

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 1887

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 10 November, 1887.

Message from the Governor.—Question.—Question without Notice.—The “Gayundah.”—Formal Motions.—Toohey Estate Enabling Bill—first reading.—*Ransome v. Brydon, Jones, and Company.*—Message from the Legislative Council—Electoral Districts Bill.—Question without Notice.—Maryborough and Uran-gan Railway Amendment Bill—second reading.—Supply.—Adjournment.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, intimating that His Excellency had, in the name of Her Majesty, been pleased to assent to “A Bill to make provision for the Indemnification by the Colony of Queensland of Her Majesty’s Imperial Government against the expenses of the Government of New Guinea.”

QUESTION.

Mr. NORTON asked the Colonial Treasurer—

Is it the intention of the Government to provide for the construction or purchase, from loan or otherwise, of a dredge or dredges, which may be used for the deepening of shallow channels, for which money has been voted by Parliament?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) replied—

It is not the intention of the Government to make any proposal on the subject during the present session.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

THE “GAYUNDAH.”

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to ask the Chief Secretary a question without notice, if he will answer it, in connection with the “Gayundah.” It is this: Have any further steps been taken in reference to that vessel? I saw a notice in the *Courier* a week ago stating that she was likely to go to sea immediately under the command of Lieutenant Drake, but the next day that statement was contradicted. Perhaps the Chief Secretary can give the House some information as to the real state of the case: as to whether the boat is likely to be utilised for the purpose for which she is kept, or whether it would not be advisable to sell her.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the hon. member had better give formal notice of his question, and say exactly what he desires to know. Instructions will be given for the departure of the “Gayundah” on a training cruise very shortly.

FORMAL MOTIONS.

TOOHEY ESTATE ENABLING BILL.

Mr. FOXTON moved—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill to enable the trustees for the time being of the will of James Toohey, deceased, to sell and dispose of certain trust property contained therein.

Question put and passed.

FIRST READING.

Mr. FOXTON brought up the Bill, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed.

By Mr. LUMLEY HILL—

That there be laid upon the table of the House a Return showing the assigned residences of the various members of this Assembly, by virtue of which they draw and have drawn allowances or expenses for the sessions of 1885, 1886, and 1887 respectively; also the amounts paid to each member in each of the said sessions.

RANSOME V. BRYDON, JONES, AND COMPANY.

Mr. KATES said : Mr. Speaker,—Before entering upon the particulars of this motion, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not ask for damages or any monetary compensation for the plaintiff in this case; I do not ask that there should be an appeal from the decisions of the Supreme Court judges, and I do not ask the Committee to re-try the case. Some time ago I presented a petition to this House, signed by nearly 800 Queenslanders, amongst whom there were twenty-seven justices of the peace and a great number of persons connected with the timber trade, asking for an inquiry into the case of *Ransome v. Brydon, Jones, and Co.*, and setting forth that according to their opinion a miscarriage of justice had taken place in connection with that case. I do not appear here to-day on behalf of Ransome at all, but on behalf of these 800 petitioners, who are all well known in the colony of Queensland. What I ask is for an inquiry to ascertain how this miscarriage of justice, as I call it, took place, and having ascertained how it came about I want the Committee to suggest a remedy by way of reforming the law in connection with these cases dealing with the usage and customs of trade. I believe it is the function of this House to inquire into such cases. I do not wish that we should sit as an appeal court upon the decisions of the Supreme Court judges, but we are the law-makers, and should inquire into such cases when they come before us and are brought under our notice, and it is simply the duty of the judges to administer the law as we serve it. That, then, is my object this evening—to ask for a committee to inquire how this injustice was done to one of our fellow-citizens. It will often occur in cases that come before the Supreme Court in connection with the usage and customs of trade, where, by the technical ignorance of the judges, they will make mistakes. They are not supposed to be as conversant with the usage and customs of trade as those whose daily avocations render them experts in those matters; hence mistakes will arise. Now, the custom of the trade throughout the colony is that cedar under 1 inch in thickness is sold as full inch. I am prepared, and will shortly show, by a mass of evidence taken before the judge in Toowoomba, that that is the custom in Toowoomba and Warwick, and also in Brisbane. I shall go into the particulars of the case and will briefly point out the circumstances connected with it as stated to me by the plaintiff, Ransome. It appears that in 1885 Mr. Ransome purchased in Warwick nine drayloads of good marketable cedar, a total of 22,000 feet. He sent this cedar by six railway

trucks as a consignment to Brydon, Jones, and Co., of Brisbane, to be sold on his account. On the 2nd of April of the same year Brydon, Jones, and Co. wrote to Ransome as follows :—

“The very best we can do is to sell the whole for 28s. per 100 superficial feet.”

That means that $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch and $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch should count as full inch, as it is understood throughout the colony by all who know anything about the trade. Ransome replied to that letter by wire :—

“Will accept 28s. if carefully measured.”

A few days afterwards Brydon and Co. wrote again—

“We cannot get the sizes below 1 inch taken as 1 inch.”

And to this Mr. Ransome replied by wire :—

“Cedar all bought as full measurement. Do not sell otherwise an offered 28s. by McClay of Brisbane. If present purchasers will not agree see McClay.”

A few days afterwards, on the 7th April, Ransome sent the following final instructions :—

“As wired I bought all undercut stuff as full measurement and why this new agreement should crop up is a mystery. My instructions are that all undercut stuff shall be sold as full measurement if purchaser objects and you cannot arrange with McClay let me know. Hold the timber and I will come down at once.”

Ransome, feeling satisfied that Brydon and Co. would carry out his instructions, left the matter in abeyance for a day or two, and after three days, to his indescribable dismay, he received from Brydon and Co. sale-notes for 11,000 feet of timber closing the transaction, with a cheque for £100 19s. 5d. The cedar cost Ransome £200 in Warwick. He went at once to Brisbane to see Brydon and Co., and asked them to cancel the sale, offering at the same time to return the cheque. Brydon and Co. refused, and nothing was left to Ransome but to sue Brydon and Co. for the amount at the Supreme Court held soon afterwards at Toowoomba. A Toowoomba jury of four gave Ransome a verdict for £103 17s. 8d. in addition to the cheque for £100 19s. 5d. previously sent him by the defendants. The evidence taken in Toowoomba was that of gentlemen for a long time connected with the timber trade generally and with the cedar trade. One of the witnesses, Mr. Frank Wright, is well known both to myself and the member for Warwick, and he stated :—

“I have been dealing in cedar for twenty-five years, and have sold thousands of feet in Brisbane, and never sold boards under 1 inch except as inch boards.”

Mr. Wm. Milwood gave the following evidence :—

“I have been a sawyer and timber-dealer for over thirty years. I have principally sold it in Brisbane, and even to Brydon, Jones, and Co., large parcels of cedar, and never sold boards under 1 inch except as inch.”

On behalf of the defendants, the witness Moreton was asked the question :—

“What is the Brisbane measurement of a board 10 feet long 12 inches wide and $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch in thickness?”

The reply to that question was “10 feet.” Well, sir, at the same trial other witnesses were examined—Adam Hoffmann, Henry Watts, G. S. Backhouse, Alexander Robertson, and many others—who all distinctly declared that cedar boards under an inch in thickness are for the purpose of sale counted as an inch in thickness. Well, the defendants in this case were not satisfied with the trial, and they appealed to the Full Court. I may as well mention that before the appeal they offered Ransome £100 to settle the matter, but Ransome refused to accept it. The case came before the Full Court in Brisbane. At that time one of the judges said :—

“He thought it had been proved at the trial that the timber should be sold at 28s. per 100 feet, and what it was necessary to prove was that by custom or usage boards under the thickness mentioned were to be taken

as 1 inch. As far as any evidence had been pointed out to him he could see none proving such a custom, and he thought the rule must be upheld. As a new trial on the same evidence could not alter the case, judgment would be entered for the defendant."

That anyone, even a judge, after the mass of evidence that had been brought before him, should have come to such a decision, appears to the petitioners altogether incomprehensible. The consequence was that Ransome lost the case. In the first instance he lost £103 17s. 8d.—that is the Toowoomba verdict—he lost his own costs, £190, and he was also mulcted in the defendants' costs, an amount of £337, or a total of £630 7s. 8d. The action was below £500, so he was debarred from an appeal to the Privy Council. Now, it is not so much in the monetary interests of the petitioners as to prevent anything of the kind happening in the future that I bring this motion on again. To strengthen my hands I will also mention what the foreman of the jury in Toowoomba said at the time. It was Mr. George McCleverty, an old, respected, and intelligent man. He said distinctly that the judge told the jury as follows :—

"You, as business men, should know better than I do the usages of the trade, and therefore will be able to decide."

Of course they, as business men, did know that the rule was that boards under 1 inch should be paid for as 1 inch, and they decided accordingly, and gave Mr. Ransome a verdict. The petition, as presented, is numerously signed, and signed by such men as Messrs. Charles MacIntosh, Wallace and Gibson, E. W. Pechey, John Keleher, Andrew Gordon, A. and D. Munro, and other sawmill proprietors, besides a great number of carpenters, joiners, timber-cutters, sawyers, and so on. They all agree on the point that boards under 1 inch are to be paid for as 1 inch. In connection with this case I will point out that some years ago the Colonial Treasurer introduced an import duty on timber, and he distinctly stipulated by a note in the schedule that boards under an inch in thickness should pay duty as for the full inch. That shows clearly that the Government recognised the custom and usage of the trade in this respect. When I last brought this question before the House the late leader of the Opposition, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, strongly supported me, and voted in its favour. He stated that the practice of the trade was always to consider timber under an inch as full 1 inch. At the same time I was supported by other hon. members—Messrs. Jordan, Annear, Isambert, Buckland, Wakefield, Horwitz, Lumley Hill, Beattie, White, and others—and I would have carried the motion then but that the question came on very late in the evening, and the Ipswich members had to go home and could not give me their vote. It was lost by very few votes, and the hon. member for Bowen, Mr. Chubb, stated that if I altered the motion and asked only for an inquiry to investigate the case, he thought hon. members would support me. That is the very thing I ask. It was said last time that monetary damages were asked for, but there is nothing of the kind. My object is purely to prevent a recurrence of this kind of thing. I ask for a committee to inquire how this mistake came about, and if possible to amend the law so that such discreditable things should not be possible again. I also hope that this motion may lead to the establishment of courts of conciliation. I have seen a great many people lately who approve of the establishment of such courts. Many people are afraid to go into the Supreme Court for fear that if they lose their case they may have to pay more than they are able to pay, and we all know that from the Supreme Court to the Insolvency Court is only one step very often. If

this motion would bring forth such a thing as the establishment of a court of conciliation, I should be very well satisfied with my labours this afternoon. On the Continent courts of conciliation have been established, and many cases are disposed of by them satisfactorily to all parties, and I am sure that if such a court were established in this colony five cases out of ten would be disposed of without putting the machinery of the law in motion. I wish distinctly to say that I do not wish the House to sit as an appeal court to re-try this case. This is not a new thing. A few years ago the Premier introduced a Bill to alter the law in connection with a case that came before the Supreme Court—*McBride versus the Corporation*—with reference to the Victoria Bridge. In this case there cannot be the slightest doubt that an injustice has been done to a fellow-taxpayer, as is set forth in this petition signed by 800 people. They did not all sign that petition without some consideration. They know that an injustice has been done, and we ought to grant an inquiry to see how it came about with a view to reforming the law. That is the object of this motion. I would not have brought forward the motion if I were not perfectly convinced that something is necessary to be done to prevent the recurrence of cases of this kind; and with that view I submit the matter to the House.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—It is two years since this motion was brought forward in this House and negatived. Will there ever be an end of the matter? The hon. member says that 800 persons have signed the petition. I am disposed to believe that they signed the petition for exactly the same reason that has induced the hon. member to move this motion in the House. They were all tired out by the importunity of Mr. Ransome. I hope this House will not be so influenced by the importunity of Mr. Ransome as to do anything so foolish or dangerous as is proposed by this motion. The hon. member says he does not want to review the decision of the Supreme Court, that is, to say whether that decision is right or not. He does not want any pecuniary compensation for Mr. Ransome. What does he want then?

Mr. KATES: To amend the law.

