. gentleman is going to be in office for ever; and that is the difficulty I see in the matter; otherwise the proceeding is quite correct.

Mr. CHUBB said: Mr. Speaker,—I have very much confidence in trusting the man in this instance. I would trust the Colonial

Treasurer with the issue of Treasury bills, but I do not think I would be inclined to trust the Minister for Works. The Minister for Works told us earlier in the evening that he did not like the responsibility of being entrusted with the discretionary expenditure of money, but preferred to administer an Act of Parliament where there are hard-and-fast lines drawn, and he can go neither to the right nor to the left. I am sure that to trust him with a power like that conferred by this measure would not meet with his approbation, but I think there is no danger to fear at the present time in entrusting the power to the Colonial Treasurer.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have never broken any pledge or promise given by me in this House or anywhere else.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Bill in detail.

Preamble postponed.

Clauses 1 to 12, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 13—"Short title"—

Mr. NELSON said he understood that the amount of money they were now passing was to be a part of the permanent debt of the colony. It was really not a floating debt, although it would appear to be so. It was floating for the present; but, as soon as ever a new Loan Bill was brought in, that sum would be included in it.

The PREMIER: Perhaps we shall be able to pay it off out of revenue in the meantime.

Mr. NELSON said that was not very likely; but what he would like to call the attention of hon. members on the other side to was this fact: that at the end of the financial year in 1883, shortly before the present Government took office, the debt charge of the colony was under £600,000.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is the interest.

Mr. NELSON said the debt charge of the colony was under £600,000. Now, it would be this year £900,000, which was an increase of 50 per cent. in that short period, without a corresponding increase in population, trade, or settlement, or in anything else. They had expected a large revenue from their Land Act, but it was not one that would work wonders. The amount of the debt charge payable for the current year was £871,565, but there was £30,000 due on the 1st of July which they ought to have paid out of revenue, but they had not done so.

Mr. NORTON said the money provided would be an addition to the debt of the colony unless the present or some future Government decided to divert money appropriated for other works to the purpose of paying it off.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there was no doubt in dealing with the question that, had that expenditure been foreseen at the time of the passing of the last Loan Estimates, it would have been included; therefore it might be regarded as additional debt, unless good times brought them a large surplus revenue.

Clause put and passed.

Preamble put and passed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill to the House without amendment, and the third reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

GOLD FIELDS HOMESTEAD LEASES BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the amendments of the Legislative Council in this Bill.

On clause 4—"Resumption of land"—which the Legislative Council had amended by providing that six months' notice should be given to the lessee before resumption should take place—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was inclined to think the amendment of the Legislative Council was a very judicious one. He therefore moved that the amendment be agreed to.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he agreed with the hon. gentleman that it was right some notice should be given; but he thought six months' notice too long on a goldfield.

The PREMIER: It will not affect mining. You can mine without any resumption.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that was so, but the land might be required for some public purpose, or it might be wanted for surface mining; and he considered six months' notice too long.

The PREMIER said six months' notice was not very long when they were turning a man out of his home. It was not too long a time to give him to find another home, and besides, so far as mining was concerned, ample powers were given under the Bill to enable miners to go upon a homestead at once for mining, either under a miner's right or under a lease.

Question put and passed.

On clause 7, to which the Legislative Council had added the following proviso:—

"Provided that the proclamation of a new township, or the enlargement of an existing township, shall not affect the area which may be held under a lease subsisting at the time of such proclamation.

"The restriction as to area, contained in this section, shall not apply to any holding under the said repealed Acts or any subdivision thereof."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he thought the proviso a very wise one, and he would therefore move that the Legislative Council's amendment to the clause be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On new clause 22, as follows:—

"When a holding under this Act is taken in execution under the judgment of any court of competent jurisdiction and sold, the sheriff or other proper officer shall execute a transfer of the lease to the purchaser at such sale; and upon production of the transfer to the warden, and payment of the prescribed fee, the lease shall be transferred to such purchaser accordingly."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Legislative Council had inserted the new clause before them and he thought it a very good one. It did not often fall to his lot to compliment the gentlemen of the other House, but they deserved credit for the care they had exercised in dealing with that Bill. He moved that the new clause be agreed to.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would like to ask the Premier if the new clause would not require some alteration to prevent a transfer being given to an Asiatic or African alien?