The PREMIER: The hon. member says, to amend the law. In what respect does he want the law amended? The hon. member stated in his speech that on one occasion, after a decision was given by the Supreme Court, I introduced a measure to amend the law with respect to the Victoria Bridge. That is perfectly true. Having discovered that by law the corporation was bound to keep open the swing of the Victoria Bridge, which it was perfectly impossible to do, I brought in a Bill to amend the law in that respect. What else was it possible to do under the circumstances? What kind of a measure does the hon. member want? Does he want a law made to declare what rate a man shall pay for timber that is less than an inch in thickness? Surely he does not want a select committee to do that? The hon. member asks us to believe that in Queensland every person buying timber under an inch in thickness has to pay the same price for it as if it were an inch thick, even if it is only half-an-inch or the eighth of an inch thick. I shall not believe that, no matter how many witnesses may swear to it. It is quite clear that the hon. member, or rather his friend, Mr. Ransome, is labouring under a very simple delusion or confusion of thought. I have no doubt it is true that people in calculating the price they have to pay for timber less than an inch in thickness—that is to say, in calculating the number of feet they have to pay for—treat the timber as if

it were 1 inch in thickness. But in considering the price they have to pay per foot they consider the thickness of the timber; they fix the price according to the size or quality of the timber. That is the confusion of thought that Mr. Ransome has got into. But to suppose that there is any such practice as that timber under 1 inch in thickness is paid for at the same rate as timber an inch thick, is to suppose that all men dealing in timber are fools. The hon. member will see that that is not the case, by referring to the published quotations for timber. If he will look at the *Sydney Morning Herald* any day he will find that the price varies according to the thickness. My hon. friend the member for Gympie has just shown me the last quotation of the sale of timber in Sydney, and I will read it, in the hope that it will relieve this Mr. Ransome from the delusion under which he labours with regard to this matter. I find here that in one lot of timber sold, timber $6 \times \frac{7}{8}$ was sold at 10s. 6d. per 100 feet; $6 \times \frac{3}{4}$ at 12s. 6d.; $6 \times \frac{1}{2}$ at 11s. In another lot timber $6 \times \frac{1}{2}$ was sold at 17s. 6d.; 12×1 at 14s. 6d.; 14×1 at 14s. 9d.; and $6 \times \frac{3}{4}$ at 15s. But suppose there is a rule of that kind in Toowoomba, or Warwick, or Brisbane, or somewhere else, what has that got to do with this House? The facts of the case, so far as they are material to the motion before the House, are that Mr. Ransome brought an action against Messrs. Brydon, Jones, and Company, and to succeed in his suit he had to establish to the court and jury that there was a custom of trade. It does not matter what the custom was. The judges were of opinion that he did not prove that custom.

Mr. KATES : Look at the evidence.

The PREMIER : The hon. member asks me to look at the evidence. He wants a committee to sit and find out whether it was proved by the evidence. That is sitting in review of the decision of the Supreme Court. All we know is that the judges, after solemn argument found that Mr. Ransome did not give evidence of that custom. What is the select committee to do? To find that the decision of the Supreme Court is wrong? Suppose they do not find that it is wrong, what is the use of the committee? And suppose they do find that it is wrong, what use will that be? Is the country to compensate Mr. Ransome for the injury? But how can the committee inquire into the matter? Mr. Ransome alone will be represented before them. Suppose he produces 500 witnesses, all of whom swear that there is a custom, that will not prove that the Supreme Court was wrong. The question was not whether there was such a custom, but whether he proved that there was such a custom. He failed because he did not prove his case, as many other men who have good cases have failed. I do not know whether he had a good case or not; but I do not believe he had. All that the judges said was that he did not prove his case. The hon. member says there was a miscarriage of justice. There could only have been a miscarriage of justice if he had proved his case; although the judges decided that he did not prove it. Is a select committee of this House a proper tribunal to try that? But this is a very much larger matter. When it was before the House two years ago I referred to a celebrated case that was brought forward in the House of Commons in 1856, and quoted the opinion of Lord Palmerston why a motion of the kind should not be passed by the House. In that instance, Mr. Phillimore, himself a lawyer, moved for certain papers in connection with the case of *Talbot v. Talbot*, which had been tried in Dublin before the Court of Delegates. I then said :—

“He introduced his motion in a speech like that of the hon. member; he referred to passages in the evidence, and drew the conclusion that Mrs. Talbot had

been unjustly condemned by the court. The motion was opposed by Mr. Whiteside in the first place. He concluded his speech by saying—

“The motion itself was most unconstitutional and most mischievous, and he trusted that on this occasion he would have the support of Her Majesty’s Ministers in maintaining a Court of Delegates appointed by the Lord Chancellor, and in resisting an attempt to injure and defame ‘as upright and honourable a man as ever sat on a bench of justice.’

“Mr. Phillimore being of opinion that the judges were wrong, Mr. Fitzgerald, who was the Solicitor-General for Ireland—

And is now one of the Lords of Appeal in the House of Lords—

“put it in this way :—

“It was the province of that House, if a judge was accused of corruption, or if moral misconduct was imputed to him, to inquire into the charges, and, if necessary, to address the Crown upon the subject; but he denied that because a judge had made a mistake, or because there had been a failure of justice, that House was entitled to examine, as an appellate tribunal, into the conduct of a judge against whom no corruption or misconduct was charged.”

“Lord Palmerston afterwards spoke—I suppose no one will dispute the authority of Lord Palmerston on a question of constitutional law or practice.”

This is what he said on the subject :—

“Viscount Palmerston hoped his hon. and learned friend would permit him to join in the request made by the right hon. gentleman opposite not to press his motion to a division. Nobody could have listened to the speech of his hon. and learned friend without doing ample justice to the feeling which had urged him to bring the case forward. He stated with a degree of eloquence that did justice to his ability, and with a degree of feeling that did credit to his heart, the views he had taken of the case. He would not attempt to lay down on the present occasion the functions of the House of Commons, but it was at all times desirable that they should not press these functions to their extreme confines in cases on which doubt might arise, whether they were not transgressing the limits assigned them by the Constitution. Now, an interference with the administration of justice was certainly not one of the purposes for which the House of Commons was constituted. He thought nothing could be more injurious to the administration of justice than that the House of Commons should take upon itself the duties of a court of review of the proceedings of the ordinary courts of law, because it must be plain to the commonest understanding that they were totally incompetent to the discharge of such functions. Even supposing they were fitted for them in other respects, they had no means of obtaining evidence, and taking those measures and precautions, by which alone the very ablest men could avoid error. Cases of abuse in the administration of the law might arise, it was true—cases of such gross perversion of the law, either by intention, corruption, or by incapacity, as to make it necessary for the House of Commons to exercise the power vested in it of addressing the Crown for the removal of the judge; but in the present case his hon. and learned friend could not single out any individual judge with regard to whom his observations principally applied as having acted in his sole and single capacity in pronouncing the judgment of which he complained. * * * For all these reasons he would suggest to his hon. and learned friend that he would best exercise his constitutional functions, as a member of the House of Commons, by abstaining from pressing his motion to a division.”

Now, sir, is not that strictly applicable to the present case? What object would be gained supposing the committee sat and found that the Supreme Court was wrong? Would that tend to support the administration of justice? I am quite sure what the opinion of the public would be—first of all, that this House made a great mistake in appointing a committee for that purpose, and secondly, that the committee had undertaken a duty they could not perform, and that their decision was therefore absolutely worthless and valueless. How can they review the decision of the Supreme Court? If the case is to be tried between Brydon, Jones, and Co. and Ransome, by the committee as a jury, they must get Brydon, Jones, and Co. before them if they want to try the case over again. If there

has been a miscarriage of justice it cannot be discovered on a fresh trial based on new material. A judge or jury can only decide on the facts before them; and on the facts before them those judges have dealt with the case. Unless the hon. member wants to make out that the judges were wrong on the facts before them, he certainly cannot make out that there was a miscarriage of justice. The fact is, Mr. Ransome has an unfortunate craze. We have heard of persons haunting the courts of justice under a similar delusion.

Mr. CHUBB: Miss Flyte, for instance.

The PREMIER: Yes. He is labouring under a delusion that an injustice has been done to him, and he has bored the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates. He bored him once before until he brought a similar motion forward, but it was negatived by a considerable majority, and I really thought we had heard the last of it.

Mr. KATES: I am not bringing it forward on behalf of Mr. Ransome, but of the 800 men who signed this petition.

The PREMIER: Do we suppose that these 800 men are actuated by an enthusiastic desire to take up the matter? Their only enthusiastic desire, I have no doubt, was to get rid of Mr. Ransome when he came to ask them for their signatures. The hon. member would be doing a kindness to Mr. Ransome if he would withdraw the motion and let it be understood that the thing was at an end, and that this House was not going to be worried into granting a committee, which would be contrary to all precedent, and which could not possibly be productive of any good result.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge) said: Mr. Speaker,—It is very much to be regretted that the hon. member for Darling Downs has brought forward this motion, especially after the reception which a similar resolution met with when it was brought forward in the House two years ago. It is true the hon. member has expressed a desire to proceed in a different way on this occasion. It is not, he says, his intention to make this House a court of appeal from a decision of the Supreme Court, although that seems to me to be really implied in the terms of the motion. I fail to see how it is possible to inquire into an alleged miscarriage of justice unless the committee, if appointed by the House, goes into the whole question and ascertains all that can be ascertained by evidence on the subject. Without that they cannot decide whether there has been a miscarriage of justice or not. The terms in which the resolution is worded are a little unfortunate. The term "alleged miscarriage of justice" used in this way, when there has been a trial before a judge and jury, followed by an appeal to the Full Court, would seem to imply that there has been wrongdoing on the part of some person or other who had to do with the case—either the judge or the jury, or the members of the Full Court. I do not know whether the hon. member seeks to insinuate that there was any misconduct on the part of the judges.

Mr. KATES: Not at all.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If he does, it would be his duty to proceed in the ordinary way, and have the alleged misconduct inquired into, by preferring a direct charge of misconduct. But I do not see what grounds the hon. member has for making the statement, even by implication, on the strength of what Mr. Ransome says, that there has been a miscarriage of justice. Mr. Ransome is a suitor who has failed in an action before the Supreme Court, and, like a great many other persons in that position, he comes to the conclusion that

he has been wronged, and that somebody else has obtained an advantage at his expense. If this committee were appointed, I do not see how it would be possible to inquire as to whether Mr. Ransome has been wronged or not unless they not only summon the witnesses who were called at the trial, but try to bring the judges also to give evidence before the committee and to state their reasons for their decision. The House is asked to give the committee power to send for persons and papers in order to ascertain whether there has been a miscarriage of justice or not; but hon. members are perhaps not aware that if the committee were to be appointed an attempt to bring before it the judge who presided at this trial, or the other judges, would be a totally abortive one. It would be ridiculous on the part of the House to appoint a committee to inquire into a matter of this sort, and empower them to call for persons who may refuse to come and give evidence. This would not be the first time in English history when an attempt has been made to get a judge brought before a committee of Parliament to give reasons for his judicial actions. If hon. members are not aware of what would probably be the result of any attempt of the kind, I will direct their attention to a case which happened a great many years ago, and is reported in Lord Raymond's "Reports," at page 18. This is the note appended to the report of the judgment on the case:—

"Note.—That this judgment was very distasteful to some lords, and therefore, Hilary Term, 1897, 9 Will. III., the Lord Chief Justice Holt was summoned to give his reasons of this judgment to the House of Peers, and a committee was appointed to hear and report them to the House, of which the Earl of Rochester was chairman. But the Chief Justice Holt refused to give them in so extra-judicial a manner. But he said that if the record was removed before the Peers by error, so that it came judicially before them, he would give his reasons very willingly; but if he gave them in this case it would be of very ill consequence to all judges hereafter in all cases. At which answer some lords were so offended that they would have committed the Chief Justice to the Tower. But, notwithstanding, all their endeavours vanished in smoke."

It will thus be seen that when Lord Chief Justice Holt was summoned before a committee of the House of Lords to give his reasons for having arrived at a certain decision, he point-blank refused to give his reasons in an extra-judicial manner.

Mr. MOREHEAD: What about the committee on Mr. Justice Cooper?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. gentleman says "What about the select committee with regard to Mr. Justice Cooper?" That is an entirely different case. The matters referred to that committee were in regard to the travelling expenses of Mr. Justice Cooper. The question was whether the travelling expenses allowed were sufficient, and possibly in that case Mr. Justice Cooper might very probably have been asked to say whether his travelling expenses were sufficient or not. That would not be giving a judicial opinion. He would not be acting judicially in giving his opinion as to whether so much a day was sufficient for his travelling expenses. Under the circumstances of this case I take it that, as in the case of Lord Chief Justice Holt, the Chief Justice who presided at the trial would be asked to attend the committee to give his reasons for certain things, and I say in that case his Honour would be perfectly justified in refusing to attend. And if he or the other judges were to refuse to attend, the only effect would be that the House would put itself in a ridiculous position by authorising a committee to do what they would find when they came to exercise that power they could not carry into effect. I do not think that the House ought to be asked to go

into the *pros* and *cons* of the matter at all. What is the use of a court of justice if when suitors come there they are not to accept the decision of that tribunal which the law has appointed for the decision of cases of that kind? If every disappointed suitor is to come here and ask for an inquiry in this way, why, we should never have anything else to do in this House but inquire into such cases. The resolution is to inquire into an alleged miscarriage of justice, and how is a miscarriage of justice to be inquired into unless the committee goes into the whole matter judicially, practically as a court of appeal from the Supreme Court?

Mr. KATES: No.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Notwithstanding the disclaimer of the hon. gentleman, who, I have no doubt, is perfectly sincere, to give this committee the functions he proposes to confer upon it in this way is really to constitute it by resolution of this House a court of appeal from the decision of the Supreme Court. It would be establishing a very dangerous precedent, and I have not the slightest doubt that, as in the case of Lord Chief Justice Holt, the whole thing would end in smoke. Under all the circumstances I think it is better that the initiatory proceedings should not be taken at all. I hope the hon. gentleman will accept the advice which has been given him, and withdraw the resolution and let us have done with it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I voted for the appointment of the select committee on the last occasion when this matter was before the House two years ago, but this time I am going to vote against it simply because I can take my beating. The question was fully and freely discussed in the House two years ago; the hon. member for Darling Downs was then beaten on division, and I do not see the fun of having cases of this kind brought up over and over again, and the time of the House wasted in this manner. I have not very much faith in these committees after their work is done, and I certainly do think the hon. member for Darling Downs ought to have been satisfied with the verdict of the House upon the previous occasion. Nothing has occurred in the meantime to alter the opinion of the majority of the House as it expressed itself then, and I would suggest that he had better bring it before the next Parliament, if he is here to do it. One case of this kind on account of one individual is quite enough during one Parliament.

Mr. MORGAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. the Attorney-General has argued that it would be unadvisable to establish a precedent by which suitors defeated in courts of justice could come to this House and get committees appointed to review the decisions of those courts; in other words, that the decision of the courts ought in all cases to be final. Well, if the decision given by the special jury in this case had been allowed to be final I do not think this House would ever have heard of it. But a special jury having given a verdict on the evidence, and that verdict having been reversed by the judge thereafter without fresh evidence, I think it opens up a very grave question as to whether injustice has not been done to the petitioner, Mr. Ransome. If we are to take the hon. the Attorney-General's ruling, I suppose, as in the case of the old belief that used to prevail that "the king can do no wrong," we must admit that a judge can do no wrong. Although I have very great respect for the gentlemen occupying the judicial bench in this colony, I am not prepared to go that far. I believe that judges are human beings, and as such are liable to errors. The

point is this: This man had a verdict given to him by a jury who weighed the evidence given by experts on matters of fact, not matters of law; he had that verdict taken from him by a judge who had no special knowledge of the case, and he now asks for a committee to inquire into the whole circumstances of the case, and say whether injustice has been done to him. I believe injustice has been done. I have some knowledge of the practice of the trade, and I know the universal custom in the southern districts is that, in buying and selling cedar, $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch stuff shall be taken for inch. Indeed, so well is that rule recognised, that when people go to a timber-yard to buy cedar 1 inch, $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch, or $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch, they make no question about it; they simply buy the timber as inch stuff, and pay for it accordingly. As to the custom in Sydney, that is in another colony, where different laws and different customs prevail, and the argument with regard to that does not apply in the least. It is a sufficient reply to the Premier's argument about the price-list, that it is an admitted fact, given in evidence by employes of one of the Government departments, that when they purchased cedar for the Government of this colony they invariably paid for $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch stuff at full inch rate. Therefore, if the Premier's contention is good, these gentlemen have been allowing the public treasury to be robbed, and ought to be got rid of at once. I will just quote a short letter written by the foreman of the jury before whom this case was heard, which will show the House that they had very good ground upon which they based their verdict. The letter is written by Mr. McCleverty, who says:—

"The judge further said to the jury, 'You, as business men, should know better than I do the usages of the trade, and therefore will be able to decide.' We (the jury), as business men did know the usages of the trade, not only in Warwick and Toowoomba, but also in Brisbane—namely, that all cedar boards under 1 inch should be paid for as 1 inch. And we were supported in this by several of the witnesses, who stated distinctly that cedar boards under 1 inch are always sold as inch. Even some of defendants' witnesses proved so. But the evidence as to Mr. McClay, a Brisbane purchaser, having offered 29s. per 100 feet for this same lot of timber, and to take it at full measurement—that is, all under inch to count as inch—was very important and worthy of notice. Our verdict was to a great extent based on this evidence, which clearly proved what is the usage of trade in Brisbane, where the transaction occurred. Another reason for the verdict we gave was the fact as elicited in evidence, that defendants wrote to plaintiff that the very best they could do was to sell the whole lot at 28s. per 100 superficial feet. Yet within a day or two they sold the lot by actual measurement, not in the usual way, but under special agreement for actual measurement, thereby departing from the usual custom, and reducing the quantity of timber to about 11,000 feet."

Now, Mr. Speaker, even supposing the custom of the trade is as the Premier contends, I say that those people having acted in direct defiance of the instructions they received from their principal, on that ground the verdict of the jury was perfectly justified. The jury gave that verdict upon what they considered the very best evidence, and if the defendants felt themselves aggrieved, and applied, as they did, for a new trial, there could be no objection to that course; but to say that the judge should, without hearing one tittle of fresh evidence, override the verdict of men acquainted with the custom of the timber trade, is ridiculous. I think it is dangerous that we should look on and see people robbed of the verdicts given by juries. We might as well abolish the system of trial by jury altogether. The effect of the reversal of the verdict is this: Mr. Ransome had a verdict of £100 odd from a jury, which verdict carried costs. It was not much, and he considered he was entitled to more, but he was satisfied. Then the verdict was taken away and he had to pay not only his own costs but also the

defendants'. He paid his own costs, but was unable to pay the others, and had to go insolvent, and his property was sold up. I think it is a very hard case indeed, and though there may be something in the view taken by the Premier, I think Mr. Ransome is entitled to some inquiry. I do not hold the view that this House has no right to interfere with the administration of justice. I think this is the supreme tribunal in the colony, and that we have every right to deal with the case. I do not see that there is much chance of getting the committee, but I for one think a serious wrong has been done to Mr. Ransome and should like to see the committee appointed.

Mr. WHITE said: Mr. Speaker,—I think if this discussion has no other result it will have a tendency to make Brydon, Jones, and Co. wince. My sympathies are with Mr. Ransome. It is very evident he knew what he was doing when he engaged in the timber business, but he paid £200 for timber and never got half the money back. That would look to me something like a swindle, and that is the way in which it would strike any common-sense man. Brydon, Jones, and Co. received instructions from the consignee and did not give him a chance to come down himself and see that the timber was not sacrificed. But when he did come down he found the bargain had been made so fast and firm that it could not be broken. There must have been a swindle, because half the money was not received, and it was never contended that there was anything wrong with the timber—that it was rotten, or had deteriorated in value. The only conclusion I can come to is, that the law in this case has stepped in and protected the wrongdoers. That will be very clear to any common-sense man.

Mr. BULCOCK said: Mr. Speaker,—I did not intend to say anything on the subject but for what has fallen from the last speaker. I do not know anything at all about the matter itself, but this I do know, that Mr. Brydon during that time was in England, and that his partner, Mr. Jones, was sick in bed with rheumatic fever for seven weeks, and the business was left in charge of some persons they employed. It is merely to defend the character of those two men that I make the statement.

Mr. FERGUSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I voted against this question when it came before the House previously and gave my reasons for doing so. I do not see that there has been any miscarriage of justice in this case. I know that there is a difference of opinion about the practice in selling timber. Very likely Warwick and Toowoomba may have a system of their own, and other parts of the colony have their systems. At all events, one thing is certain—that 100 feet superficial measurement of timber must be 1 inch thick. That is a standard measurement and cannot be altered. You cannot get 100 feet superficial measurement unless it is 1 inch thick. If you buy a cargo of cedar in the log and get it measured it is measured inch thick. If that cargo in the log measures 100,000 feet of inch thick, and if you cut it into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick, are you supposed to get 200,000 feet of measurement out of 100,000? It does not matter how you sell the timber. There may be different ways of selling it; but I know that I have bought as much timber as any man in this House, and I can say that in some yards, at all events, there are scales; $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick is, say, 4d., $\frac{1}{2}$ inch 4½d., $\frac{1}{4}$ inch 5d., and 1 inch thick 6d., and so on. I do not know what the scale is down here; but I have seen that system in force over and over again. If you give instructions to buy a cargo of timber wholesale, it must be standard measurement, inch thick, and if planks are 2 inches thick you will have to pay for 2-inch timber. If it is

$\frac{3}{4}$ inch, you are supposed to pay for 1 inch. The value of cedar is, say, 25s. per 100 feet in the log, and the cutting does not amount to much, say 2s. It is a very small consideration in the value of the timber. The value is chiefly in the log before you cut it. It stands to reason that timber $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick is not worth the same as inch thick; you are not supposed to pay the same for $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch as for 1 inch, and if you go over the inch you have to pay for it. If the thickness is 1½ inch it has to be paid for. I do not know what may be the custom in the small retail yards at Toowoomba and Warwick, but anyone who has to consider the value of timber in large quantities must know that the custom is different from what has been stated. Suppose you ship a cargo of 50,000 feet of cedar, and supposing the ship will not hold more than 50,000 feet, if it is shipped only $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick you can get 100,000 feet of cedar into that ship according to the argument of hon. members opposite. You are never asked what the thickness of the timber is, because it is known very well that the standard thickness is 1 inch. It makes no difference whether it is 2 inch, 1 inch, or $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch, it is all reckoned as 1 inch. There is a standard for timber just as well as for brickwork, and in fact for all building material, and according to the standard for timber, 100 feet means 100 feet 1 inch thick.

Mr. FRASER said: Mr. Speaker,—I have no intention of delaying the House upon this question, but I cannot let the remarks of the hon. member for Stanley pass unnoticed. Even admitting that there may have been a miscarriage of justice in connection with this question, that does not warrant the hon. member for Stanley in describing the conduct of a respectable firm in Brisbane as "swindling." The hon. member for Darling Downs does not bring the matter forward on that ground at all. I know Messrs. Brydon and Jones very well, and they are as respectable and honourable men as any in Brisbane, and I protest, therefore, against the remarks of the hon. member for Stanley, made under the shelter of the privileges of the House.

Mr. KATES, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—I just wish to make a few remarks with respect to what fell from the hon. member for Rockhampton. His remarks were quite outside the question, as he was speaking of timber in the log, and this is a question of timber in boards, and it makes a very great difference to the sawmill proprietor to cut $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch or inch boards, because he has to allow for the extra saw-cut and extra labour. I do not at all regret having brought this matter before the House again this year. I am backed up by 800 residents, not only of Brisbane and the Darling Downs, but of all parts of the colony, amongst whom are thirty or forty persons connected with the timber trade. I brought this forward, as I said before, not to ask for a monetary compensation for Mr. Ransome, but in order that the committee may inquire into the matter and suggest a remedy in connection with the law. The *Courier* and many other papers at the time this case was heard sympathised with Ransome in having his case capsized and reversed in the Supreme Court after he had received a verdict in Toowoomba. I have nothing to say against the firm of Brydon, Jones, and Co., and I am merely speaking of the injustice done to Ransome, whose case has been taken up by the 800 gentlemen who signed the petition I presented to the House. Whoever may be alive here next year, whether myself or someone else, this question will be brought on again and again, until the law is remedied in this respect to prevent a recurrence of cases of this kind. I have consulted my hon. friend the member for Warwick, and we

have decided not to let the question go to a division. I therefore beg leave to withdraw my motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL.

The SPEAKER said: I have to announce the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, returning the Electoral Districts Bill with certain amendments indicated in an accompanying schedule, in which amendments the Council request the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that the Legislative Council's message be taken into consideration in committee to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I trust that the Premier can answer the question I am going to put, without notice, as the Minister for Lands is not in his place. I had intended to have asked him the question, which is this: When the papers which were spoken about with regard to the late Premier and the late Minister for Lands are likely to be laid on the table?

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I believe they will be ready on Tuesday. There are a good many papers to be copied.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Have the missing documents been found?

The PREMIER: There are a good many to lay on the table. I have seen quite enough of them.