The PREMIER said he did not think it necessary, because a lease could only be transferred under the 21st clause to persons qualified to apply for a lease; still, as the Act would be administered in country districts, it might be as

well to clear up all doubts, and provide that the person to whom a lease was sold under execution must be a person qualified to hold a lease under the Bill. He moved that the new clause be amended by the addition of the following proviso:—"Provided that the purchaser must be a person qualified to apply for a lease under this Act."

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

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the Legislative Council's amendment in clause 31, providing that six months' notice be given to the lessee of the resumption of the whole or any part of a holding under the Bill, was agreed to.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to one amendment of the Legislative Council with an amendment, and had agreed to the other amendments.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the Bill be returned to the Legislative Council, with a message intimating that the Legislative Assembly had agreed to one of the Legislative Council's amendments with an amendment, and agreed to the other amendments.

Mr. CHUBB said: Mr. Speaker,—As this is the only opportunity I shall have during the present session to call attention to a matter connected with mining, I would like to ask the Minister for Works whether, during the recess, the question of amending the mining regulations will be considered. Some of these mining regulations require revision, and I think they might very properly come under the consideration of the Minister for Mines with a view to amendment.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—If the suggestion of the hon. member is accepted, I would advise the Minister for Works to get mining experts to assist him, and not depend upon the officers of the Mining Department for any improvement in the regulations.

Question put and passed.

CROWN LANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Legislative Council's amendments in this Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) moved that the Council's amendment on clause 6, which was simply a verbal amendment, be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 7, as follows:—

"The rule prescribed by subsection 6, paragraph (c), of the twenty-ninth section of the principal Act, may be departed from by the board if it appears to them to be for the public interest so to do"—

which the Legislative Council had amended by the insertion of the words "with the consent of the lessee" after the word "may"—

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the clause provided for the departure in certain cases from the hard-and-fast line laid down by the principal Act for the division of runs by one straight line. It was chiefly in the interests of the lessee that the provision was asked for, though the public interests were more or less connected with it. The amendment proposed

was that the consent of the lessee should be obtained before departing from the line laid down in the principal Act. He moved that the Council's amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

Amendments in clause 14, and in the second and third schedules, agreed to.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS, the CHAIRMAN left the chair and reported that the committee had agreed to the Legislative Council's amendments in the Bill.

The report was adopted, and the Bill ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council by message in the usual way.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, stating that in the schedule of amendments accompanying the British Companies Bill, which was returned by message to the Assembly on the 24th instant, two errors had occurred by the insertion of "December" instead of "January" in clauses 10 and 14.

BRITISH COMPANIES BILL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the Legislative Council's amendments in this Bill.

On clause 10, as follows:—

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

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

The PREMIER said there were two amendments in clauses 10 and 14 which should be taken together. It was proposed by the amendments to extend the time within which companies might come under the Bill from July next to the following January. He did not see any objection to the extension if companies would like more time to consider the matter. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 13, as follows:—

"In the event of the winding-up of a registered British company, all land of the company within Queensland shall, subject to any valid mortgage, encumbrance, or charge subsisting thereon, be applicable in the first instance in payment and discharge of the debts of the company contracted within Queensland, in priority to any other debts of the company, except debts secured by any such mortgage, encumbrance, or charge."

The PREMIER said the Legislative Council had made two amendments in the clause. As the clause passed the Assembly it provided that in the event of the winding-up of a registered British company, all the land of the company in Queensland, and all money due to the company upon the security of land in Queensland, should be applicable in the first instance in payment of the debts of the company contracted in Queensland in priority to debts contracted elsewhere. It was proposed by the amendment that that should not extend to money due to the company on the security of land in Queensland. He did not think it necessary to offer any objection to that modification. According to the law of nations, they had control of their own lands; but they had

no control over any assets of a company existing out of the colony so far as he knew. There might some day be a rule of international law laid down by which the winding-up of a company here would be allowed to have effect elsewhere; but no such rule existed at the present time so far as he knew, and he thought they ought to keep some control over their own land for the benefit of their own people. He had no objection to the second amendment, which gave priority to mortgages existing on the land at the time of a winding-up. He moved that the amendments be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Legislative Council's amendment in clause 14 was agreed to.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the amendments of the Legislative Council.

The report was adopted; and the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council by message in the usual way.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 2.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, this Bill was read a second time, passed through committee, and the third reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that this House do now adjourn. It is necessary that there shall be a quorum to-morrow, in order to read the Appropriation Bill and the Treasury Bills Bill a third time, and to receive messages from the other House.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at six minutes to 9 o'clock.