MARYBOROUGH AND URANGAN RAILWAY AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of the debate on Mr. Foxton's motion, "That the Bill be now read a second time"—

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—It may not be usual to present any opposition to a Bill of this sort being read a second time, and I may just as well state why I intend to take that course. I think this is the introduction of something which this House should have a distrust of in the preliminary stage. When this railway was mentioned in the House before, the hon. the leader of the Opposition had something to say which, to my mind, is by no means unimportant. He objected to our having anything whatever to do with certain persons who at one time had something very intimately to do with this colony, and he mentioned certain names, which I think are not calculated to inspire feelings of confidence. The hon. the Premier gave us an account of certain interviews which he had had in London with certain persons in connection with this railway, and at the close of his remarks he gave utterance to an expression which, if I remember aright, was something like this: that he could see no reason why those gentlemen should not be accepted by this House as persons—I hardly know what term he used, but as persons who come before us as strangers. Now, I differ from the Premier in that respect. Those persons do not come before us as persons of whom we have never heard, and I am bound to say that the little we know of them is not very much calculated to increase our confidence in them. This Bill is a proposal to enable a railway to be

built by private enterprise. Now, you know well, sir, and the House knows, the very violent effort that was necessary to prevent a certain railway being built by private enterprise. Of course, compared with that this is a mere trifle, but still, somehow or other, the promoters are to a great extent the same persons; and those hon. members who remember the transcontinental railway will have difficulty in associating that railway with anything else than the idea that it was a speculation instituted by private persons, leaving out of account altogether the welfare of this colony. I shall not say much now, because we shall have an opportunity of going into the matter in committee; but I should be very glad to see the second reading thrown out, if it were only for this reason: that this House has found itself addressed on a past occasion by a certain syndicate, and they have found on careful inquiry that to get rid of that syndicate has been to release the colony from a danger the like of which this colony has not before encountered. Now, when we find certain persons who were connected with a proposition which would have led this colony into a morass which it would never have seen the bottom of, coming forward again with a very modest proposition—approaching this House with bated breath and whispering humbleness—I confess that, with the hon. the leader of the Opposition, I have a *prima facie* distrust of the whole affair. Now, that is just the way in which I cannot help approaching this matter. As to the absolute merits of this railway, of course they are open to demonstration; and I am, I trust, on this matter, as on every other, open to receive fresh light. However, I cannot conceal that I have a suspicion of the whole affair; and my own intention is to do exactly as I would do in my own case—have nothing to do with this railway.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—I think that as one of the members of this committee, and as one who had no very strong faith in this question when it was first introduced, it is perhaps necessary for me to explain why I have so altered my opinions. I believe, from what the committee have seen, that the construction of this railway is now a *bona fide* transaction. Hon. members know that the Maryborough and Urangan Railway Company had a Bill passed through this House for the construction of this railway, but, from several causes over which some of the members of it had no control, they could not carry out the scheme in accordance with that Bill. The same conditions as previously existed, with a more stringent clause introduced in this measure, will apply to the gentlemen who have now come forward to carry out the objects of the Bill. I do not see that it makes much difference who the capitalists may be, whether they are the Duke of Manchester, General Feilding, or any other persons who may have had connection with the old transcontinental railway scheme. I do not see that that is any reason why they should be debarred from coming in and taking up what the previous company were expected to carry out. The construction of this railway implies the development of the property which the company have already, and which they will hereafter secure by the expenditure of money; and expenditure of money from outside sources is what we want in this colony at the present time. I would much rather have seen the Government undertake the construction of the railway, but owing to the first company having come into the field, the inhabitants of that district were done out of the line; I feel quite sure that had that not been the case, it would have been included in the £10,000,000 loan. As it was not included in the works for which that loan was authorised, there is no

probability for some time to come that the Government will be able to carry out the railway. The select committee have gone very carefully into the Bill, and have got a clause inserted which I think is a sufficient guarantee as to the *bona fides* of these gentlemen who are now going to make the line. That clause reads as follows:—

"If the railway is not completed within the said period of four years from the passing of the principal Act, or in case the period for the completion thereof shall be extended for a further period of six months in manner herein provided, then within such extended period, the powers, rights, and privileges by this Act and the principal Act granted to the company for acquiring land by purchase or otherwise, and for completing and working the railway or otherwise in relation thereto, shall, on the expiration of the said period of four years, or such further or extended period, as the case may be, cease and determine; and thereupon the whole of the moneys so deposited by the company in the Treasury as security for the due completion of the main line of railway shall be and become absolutely forfeited to Her Majesty."

Hon. members will see that the company will have to deposit another £3,000. I think there is £2,000 in the hands of the Government already, so that the additional sum will make the amount of deposit £3,000. Any contractor taking a contract from the Government is only asked to deposit 5 per cent. on the amount of his contract, and when he has done certain work that 5 per cent. is returned to him; but in this case, if the line is not completed in the specified time, the whole £3,000 becomes absolutely forfeited. Surely the Government and the members of this House, and those who will be members of the next Parliament, have sufficient knowledge to know that this company or any other company will not evade the Bill, but that they will carry out its provisions strictly. I feel quite sure that the gentlemen who are members of this syndicate, or some of them, will come to this colony and carry out what they have undertaken to do. One thing so impressed me in this matter that I am induced to give the measure my support. Hon. members will see that the syndicate is represented by a firm of solicitors than which there is not one of higher standing in Brisbane—Messrs. Hart and Flower. Mr. Hart stated to the committee that had he not been thoroughly convinced of the *bona fides* of the company he would never have appeared before the committee to advocate the passing of the Bill. The construction of the railway will be a great benefit to the district, and if I did not feel sure that the company will enter upon the work in the time allowed I would never have fallen in with the views of the committee as contained in this report. I believe it will be carried out with spirit and finished within the eighteen months limited by the Bill. Parliament will then not be troubled to pass a sum of money for the railway. I believe that this line would have received the same consideration as the line from Rockhampton to Emu Park if this company had not been in the field. I hope that hon. members will look at the matter in the same light as I do, and that they will agree to the second reading of the Bill.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—It is very refreshing to hear the arguments of the hon. member who has just sat down. They remind me of the arguments on the transcontinental line of railway four or five years ago. Had the hon. member been present when the transcontinental line was discussed, he would probably have used just the same line of argument. He did not, however, tell us why he has changed his mind on this Bill. Were I in the same position as the hon. member for North Brisbane in regard to the transcontinental scheme, I would certainly take the same view of the matter as he does. I believe that any person who has any recollection of the

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transcontinental railway debates, and who remembers the arguments used at that time against the making of that line by a syndicate, as then proposed, will recollect the bitterness of the arguments used against it. When I remember that, I can hardly blame the hon. member for North Brisbane being opposed to the making of this line by members of the old syndicate who were connected with the transcontinental scheme. It is like getting the little finger in, and then the whole hand will follow. I do not blame the hon. member. I think that, so far, he is probably right. This is the second time a measure of this kind has come before this House. The first time when it came before the House it came with a great flourish of trumpets. The promoters of the company were going to do a great deal for the Maryborough district. I was a member of the committee which recommended the House to pass the Bill, conferring upon the company the privilege to select 1,000 acres of land in the Burrum reserve, the right to get the land on which the railway was built, and the right to make the railway. I confess that I have been very much disappointed and have come to look upon the whole thing as a mere speculation of certain individuals to exploit our resources—to get certain privileges granted by this House, and then go about the country to find men to buy them. That is the conclusion I have come to. It is three years now, or nearly so, since the original Act was passed to authorise them to make the railway. The report of the select committee, which was ordered to be printed by the House, on the first Bill, is dated the 29th October, 1884—that is, three years ago. One reason why I was so favourable to the making of this line at that time was, that it was not only going to be a line that would develop the resources of the Wide Bay district, but it was going to be a line that would assist in developing the resources of the whole of the colony. The hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Ferguson, was, I think, a member of that committee, and he may recollect that a gentleman named Rawlins, who was secretary to the company, stated in his examination that they were going in for the extraction of gold and silver from refractory ores, which could not be extracted by the ordinary process; and they were going to do wonderful things for the northern portions of the colony, especially for Ravenswood, and similar places where refractory ores are most common. On the recommendation of that committee this House passed the Bill. What is the result? Not an inch of the railway has been made yet. These gentlemen have been going about looking for people to make the railway for them, and at last they found the old railway syndicate in London, and they persuaded them to take it up. I am extremely surprised at the Premier having given himself away to this project as he has done. If the hon. gentleman recollects what he said on one particular occasion, he might almost take upon himself the mantle of prophecy. The very thing that he predicted would take place by the establishment of that railway syndicate has actually taken place in this particular case. Perhaps the hon. gentleman does not remember what he said on that occasion, so I will read it so that he and the House may see how wonderfully like the result in this case has been to what he said would happen, in the discussion on the Warrego railway. I am quoting from *Hansard*, volume xxxvii., page 856. On the preceding page the hon. gentleman was telling the House about the corruption of railway syndicates in America, and what they had done in the way of bribing members of Parliament. I interjected, "Bribing judges and lawyers." Of course, they did that too. The railway syndicates had

judges of their own sitting on the bench, and there is no doubt they bribed members of Parliament. But that did not apply only to syndicates of land-grant railways, but to all syndicates of railways who had no land grants; so that it was not the land-grant system that was the cause of the corruption; it was something else. The hon. gentleman went on to say:—

“Those things are notorious, and we ought to pause a good while before we deliberately incur those dangers. It is deliberately incurring a new danger, which in the United States has threatened the very existence of the Constitution. We have done very well here without it, and I hope we shall continue to do so. Another thing in connection with those great railway companies having control of the public highways is that they are always wanting something. I will take the case of a railway that has to be finished in two years. Suppose they want two more years, pressure will be brought to bear, and what is called in the United States, ‘lobbying,’ will be introduced and acclimatised here.”

That is the very thing that has happened, only, instead of the “lobbying” having taken place here, in our lobbies, it took place in the lobbies of St. Stephen’s Club, London, and it was the hon. gentleman who went “lobbying” and consented to take up this scheme. After this prophecy and its fulfilment, I think we shall have to call the hon. gentleman “the Prophet Samuel” for the future. I do not object to making the line because the old railway syndicate is connected with it, as I believe that individually they are men of honour. But the hon. member for Maryborough need not imagine that they will come out here: they will send some small agent out to do their work, whether it be dirty or clean. What I object to is giving our resources away to mere adventurers. And these men have proved themselves to be nothing but adventurers so far. Their three years are nearly expired, and they come to the House for an extension of time, as the Premier prophesied with regard to the Warrego railway; and what guarantee have we, even then, that they will go on with the work? What is this small money deposit to those gentlemen? What guarantee have we that the next Parliament will not be “lobbied” also? It will be better for the House, better for the country, better for the people of Maryborough and Wide Bay, to wait a little longer until the Government will be able to make that railway for them and develop the resources of the district. I am certain that those resources will then be developed more in the interests of the people than they can possibly be by the making of the line by this company, even if they do make it. I shall oppose the Bill now if it goes to a division, and I shall also oppose it in committee.

Mr. ALAND said: Mr. Speaker,—I have listened with a great deal of interest to the speech of the hon. member for Townsville, and I quite coincide with, I think I may say, everything he has said. But whilst he was speaking, this thought struck me: It has been decided by the House and by the Government that no business of a contentious nature is to be discussed during the present session. If that rule holds good as far as Government business is concerned, it should hold good as far as private members’ business is concerned, more especially in a serious matter like the one now engaging our attention. We are now near the close of the session, and as it will be necessary to debate the Bill very fully, both in the House and in committee, it seems to me that there is not sufficient time to do so. I regard this matter somewhat in the light of making a provision—a charitable provision I might also say—for certain gentlemen who have not been able to carry out the provisions of an Act which was passed for their benefit some three years ago. The House suffered the Bill to pass then, and granted them certain concessions. They have been unable to

carry out their agreement, and now they come down to the House and ask us to extend that agreement. What have they been doing in the meantime? Surely three years ought to be quite long enough for a small affair like this to be carried out, unless the gentlemen who formed the original syndicate of this Urangan railway had been waiting for some really good chance to offer, by which they might dispose of their concession. It appears they have now managed to dispose of their concession: but their time is up, and unless we extend that time they will not be able to sell their concession. With the hon. member for Townsville, I believe it is just possible that next year, this new syndicate will be coming here and wanting a still further concession from the House. There ought to be some finality in these matters. If an agreement is entered into with the Government, the persons who make the agreement ought to be prepared to carry it out, or else, as is done in ordinary business transactions, forfeit whatever penalty may have been mutually decided upon when the agreement was made.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said: Mr. Speaker,—It would be very hard for some people who contracted with the Government if they were tied down hard and fast as to the time for finishing their contracts, not only in railways, but in many other works throughout the colony. What the hon. gentleman who has just spoken has said is on the assumption that the original syndicate or party of men who asked for the right to make this railway are those who proposed to dispose of their rights to another syndicate in England. He must certainly be in ignorance of the history of this case if he supposes so. The man at whose instigation the business was first started was Mr. Rawlins, who was examined before the select committee. It was at his instigation the company were induced to enter into the business of building this railway, and I believe undertook with him to do so, and they, I suspect, deposited the £2,000 as required by the Act. They afterwards had some cause, I suppose, to doubt the probable results of the undertaking, and for some reason or other stood out, leaving Mr. Rawlins alone. When they stood out and were not willing to carry out their contract or arrangement made with him, he, having spent his money and his time, looked about to see if he could get someone else to take the matter up, because he required support in doing so. To effect that object he went to England, and there met the ghost of that old monster we used to be so much afraid of, the Transcontinental Railway Syndicate. It appears that they have still sufficient life in them to undertake any railway work which promises a chance of profit. I think there need be no fear of their coming here and undertaking work of this kind on the terms proposed. I do not think anybody really entertains any feeling of that kind. But I am rather surprised to hear hon. gentlemen opposite, who were mainly instrumental in endeavouring to bring about the agreement with regard to the transcontinental railway, object now when the promoters of that undertaking were the members who now propose to carry out this work.

Mr. NORTON: No.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The leader of the Opposition, at any rate, spoke against it the other night. The hon. member for Townsville also said he objected to allow adventurers to come here and pocket or sell our resources. He was a member of the committee that sat on the Bill before, and why did he recommend the line then? If they are adventurers now they were adventurers then. They were going to develop the resources of the country, and all that sort of thing. I do not think such a term is

applicable to them. As to the desirability of carrying out works of this kind, now we know perfectly well that if they are not undertaken in this way they must wait, and wait for a considerable time. That must be so, unless they are undertaken by some private firm or company. With regard to the remarks made about the land-grant principle, I would point out that the company have to pay a very much higher price for the land than has been paid for other land in the hands of private individuals and firms. Some of the land was taken up at 5s. an acre, and this firm, or company, or syndicate, or whatever it is termed, have to pay 30s. an acre; and if they fail to carry out this line at the end of twelve months or of the additional six months' extension which may be required, they will forfeit £5,000—the Government will pocket £5,000 and not be one penny worse off than they were before.

Mr. MELLOR: And no line.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And there will be no line. There is no probability within the next eighteen months of the Government undertaking that line, and if the company fail to carry it out the Government will make £5,000 out of it. I cannot see what objection there can be to that, unless it is on the principle of not allowing anybody to build railways except the Government. Of course, if hon. members object to the line on that ground it is perfectly intelligible. I do not think there can be any objection to persons buying a piece of land, a comparatively small area, and making a railway for the purpose of developing the coal trade of the district. It is pretty well known that the only chance of developing the coal trade of the Burrum is by taking the coal down to deep water at Hervey's Bay, so that it can be exported. If they have to bring it to Maryborough and carry it down the river it will be many a long day before the coal trade of the Burrum can be developed to anything like large proportions. So that I think hon. members will do well to pause before putting any difficulties in the way of allowing this firm or syndicate an opportunity of carrying out this line, which must prove of benefit to the Maryborough district and, with that, of the whole colony. If the enterprise is extended in the other direction of treating refractory ores, that will be an advantage, in addition to developing the coal trade of the district. I shall be very glad to see the Bill passed into law, and the company given another opportunity of carrying out the work.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I was certainly very much surprised at the speech we have just heard from the Minister for Works, particularly as I remember the very intense manner in which he argued against the Transcontinental Railway Syndicate at the time of the general election three or four years ago. I quite share the views of the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes. I look upon that syndicate with the gravest suspicion and do not wish to see them get the thin end of the wedge into the colony with land-grant railways or anything of the kind.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not a land-grant railway.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: They get 1,000 acres of coal land, and it is a land-grant railway only in another form. They pay 30s. an acre, but the land may be worth £5, or £40, or £50 an acre. We do not know what it is worth. Therefore I say, notwithstanding the assertion of the Minister for Works, that it is essentially a land-grant railway, and it is taken up by the company or syndicate about which we had occasion to make a good deal of inquiry before,

and in connection with which a good deal of ill-feeling was created not only in this House, but throughout the country. The capital of this Transcontinental Railway Syndicate in the first instance was ridiculously small and insufficient. £16,040 was the whole of the subscribed capital of that company. Many people thought they were going to build that railway if they got the concessions they asked for, but they were going to do nothing of the kind. They were going to act as a sort of jobbers and sell the concession they got from the Government. They would have sold those concessions which they tried to get on a capital of £16,040 in London for about £2,500,000, so I was credibly informed. I was in London at the time, and that was considered about the value of the concession at that time—£2,500,000. However, they did not get it, and finding they were beaten in the business they came crying round to get back the £16,040 they spent in trying for this big boom. The Premier has had several applications for that money, which would form a nice little nest-egg for future operations. And I am not sure that they will not get it back when there is a change of Parliament. They have a good many friends in this House, and very likely it will be one of the jobs for the next Parliament to hand back that £16,040 which the transcontinental syndicate expended in trying to get what would have been at that time a very valuable concession. I never believed in land-grant railways or in our railways being in any other hands than those of the State. That is my opinion since I visited America, where I inquired a good deal into the system, and from the way in which the railways there are carried out there it simply confirmed my previous opinion. I took a good deal of trouble and pains to ascertain the nature of these institutions—these railway rings—and I think if we deliver ourselves over to a company of this kind we shall find ourselves fettered and harassed in such a way that we shall cease to be a great colony almost. I think the Government are quite competent to make any railways that are necessary for the people of this colony, and I do not wish to see the thin end of the wedge put in by this Transcontinental Railway Syndicate at all. I do not want to see any of these land-grant railways in any shape or form, whether they pay a certain price for the land or get the land as a simple bonus. I have no knowledge of the land in question, and therefore I am no authority on that part of the subject. I dislike the whole motion. On the face of it it is a "job," not to designate it by any worse term, and I shall vote against it.

Mr. McMASTER said: Mr. Speaker,—As a member of the committee it is desirable that I should say a word or two on this subject. I was induced, in the first place, to support the Bill, because this very same Parliament passed an Act three years ago to give permission to the railway company to construct the line, and it was plainly shown to the committee that the reason for not carrying out the work was beyond the control of the company. The principal of the syndicate died; others withdrew from the syndicate because this Parliament had inserted some clause in the Bill which they thought did not allow them sufficient liberty; others were drawn into it and died financially. The syndicate disappeared altogether, and the promoter of the scheme endeavoured to secure other capitalists to carry it out. Now, if I thought for a moment that this had the slightest connection with that vile gigantic swindle, the Transcontinental Railway Syndicate, I should have nothing to do with it. But I do not see that there is any connection between the two. The transcontinental line was to be constructed on land grants,

Not only were we to give the land, but buy the railway with hard cash, and, if it did not pay, work it ourselves. Now, there is nothing of that kind here, and there is a saving clause for the Government that in five years after its construction they can step in and buy that line at the actual cost, with 5 per cent. interest added, taking the wharves, rolling-stock, and everything else. I think that is a very good bargain for the colony. At all events, it would be a very good bargain for the Maryborough district to have the coal developed in that district. The hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hill, doubts whether there is any coal there, and then says that the land may be worth £5 or £40 an acre; but I do not suppose it is worth more than the 30s. an acre they are paying for it. The old syndicate were to get the land for nothing, but we are now to get 30s. an acre for it. Therefore we are simply allowing these men to come in and expend their money in trying to develop the coal district of Maryborough. We are keeping a hold of the railway, inasmuch as the Minister for Works, at the end of five years, can demand it by paying for it, and I consider we are really getting a very good thing. I must confess that I was astonished at the way in which the hon. member for Townsville spoke. He said the company was a bogus one, and that as soon as they got the thin end of the wedge in they would soon have their whole hand in. Well, now, that gentleman, so far as I remember, strongly supported that syndicate, and he also strongly supported the Maryborough and Urangan Railway Bill when it was first introduced. He was one of the committee that sat on the Bill and recommended it three years ago, and it is the same Parliament which is now asked to extend the time for twelve months, or for six months after that, if the Minister for Works is satisfied that the work is proceeding satisfactorily. The Minister must be satisfied that the syndicate are going on with the work, and that it is likely to be finished within a reasonable time. So that we are simply allowing this twelve months' extension of time, and we are demanding that the syndicate shall deposit a further sum of £3,000. I believe that will be 5 per cent. on the whole cost of the line, if it is added to the amount already deposited. Therefore, I think it is desirable to encourage these people when the Government is not in a position to undertake the construction of this or any other railway. We have had an indication of that within the last few weeks, and the hon. member for Townsville himself declares that we are not prepared to go on with more railways; his action in the House has shown that. But I think he will support any railways for the benefit of the North. I believe this railway will not be far enough north for the hon. member; that is why he will not support it. The hon. member for Cook, Mr. Lumley Hill, says the next Parliament is going to allow the Transcontinental Railway Syndicate the expenses they were put to in connection with the work they did on that account. Does he expect the other side is coming across here when the next Parliament comes in? Well, I think he will be very much mistaken if he does think so. I think the hon. gentleman will turn out to be a false prophet. No doubt the gentlemen on the other side of the House will come across here eventually, but not yet. I think the passing of this Bill will be advantageous to the country. I shall therefore give it my support.

Mr. DICKSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I must say that if this Bill came before us in the light of a first application I should not look with favour upon its passing. I am certainly not in favour of the principle of land-grant railways, and I think we have had an exemplification here

of the folly of trusting the development of this country to railway syndicates. I must also say that I am not induced to view this proposal more favourably when I look at the names that are now placed before us. They are old foes with new faces, and as such I am very doubtful whether they have any intention of looking after anything but their own interests. However, I look at it in this light, that the concession has been already granted. We have received a deposit upon that concession, and I think it will be acting in a very sharp and unfair manner if we refuse to give the moderate concession of an additional year in which to construct this line; I think the Government are bound to recognise that. It would be sharp practice for an individual to peremptorily close the agreement, and say: The day, or month, or year, having expired, we will have no more to do with you; we will forfeit what you have already paid. I am therefore of opinion that we should treat the applicants in a generous and honourable spirit, and accord them the extension of time they ask for, upon their complying with the conditions. It is only in that light that I regard the application at all with favour. I think that nothing that has transpired in the course of these negotiations will tend to make us view land-grant railway construction with increased favour, and the names submitted to us would not tend to strengthen or warrant approval of the project, if it was a new project. No doubt the syndicate have had some difficulties to contend with, because, in submitting this matter to Parliament, it was surrounded with severe conditions. It will be remembered that the select committee recommended that ten years should be the time during which the Government should have the right of purchase. That time was subsequently reduced, and there were other conditions of a stringent character introduced. There is therefore some excuse for the delay. In addition to this view of the case, I am further led to approve of the Bill by the evident desire of hon. members for the district that this line should be proceeded with as early as possible. I may say also that I fear, from the present condition of the Treasury, if we reject these proposals it is unlikely that any steps can be taken for the construction of the line by the Government. The country will, therefore, suffer no injury that I can see by granting the concession asked for by this Bill, and allowing another year for the completion of the line. It is because of the views I have stated above, that I shall vote for this Bill, and I do not depart from the objections I have entertained, and continue to entertain, with respect to the construction of railways generally by private syndicates on the land-grant principle.

Mr. CHUBB said: Mr. Speaker,—I intend to vote for the second reading of this Bill, as I did for the principal Bill which received the sanction of Parliament on a former occasion. I am strengthened in my view of the matter by the opinions expressed by the members representing the Maryborough district. I know that a portion of this line is a line to the seaside from Maryborough to Pialba, the line surveyed by the Government, which will not be attempted while the eighteen months' additional time granted to this company remains unexpired. I am aware that a year is the statutory time allowed by the Bill, but provision is made by which an additional six months may be allowed, and I am confident the full term of eighteen months will be required. Upon that we have this fact: The carrying out of a railway from Maryborough to Pialba within four and a-half years will entirely depend upon the *bona fides* of this company. Hon. members representing

the district being in favour of it, and this House having on a previous occasion granted concessions, it does seem to me not unreasonable that the company should get the extra eighteen months they ask for. That seems to be all there is in the question, and with regard to the side-issues raised about transcontinental railway syndicates and land-grant railways, it will be sufficient to deal with those questions if ever they arise again. I may remark, in passing, that while much may be said against transcontinental railways on the land-grant principle, a great deal may be said in favour of the system. The question has been thrashed out before and may have to be thrashed out again, but as one lives longer one grows wiser, and if a proposal for land-grant railways is brought before Parliament again, no doubt more favourable conditions will be insisted upon. There is one matter to which I think attention should be drawn, and that is this: In the 4th clause—a new clause put in, I think, by the Committee—provision is made that the deposit is to be forfeited if the railway is not completed within the period stated; but there is no provision made in either the principal Act or in this Bill for this state of affairs. Supposing the company began to do a certain portion of the work and then abandoned it, there is no provision whatever for the Government stepping in and taking possession of the works. The principal Act provides that if, after the works are completed, they are not worked for a certain time, the Government may step in and work them; but for the case I have just mentioned no provision is made. Again, the 81st section of the principal Act is inconsistent with the 4th clause of this Bill as it now stands, and the two sections cannot stand together. The 81st section of the principal Act will be constructively repealed by this Bill, but it would be better to have a special paragraph dealing with it. If hon. members are disposed to think that a deposit of one-twentieth is not sufficient, it may be advisable to require a larger deposit as evidence of the *bona fides* of the company, and that can be done by a clause in the Bill. In a Bill which was before the House not long ago, there was a question of the evidence being given as to *bona fides* by requiring that there should be a certain amount of capital. If the House in committee think the amount provided here is not sufficient, it will be easy to make it larger, so as to prevent any possibility of the proposed extension of the railway from Maryborough to the sea-shore being hung up for eighteen months longer.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Dickson, in referring to the syndicate to whom it is proposed to transfer the rights given under the Urangan Railway Act, seemed to think that one objection to the proposal was that they first seek their own interests rather than the interests of the colony. Well, I wonder what company would do anything else. I wonder what the original company in this case proposed to do. Little they thought of the interests of the colony when their own were at stake. Do we not know that all companies going in for an undertaking of this kind go into it for their own profit? I had doubts about the original Bill brought before the House, and I confess that at that time I was very much opposed to the passing of that Bill. Because of a good many statements made in connection with it, I viewed it with a great deal of suspicion, and I view this Bill with just as much suspicion as I did the first Bill. I always thought that the company which applied for the right granted under the Urangan Railway Act was a company got up for the purpose of acquiring rights to dispose of to some other companies, and the evidence which has been given I think confirms that view. The

syndicate—the Vernon Coal Company, or whatever they call themselves—was so disunited that immediately the Bill became law a number of the members went out of it and declined to go on, and the reason assigned for their doing so was that instead of getting ten years, as they hoped, to carry out this paltry line of seventeen or eighteen miles, they were only allowed five. Well, five years was quite long enough, if they wanted to carry out the work at all, to carry out a little line like that. Now, I think if the House is to grant rights of this kind to a syndicate composed of gentlemen with whose names we are already familiar, they ought to be directly granted. Why should we allow extraordinary rights to be acquired by Act of Parliament to be shuffled on from one company to another?

Mr. FOXTON: It is the same company.

Mr. NORTON: How is it the same?

Mr. FOXTON: Because they purchased 47,000 out of 50,000 shares.

Mr. NORTON: It is an entirely different company all the same—a reconstructed company if you like. There has been a good deal of engineering done, and that is why I suspected it from the first. This is not the first appearance of Mr. Rawlins in the colony in connection with the floating of companies. I remember him in connection with a meat company at Port Curtis once; it created a great sensation there, but the whole thing was as hollow as possible, and fell through. I do not intend to go into the question of land-grant railways; that is beside the question now. Of course this may be regarded as a land-grant railway, or it may not; all I know is that when it was before Parliament previously it was stated that they were to acquire the land at very much below its value. It was to be acquired at 30s. an acre, I think, and it was worth a good deal more than that; so that in some sense it was a land grant. I can only say that, as far as I am concerned, I shall vote against it. I quite agree with a good many remarks that have fallen from several hon. members who have spoken against it. I do not see any objection personally to the gentlemen at home, whose names we have heard so often, to whom it has been transferred; but if we have to deal with them, let us deal with them straight; and if this company, to which we have conceded the rights given by the Urangan Railway Act cannot carry out the line, let them give it up.

Mr. MELLOR said: Mr. Speaker,—I only wish to say a word or two with regard to the remarks of the hon. gentleman who just sat down, about the land. I may say that the land the company is to acquire has been open to the public for selection for many years past at a less price than he mentioned. A good deal of the land about there has been acquired at 5s. an acre, because it is no good whatever, except as coal lands; the surface of it is no good. I trust the House will allow this Bill to pass. It is a very serious matter for the district. At the time the original Bill was brought in, it was thought as well to try the principle of construction of railways by private companies, and see if they could be constructed and worked as cheaply and as well as by the Government. I thought at the time that it would save the country a good deal of money, and no doubt it would have done so. If the Government had constructed the line, there would have been over £100,000 invested in the railway there at the present time. It is in exactly the same position as the Emu Park railway from Rockhampton. There is a very large centre of population in the Wide Bay district, and this is the only watering place they will ever be likely to have; and the construction of the railway cannot take place for many years to

come, unless it is allowed to be constructed by the present company. We know very well that there will be no loan raised for the purpose for many years. The development of the Burrum Coal Field depends upon the construction of this railway, to give an outlet to deep water. Whether it is constructed now or at some future time, it will be constructed either by the Government or by a private company. I would like to see it constructed by a private company.

Question put, and the House divided:—

AYES, 29.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Jordan, Moreton, Sheridan, Dickson, Kellett, Foote, Dutton, Mellor, Isambert, Foxton, Rutledge, Buckland, Black, Jessop, Palmer, Wakefield, Scott, Kates, McMaster, Nelson, Hamilton, Chubb, Macfarlane, Morgan, S. W. Brooks, Lalor, Annear, and Ferguson.

NOES, 11.

Messrs. Norton, Morehead, Macrossan, W. Brookes, Lumley Hill, White, Bulcock, Grimes, Campbell, Aland, and Fraser.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

On the motion of Mr. FOXTON, the committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into Committee of the Whole, further to consider Supply.

SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. B. B. Moreton) moved that there be granted for the service of the year 1887-8 the sum of £4,355 for salaries, Secretary for Public Instruction. That was exactly the same amount as was voted last year.

Mr. NORTON asked whether there would be any interference with the Normal School in consequence of the railway being carried to Fortitude Valley?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said it was not contemplated that there would be any interference with the school at the present time. The only reason for any interference with it was the idea the Railway Department had of cutting a road through the ground from Adelaide street to Ann street. That would have gone through the infants' and girls' school. But that was not contemplated now, and although the department had gone to some expense in leveling the land and had called for tenders for a school building, there was no tender accepted.

Mr. NORTON said he understood that there would be a good deal of cutting in the railway near the school. A boy from the Grammar School was passing the locality the previous day when blasting was being carried on, and ran a very great risk of being killed. If blasting was allowed to go on close to the school in that way, there was of course great danger to the children, as they could not be expected to protect themselves like grown people. He brought the matter under the notice of the Minister in order that some action might be taken to prevent any blasting that was likely to endanger human life in any way, but more particularly the lives of children who had to pass backwards and forwards. He heard that some stones had been sent on the roofs of houses in the vicinity of the works.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it would be very difficult for the contractor to carry on his operations without blasting; and once the men used powder or dynamite it was just as difficult for the contractor to control them, because they actually, in spite of any instructions

they got from the contractor, used far more powder and dynamite than was absolutely necessary. Some other means must therefore be taken to prevent accidents, such as covering the blast with pretty heavy fascines. The contractor should provide fascines; but whether he could afford to do that at the schedule rate for which he had taken the contract he (Mr. Macrossan) did not know. The Minister for Works probably knew more about that than he did, and might inform the Committee whether any steps had been taken to provide against accidents.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not think the contractor was bound to find anything of the kind. The people in the neighbourhood no doubt should be protected from the showers of stones from the blasting, but he was not prepared to say what was the best method of doing that; possibly good strong wire netting might suffice. However, he would see if something could not be done to provide against accidents.

Mr. CHUBB said he hoped something would be done, because the matter referred to by the hon. member for Port Curtis might have resulted fatally. There were three boys at the place when that accident occurred. One of them was his own son, and he told him that they were 100 yards away at the time the blast went off; in fact, some stones went on to a house on Wickham terrace. Probably one way of providing against accidents would be to arrange that the blasting should be done at certain hours of the day, and that people should be warned that it would take place at that time, either at a particular hour in the morning or at night. The corporation did that. If they were going to blast they drilled the holes and filled them with powder, and they were fired off, one after the other, after dark.

Mr. BLACK said he would like to know whether the item for rent, referred to the building occupied by the Minister for Public Instruction, and also what was the amount of rent per annum. He assumed that when the new Government buildings were erected the Education Office would be moved there, so as to avoid the annual expenditure for rent.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the rent was £412 10s. per annum. That was the amount paid last year, when there was an increase on account of another story being added to the building.

Mr. NORTON said that seemed to be a very high rent for a building in the position occupied by the Education Office, which was in one of the back streets, and away from the busiest portion of the town. The amount appeared to be excessive.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he took some advice on the matter, and he considered it a very low rental. He knew that the proprietor could get a very much higher rent if the department were out of it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL asked who the landlord of the building was, and whether it was held on a yearly or a monthly tenancy?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION replied that Mr. Wakefield was the landlord of the building, and that it was held on a yearly tenancy.

Mr. BLACK asked whether the additional story was added to the building by the landlord or by the tenant?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION replied that it was added by the landlord.

Mr. BLACK said the rent paid was excessively high. Equally suitable accommodation could be obtained for a very much lower rent in some of those very large buildings that had lately been erected in Brisbane.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the rental now was £450 a year. The sum of £410, which he had just mentioned, was the amount spent last year.

Mr. BLACK said that £450 was an excessive rental to pay, but he supposed it was all right now that they understood the ins and outs of the transaction. Was the Education Department one of the departments that would be provided with accommodation in the new Government buildings?

The PREMIER said it was so long since he had seen the plans of the new Government buildings that he scarcely liked to trust to his memory for an answer to the question. But, unless his memory deceived him very much, the Education Department was to be located in the corner of the building at the junction of William and Elizabeth streets; the Registrar of Titles' offices being below, and the Education Department above. That would be in the first block to be opened. It might also be some satisfaction to hon. members to know that the arrangement for the lease of the premises to the Education Department was made by Sir Arthur Palmer when he was Minister for Education.

Mr. BLACK: At the present rental, or at a very much reduced rental?

The PREMIER: At a rental of £350. Since that time the accommodation had been increased by at least one-half.

Mr. NORTON said there were some very fine buildings in George street, opposite the Government block.

The PREMIER said those buildings were not erected then.

Mr. NORTON said he believed accommodation could be had there at a very much lower rental than £450.

The PREMIER: Very much higher.

Mr. NORTON said he knew a high rental was asked, but he understood that in some cases they brought down the prices very materially. Apart from the question that a member of the House was the owner of the property, he thought that £450 was an excessive rental.

Mr. ALAND said it should be borne in mind that Mr. Wakefield was not a member of the House when the arrangement was entered into. Nothing could be said in that case, and nothing could be said against the increased rental, because, as they all knew, properties generally had advanced in value, and rents had advanced also; and they had the statement of the Premier that very much more accommodation had been provided than was originally given to the department. It was just possible that a less pretentious kind of building with less accommodation might have been obtained for a smaller rental, but he did not think hon. members generally would regard £450 as an excessive rental for a building situated where that building was. It hardly represented a fair amount of interest on the cost of the building.

Mr. PALMER said he wished to know if the total sum asked for, £205,257, would be sufficient for all the requirements of the department for the year, or would an additional sum be asked for subsequently. The sum voted last year was £195,063, whereas the actual amount spent, according to the report of the department was £208,977. In 1885-6 the amount spent was £203,788, which was also considerably in excess of the amount voted. Judging from the amount spent last year, it seemed very probable that the £205,257 now asked for would not suffice for the requirements of the year.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the Estimates had been very carefully framed, and he thought the sum asked for would be sufficient. But the Education Act was somewhat elastic, and it was impossible to foresee what would happen during the year. There might be some provisional schools which would become entitled to be raised to the status of State schools, and they would necessarily increase the expenditure. Then there were cases like Croydon, where a large population had suddenly settled, and where schools would have to be built.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Not until you build the railway.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the people there were already crying out for schools, and the department was already taking steps in that direction. Circumstances were constantly arising which could not possibly be foreseen, and on that account they sometimes had to come down for a small sum of money afterwards.

Mr. NORTON said it very seldom happened that they did not.

Mr. BLACK said he supposed the documents kept in the department were of a valuable and, no doubt, voluminous character. It would be interesting, therefore, to know of what material the buildings in which they were kept consisted.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the buildings were constructed throughout of brick.

Mr. NELSON said the hon. member for Burke had very rightly called attention to the expenditure of the department. The Government seemed to take it for granted that the expenditure for the present year would be about the same as it was last year. But that did not allow for any expansion in the department. It did not allow for the establishment of new schools, or for the formation of provisional schools into State schools, all of which involved extra expenditure, and it was an expenditure which the department was bound to incur when the circumstances arose. The Education Act required them to do so. It was not as if people came petitioning to the department for schools; they had a right to get them if the circumstances were such that the district required them. In that case he thought there was an under-estimate, seeing that the vote of last year was exceeded by £8,000, and only the same amount was put down for this year. Surely they were not going backwards, as that estimate would lead them to suppose. Were they going to make no progress in the matter of education during the year?

Question put and passed.

STATE SCHOOLS.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, in moving £5,850 for Inspection, said there was an increase of £100 on the vote of last year, which had occurred in this way: There was a new inspector appointed last year, and his travelling expenses were only put down for six months, but now they were required for the whole year.

Mr. GROOM said he should like to draw the attention of the Minister for Public Instruction to the travelling allowances of the inspectors. On referring to the schedule attached to the Estimates-in-Chief, he noticed that the whole of the school inspectors, leaving out the general inspector and the Under Secretary, were put down at £1 per day travelling allowances, and out of that they had to find themselves, pay their own coach fares, steamer fares, and railway fares. He was satisfied that that allowance was, in many cases, totally inadequate. He would take one

district, which he supposed would be typical of some others. Take the Central district. The inspector there had frequently to go off the railway lines and to places where there were no coaches. In such cases he had to hire a buggy, and to pay a very high price for it. In fact, he was obliged to submit to whatever terms the parties demanded; and certainly if he had to pay £4 or £5 a day, he could not do it out of his £1 a day allowance. The result was that these inspectors had frequently to pay a portion of their expenses out of their own pocket. They received £400 a year, and in many instances part of that had to be taken to defray their travelling expenses. It was certainly never contemplated that the inspectors should be placed in that position. The £400 a year was in payment of their services as school inspectors, and if £1 a day was not sufficient to cover their travelling expenses it ought certainly to be increased. At all events, he did not see why the railways should not be at their disposal.

THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They get passes.

Mr. GROOM said he was informed such was not the case. In fact, he was sure he was correct, because on reference to the schedule he found the Under Secretary received £800 a year, the general inspector £600 a year, and then there was the letter "A," and on referring to the foot-note he found that those officers received one guinea per day when travelling on official duty, and railway passes, and that their steamer and coach fares were paid. Then on referring to the district inspectors, of whom there were nine, there was the letter "B" and a foot-note which stated "£1 per diem travelling allowances"; so that no railway passes were given to them, and he certainly thought that in such a district as the Central division of the colony that was not nearly sufficient to pay their travelling expenses. He had some idea of travelling expenses there and in the Northern districts, and he was quite certain that an inspector could not pay his way for £1 a day. When they were discussing the other day the travelling allowances for judges it was considered that ten guineas a day for three gentlemen was not an unfair charge, and from his experience of northern hotel bills he was quite prepared to say that it was not at all extravagant. He could produce Northern hotel bills of a very interesting character, for a week's stay there, and he had not a word of complaint against the expenses of some of the officials in those districts. How an inspector could exist there upon £1 a day, and pay his own fare by rail, steamer, and coach, he could not understand.

Mr. CHUBB: It is impossible.

Mr. GROOM said he quite agreed with the hon. member for Bowen—it was impossible, and he did not think they should expect those officers to put their hands into their pockets and pay their travelling expenses out of their salaries, which were intended for the support of their families. If the two higher officials of the department were allowed railway passes, he certainly thought the same concession should be made to the other officials of the department when travelling on official work.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Steamer fares too?

Mr. GROOM said they ought to get steamer and coach fares also. He hoped that now the attention of the Minister in charge of the department had been drawn to the matter, he would place those officers on something like a satisfactory footing with regard to travelling expenses.

THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he had been under the impression that the inspectors got railway passes, but he found they did not. But whenever they made any claim for extra expenses for any emergency—through having to go to any outside place to report upon it—if they made any claim for extra expenses in such cases they were paid.

Mr. MOREHEAD said they found the Minister for Public Instruction was not aware until attention was called to it by the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, that the inspectors of his department did not get passes, although the schedule attached to the Estimates showed that they did not, as was known to every member of the Committee. However, the Minister for Public Instruction had qualified that statement by saying that whenever any extraordinary expenditure was incurred by any inspectors their application was always granted. He supposed the payment was made out of contingencies—a very comfortable vote. He thought those contingency votes—especially in those bad times—wanted very careful looking into, when they found that although there was no provision on the Estimates for the expenses of those gentlemen—and he supposed those cases did not stand by themselves—there was a nice comfortable little vote for secret service at the command of every Minister—that was the vote for contingencies. He did not see why the senior inspector of the department should be put upon a different footing, so far as travelling expenses were concerned, from ordinary inspectors. It appeared to him that the provision as it stood might just be picnic money for them, because neither the general nor the senior inspector did much more than picnic. He thought they had a pretty good time of it. The department was one which he regarded with not only very grave suspicion, but also as a matter of great gravity to the State. Year after year the vote was increasing in such a way that ultimately it would have to be dealt with in a very different way—it would have to be made a tax on those who benefited by public instruction. There was a large and growing number of people in the colony who did not derive any benefit from the expenditure, and the money appeared to be wasted, or at any rate used, in large centres of population, whereas the taxation necessary to support the system spread over all the inhabitants of the colony. Since he had been a member he had protested year after year against the system, and he was convinced that they would have to fall back on the system that prevailed in more civilised communities—in Great Britain and in other places—where they had to strike an education rate.

THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The tendency is to strike that away altogether.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it was quite within recent times that school boards had been established in Great Britain, where there were special rates taxing those people who derived benefit for the benefit they derived, and he hoped that system would before long prevail in Queensland. He did not see why those in the outside districts should be taxed to give even a high education to those who lived in cities like Brisbane; and the time was not far distant when those people would object, in stronger language than had yet been employed, to such taxation. The State was now paying £200,000 for the education of her children, or at the rate of more than £1 per head for every adult in the colony. That was a matter of very serious moment, and one that did not receive sufficient consideration. It was all very well to educate the people, but no injustice should be

done to those who were not deriving any benefit from the system. He had opened the question—he had not done with it yet—and he hoped that hon. members would express their opinions on the subject.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said that over £15,000 of the vote was required for orphanages, and that was not for education pure and simple.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was willing to leave the last three items out of consideration.

Mr. WHITE said the great pity was that the colony did not get the benefit of the money spent, for the reason that the attendance was not compulsory, the progress of the children who attended regularly being retarded by those who did not. Education was perfectly free, and for that reason many people thought lightly of it and allowed their children to stay at home occasionally, the consequence being that a considerable amount of the money was spent, as it were, in vain. In the old country the children had to pay from 2d. to 5d. a week; the buildings had to be provided by the school board, and the fathers in the township had to provide the money. A whipper-in was also provided to punish those who did not attend school, and if they pleaded poverty and were not able to pay, the poor-law board had to pay the schoolmaster. The expense in the colony was nothing compared with the expense at home. The character of the buildings enforced by the Government there was so extravagant that the burden was very great on those who had no children to send to school. He had to pay £20 a year towards the school in his town at home and he had no children to send at all.

Mr. NELSON said he thought the question was not altogether as to the amount to be spent on education, but whether the amount so spent was fairly raised amongst the community, and whether the benefits supposed to be derived were also fairly distributed. He thought both of those questions were fairly arguable. He did not consider that the education of the children was necessarily a function of the State. The State was no more bound to educate the children than to feed or clothe them. It was only one of those socialistic arrangements which had been adopted, and which could only be justified on the basis that it was for the benefit of the whole community, and that it was the best and cheapest way of educating them. He doubted very much whether it was either the best or the cheapest; he was sure it was not the cheapest, at any rate. Moreover, it was paid for out of the taxation of the country, and they knew very well that according to the present system taxation fell very unevenly on the community. If anyone would examine the subject he would find that the man who was least able to pay was the man who, in proportion to his income, was called upon to pay the most. The man who paid the highest was the man whose income was just enough and no more, to supply him and his family with the necessities and a few of the comforts of life—the man who saved nothing, but spent the whole of his income. When they were debating the financial question the learned Attorney-General referred to that subject, and argued that the poor men need not grumble at the taxation, seeing that they received free education. That was a very poor way of looking at it. He might as well have said that they received free police and free gaols, and Dunwich, and St. Helena. When they were talking about the taxation being very heavy, and that it was retarding the progress of the colony, which he maintained it was doing, the Premier said that was only a “parrot-cry,” and he referred them to one of the tables showing

that ten years ago, in 1876-7, the taxation per head amounted to £3 9s. 1d., whereas last year it was £3 10s. 5d., or a very small increase. That was quite true; but instead of proving that taxation was not falling heavier on the community than it did then, if he would look at the circumstances of the case, he would see that taxation was falling with a great deal more force now than ten years ago, for the simple reason that during the last two years additional taxes had been imposed, and that that additional taxation had not produced any further revenue. The extra taxation had been abortive in that sense. The community had been squeezed too much; in point of fact, they could not afford to pay any more and would not do it. Assuming that there was a consensus of opinion as to the educational system, the question would be whether they were getting fair value for their money. About its being a favour to the poor man to get his children educated free, the promulgation of such a doctrine was most mischievous both to the men themselves and also to the department. If it was to be national education, it should be national education. Everything that was connected with it should be paid by the State. At present the system was mixed. The people residing in a district were called upon to pay contributions before they could get a school. He thought they had to contribute a very large amount—about two-thirds of the sum required.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: About one-fifth; the State pays the other four-fifths.

Mr. NELSON said, at any rate, the people were called upon to pay something, and that was wrong. The parents ought to know that, and ought to be told that it was not free education, but education for which they themselves were paying, and very highly too. It was not right, he thought, to go round for contributions for prizes. He doubted very much whether that was right, because it must destroy men's independence if they got the notion into their heads that there was anything charitable about national schools. In that way it must destroy the character of a school, and also the independent feeling of the community. The logical outcome of their educational scheme was completely destroyed in consequence of the non-enforcement of the compulsory clauses of the Act, and that was, as referred to by the hon. member for Stanley, to elevate the intellectual standard of the people, and result in a diminution of crime, so that by-and-by they would have to pay less for police and judges. But if they allowed that scum of the community, the larrikins, and others to go free, and did not compel them to go to school, the whole benefit of the system was destroyed. He could not see why those compulsory clauses were not enforced, if not in the country districts, at least in the city and in the large towns. The sooner the system was altered the better. No Government yet had ever the courage to do that; but it was evident the time had arrived when something of the kind would have to be done, if they were to carry on the system. In regard to the distribution of benefits, he had no hesitation in saying that the large towns received a far greater benefit than would actually fall to their share if they took the contributions to the revenue into consideration. The sparsely populated places were debarred from the benefits that the system would provide for them if the country were more populated. In that way he thought the distribution was very uneven. Then again, a large number in the community did not believe in that mode of education at all, and with them he strongly sympathised. They had a right to be considered. They had to contribute towards

the maintenance of all the schools and of the whole educational system, and that wanted remedying too. It was a question not very often debated, the policy apparently being to let well alone. But there would be a mere fierce struggle when it did break out. He saw the controversy that must some day come to the front, and it would be as well to tackle it as soon as possible and try and reduce the system to some more equitable basis than at present. He supposed it was hardly worth while asking the Premier if he was going to do anything in regard to a university that session.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he must admit that there was no expenditure on the Estimates that he had more pleasure in supporting than that for the Department of Public Instruction. He hoped that the day was very far distant indeed when an attempt would be made to reduce the present power of their national schools. Instead of that, every effort should be made to improve them in such a way as to make them much more efficient in future than they were at present. He admitted at once that the expense of their State schools was growing very fast; but then population was growing very fast also, and if they bore that in mind it would be seen that the vote for education was not growing any faster than votes in the other various departments of the State. About eighteen months ago he had the pleasure of inspecting a number of national board schools in England and in Scotland. In those schools there was a very high and efficient system of education going on. The schools themselves were of a very superior class indeed; in fact, some of the larger ones would compare very favourably with the Queensland grammar schools—those in the very large towns. In passing through some of the schools in England, he was very much struck with the order and the system of management all through in reference to the various departments of education. He found in Scotland that State education was beginning to have a certain effect on crime. There was not so much of that larrikin crime as there was in the colony, and that might be accounted for by the religious teaching in the schools. He found that in some towns, such as Edinburgh, the Bible was read in the public schools, and he thoroughly believed in that. Some people had not very much faith in that, but he had a very strong faith in it, and believed that selected passages of the Bible might be read in the schools, and that that would go a long way indeed towards making children more amenable to the law, and would remove a certain amount of the larrikin element. There was another subject also taught in the schools of Scotland. Temperance was taught. He saw a smile passing over hon. members' faces, but he maintained that that also would go a long way towards reducing crime. If the evil effects of alcoholic drinks were impressed on the minds of young people, that would go a long way towards preventing crime. If they could only do what he spoke of they could feel that they were getting full value for their money; but he did not think they were in the meantime getting the full benefit of their expenditure. He approved of compulsory education, and was sorry the compulsory clauses had never been put in force. He hoped the Minister for Public Instruction would think those matters over. He had no doubt that with compulsory education, and having temperance and religious teaching in the schools, a great improvement would soon be visible in the rising generation.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman who had just sat down talked very glibly on the subject of compulsory education, but he did not think there had been a Minister in power since the Act became law who dared to bring the

compulsory clauses into effect, and he did not think there ever would be one who would dare to do so.

Mr. SMYTH: They do in New South Wales.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was not dealing with New South Wales. He was speaking of Queensland, and he thought the hon. gentleman was wrong in even quoting New South Wales. It might be done in one or two extreme cases, but he did not think that the hon. gentleman could show him that it had been the general practice to put the compulsory clause into effect.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Oh yes, they do!

Mr. MOREHEAD said they must be extreme cases; but he believed they did not, as a rule, put the compulsory provisions into force, and very wisely they did not. For his part he did not see why, if they brought the water to the horse and he would not drink, he should be made to drink. He was convinced the Government would never put those clauses into effect; but so soon as they did, there would be such an outcry, and such injustice would be done, that they would very soon have to drop it. They all knew that so far as compulsory education was concerned he objected to it. The State provided the means of educating the children, and if the parents did not take advantage of the education, then let it pass. But he was going further than that, and he would say distinctly that the error lay in the direction of over-education; there was no doubt that that was the tendency of the present day. The tendency, in a young country like this, was to imagine that it was a kind of Utopia where, under their education system, every child would rise possibly up to the standard of a member of Parliament. Now, what was the result of that higher education, so far as they had seen in the colony? The result, according to his experience, had been that children were educated up to a condition that they would not follow the occupation their father followed; they must be put in some better position. They would not work, they would not go to mechanical employment, but they all wanted to be clerks or to be put in the Civil Service, or in some position which their fathers did not occupy. Now, he thought that if they went in more for technical education, in educating the youth of the colony up to the standard of education that their fathers possessed, it would be infinitely preferable. If they insisted upon giving to the children in the colony the high education which was now being afforded them, they would do harm instead of good. Those were his views, and he had expressed them over and over again. He had expressed those views ever since the passing of the Education Act, and would continue to express them. Now, with regard to the question raised by the hon. member for Ipswich, wherein he said that he thought it would be a very good thing if the Bible could be read in the public schools. Well, that, of course, was a very vexed question. To his mind he thought it would be quite possible. He was one of those who would wish to see the Bible taught, and have a day set apart wherein ministers of different religions could instruct the State pupils. But he thought the hon. gentleman made rather a mistake when he suggested that the passages read from the Bible should be selected passages. Who was to select the passages? He could quite understand the hon. gentleman himself being one of the selection committee. He (Mr. Morehead), representing possibly a different tone of thought, might also be one. The hon. member for Townsville might be another,

and the hon. member, Mr. Wakefield, might be another; and possibly the hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Jordan), might be a fifth. Now, he wondered what the selected passages would look like when they had been agreed upon. One passage might possibly be selected by the hon. member for South Brisbane. It was a passage that the hon. Premier himself quoted, and was applicable also to a debate that took place a few nights ago on the question of the South Brisbane railway. Curiously enough the passage was quoted before in connection with a similar subject. The hon. member for South Brisbane at that time was protesting—and no doubt, from his point of view, properly protesting—against the marked neglect shown the constituency he represented, and he also stated, though not perhaps in so many words, that South Brisbane was not to be considered a pocket borough by the Government. The hon. Premier, in a very telling speech, replied to the hon. member, and said that he could get a quotation from Scripture which would be applicable to the situation, and he (Mr. Morehead) admitted that it was most applicable. The quotation was from that beautiful poem, perhaps the most beautiful poem in the Bible—the Book of Job, and it was: “And shall Job serve God for nought?” There was Job, in the person of the hon. member for South Brisbane, opposite to him, but the nought had gone. He wondered, if the hon. member for South Brisbane were on the selection committee for those select Bible readings, whether he would select that passage. He thought possibly if passages from Scripture were to be selected by members of Parliament it might lead to unpleasant remarks on the part of the scholars. However, he looked upon the vote—though it was not perhaps shown by the Estimates this year—as a gradually growing one, and as a tremendous weight round the necks of the taxpayers of the colony. It was being severely felt in New South Wales and Victoria, and he felt that here they would have to meet it, not by general, but by local taxation. Those places in which special advantages were obtained by the educational system would have and ought to pay for those advantages, and where no advantages or very small advantages were obtained, as in the outlying districts, they should not be asked, or compelled as they were by the present Education Act, to suffer the taxation they did under the present system. They would have to consider in the not far distant future whether the incidence of taxation in connection with the Department of Public Instruction was fair or just. He thought it was very unfair. Hon. members, as a rule, were, he thought, inclined to deal fairly with the outlying districts, and he hoped they would fall in with the views he had expressed, and see that local taxation must take the place of the present system if those districts were to obtain a full or fair measure of justice.

Mr. GROOM said there was one point in the hon. member's speech which he would have been glad to have heard him amplify, where he spoke of technical education. It appeared to him that it was one of the defects of their educational system that sufficient attention was not paid to technical education. That was the case more particularly in the agricultural districts. He thought it was of the greatest importance that they should do more than they were now doing so far as agricultural education was concerned, and more particularly in those districts where the inhabitants must depend upon agriculture, for many years to come, for a living. He said the technical school in connection with the Brisbane School of Arts was doing a large amount of good, and had been the means of developing a considerable amount of mechanical genius in the young men of Brisbane, the benefits of which

would remain for a very long time to come. The system might be applied with very great advantage to the country districts. He had had a conversation recently with a gentleman who had suggested that idea: the gentleman mentioned the town of Winton in particular, and suggested that an engineering school should be established there, and a class formed of young men to be educated as hydraulic engineers, and to devote their time to the consideration of means for the conservation of water. That gentleman informed him that he had had to travel a distance of fifty miles without a drink of water, and he could hardly say whether it was water or mud when he reached it. He was a wealthy man, and expressed his willingness to contribute a very considerable amount of money to the endowment of a school of that kind at Winton. He was glad to find the thoughts of the hon. member for Balonne directed in that course. What were they doing in that direction at the present time? They were doing literally nothing. If hon. members would turn to the Education Report, they would find that all the inspectors, without a single exception, complained of the barren condition of the walls of the schools. Even the maps were not hung upon the walls of the schools, and nothing was done to impart an elevating character to the schools. There was no attempt made to cultivate shade trees or flowers in the school grounds, and there was nothing to which attention appeared to be directed, except reading, writing, and arithmetic. He did not wonder at the school inspectors complaining of that. They talked a great deal about their Botanic Gardens and other places of the kind, and yet there were school grounds in the neighbourhood of towns where shade trees could be got for the asking, and where the school grounds were as barren of any vegetation as the floor of that Chamber. That was the more noticeable in country districts and in agricultural districts. Not the slightest attempt was made to impart a single particle of information with regard to the tillage of the soil, or to turn the attention of the children in the direction of the occupations of their fathers. There was a great deal of truth in what fell from the leader of the Opposition. A great many young men in this colony did despise the occupations of their fathers, and there was no use in their shutting their eyes to the fact. He had stated before—and he made no apology for mentioning the fact again—that five young men, all sons of farmers, called upon him concerning the occupations in which they desired to engage. The height of the ambition of one of them was that he might be allowed to enter the police service, and the four others wished to become railway porters. He had asked them whether it would not be better for them to take up a selection, and the answer was that their fathers had been a long time trying to succeed in that way and could not succeed. That might be so, but if it was there were reasons why they could not succeed. A great deal arose from the want of information on the part of the farmers as to the best way in which to cultivate the soil. They had no knowledge of the most scientific way to deal with the soil in order to get the most out of it. What he complained of was that nothing was being done in the direction of extending or imparting that kind of information, although they were paying a large sum of money for education; and it was a question for public men to put to themselves, whether the colony was receiving sufficient value for what was paid for education? That was a very serious question indeed, and he agreed with the leader of the Opposition that the time was coming when the Education vote would increase to such an extent that they would be

bound to put the question to themselves, whether after all they had adopted the best means of imparting education to the rising generation. He had been reading lately of the Canadian system of education—payment by results. There could be no doubt whatever as to the success of that scheme as far as Canada was concerned, though whether it would be applicable to Queensland was another matter. Possibly the present scheme was the best adapted to the circumstances of the colony, but it was capable of improvement. More attention should be devoted to technical education; in the agricultural districts a knowledge of agriculture should be imparted, and in the mining districts a knowledge of scientific mining. He agreed with the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, who he did not think had always expressed those views. When the Education Act was going through—and the hon. member for Townsville rendered great help in putting that measure into shape—he (Mr. Groom) was a strong advocate for the reading of the Bible in the national schools. At that time a majority of the House was opposed to it, but he did not think it would be so now. The longer he lived the more he was convinced of the value of reading the Bible in the schools, and though the question was attended with very great difficulties he hoped the day was not far distant when the Bible would be introduced into the schools. Provision was made at present for clergymen attending after school-hours and giving religious instruction to the children. He wondered how many clergymen carried out that practice. He had perused the report with some curiosity to see whether the inspectors had discovered any clergyman so enthusiastic in the matter of religious education as to attend in one of the State schools to impart religious instruction, but he did not find one instance recorded. Well, if the clergy were not prepared to perform their part of the duty, it was the duty of some one to step in. Might not the absence of religious instruction at the hands of the clergy be one of the causes of the increase of larrikinism in the principal towns? It was no use disguising the fact that larrikinism was increasing. There were numbers of children running about the streets of Brisbane exposed to all sorts of temptation when they ought to be at school, and there was some force in what had been said by the hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Smyth, that there should be at all events an effort made to put in operation the compulsory clause with regard to children of that class. He knew it was not a nice thing for a Minister of Public Instruction to have to do, but someone would have to do it. There was a growing disposition on the part of parents to keep their children from school when they could utilise their labour. It was one of the complaints on the part of the inspectors that there seemed, more especially in the country districts, to be a settled determination at certain periods of the year to keep children away from school, and the result was that the children who did attend school suffered in consequence of the absence of the others, and were not pushed forward at the rate of progress which was to be expected from those who attended regularly. However, he had risen chiefly for the purpose of supporting the views of the hon. leader of the Opposition upon technical education. The hon. gentleman had struck the key-note, and had put his finger on the sore place in our system of education. A great deal more attention should be paid to those matters, more particularly in agricultural districts. Many young men on farms hardly knew how to put on a gate that had come off its hinges. If a cart or a plough got out of order they had to cart it perhaps ten or fifteen miles for repairs, when anything like a

knowledge of mechanics would enable them to do the job themselves. He was delighted at the small effort in the direction of technical education which had been made in connection with the Brisbane School of Arts, and he wished every school of arts in the colony would follow that laudable example. If they did, he was sure that great advantages would result from it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was surprised that they had heard nothing of the university about which they had been inundated with petitions at an early period of the session. He would have been no party to give any additional free education to the children of the colony. He believed they were too highly educated at the expense of the State, and educated in the wrong direction. Many of them were ashamed to follow the calling of their fathers through having received what they were pleased to consider a high-class education. They thought they ought to wear a black coat, and do nothing more menial than wield a pen for the rest of their lives, though the so-called intellectual work of the clerk was very much worse paid than that of any hodman or divisional board labourer. The man who lived by the sweat of his brow and had no appearance to keep up, could earn a far better wage than many of the well-educated clerks who had to live on a very small salary indeed and to pinch and sew to keep the wolf from the door. He agreed with a great deal that had been said about technical education; and he thought it would be a step in the right direction, more especially in the mining districts. Technical schools would, in his opinion, be preferable to a university, which would simply be for the benefit of the metropolis. If technical schools were established in all mining centres—say Gympie, Charters Towers, Herberton, and Maytown—they would be of the greatest possible use in developing the welfare and prosperity of the colony, in putting the rising generation on the right track, and in teaching them the kind of work that they had no need to be ashamed of. There were plenty of men engaged in manual labour in mining who could take a very high position anywhere—independent men who did not even labour under the reflection that they were working for wages—very intelligent men who would be glad of the opportunity of getting a little better education. The technical schools would be valuable, not merely for the rising generation, but for adults. There were plenty of men who would gladly go to them to increase their knowledge, and who would no doubt profit greatly by it. He knew men who had gone down from the tin districts in the colony to Melbourne, at their own expense or the expense of their friends, in order to obtain a knowledge of the treatment of the different kinds of ores. The knowledge they acquired there was very valuable, both in the pursuit of their own interests and also to the welfare of the colony at large. The establishment of technical schools was a step in the right direction, and was far preferable to any idea of a university, as it would be of much more substantial benefit to the colony than spending that excessive amount in a direction which was more than questionable. Though the present system was compulsory, no Colonial Secretary had ever ventured to put the compulsory clauses into force. Why were those clauses on the Statute-book? Why did they not wipe out the compulsory provisions of the statute if they were not going to put them into force? As long as they were there they ought to be enforced. He considered that eventually it would come to this—and he hoped before very long—that parents would be compelled to send their children to school, and also to pay a small fee for their instruction. When that was the case people would appreciate more than they did the advantages

of the education their children were getting, and would see that they got good value for their money.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Supposing they cannot pay?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: People in this country are not in such an impoverished state as that.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Supposing they will not pay?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Send them to gaol.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Who has to pay then?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the country would have to pay then. But he did not see why people should begrudge paying for the education of their children any more than they begrudged paying for their clothing and food. He hoped some attention would be paid to the suggestion for providing technical education, more especially with regard to mineral knowledge, and also agricultural knowledge for those residing in the agricultural districts; and if the institutions, when established, were made available to adults as well as to the young, it would be far more beneficial to the State.

Mr. NORTON said it was a very plausible argument to say that, having those compulsory clauses in the Education Act, they should be enforced. But at the very first attempt to enforce them all sorts of objections sprang up. In some colonies where attempts had been made to enforce compulsory education provisions, one of the first objections made was by the parents of children who regularly attended school. Parents who were respectable objected to having gutter children put into the same school with theirs, and that was a very proper objection to make. From that fact alone hon. members would see that there was a serious difficulty in the way of enforcing compulsory clauses with regard to education. None of them in sending their children to school would like to see them in the same rooms and in the same playground with the worst classes. That was a difficulty which should not be lost sight of. In respect to reading the Bible in State schools, he must say that he did not think that would do any good unless there was some kind of religious instruction with it. Reading the Bible would not have the good effect some people seemed to think it would. The hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, was, he thought, scarcely fair to ministers of religion when he stated that he was disposed to blame them for not having tried to impart religious education in State schools. Under the present system they could not get the children to do anything with them until after school-hours were over. Under the educational systems in other colonies ministers of religion had half-an-hour or an hour during some part of the day that could be set apart for that purpose, and the time was taken out of the school-hours of the children. If religious education was to be imparted in the schools of the colony, that was the proper way to do it. He knew of instances where clergymen had tried to get children together in order to give them religious instruction after school-hours, but they had no power to keep the children, and the consequence was that, although the parents wished their children to be instructed, the children did not stay. If the change he had suggested was made, religious instruction could be given some time during school-hours, at an hour to be arranged for the convenience of the scholars, the teachers, and religious instructors, and that was the only way it could be carried out successfully. He looked upon the question as one which was bound to come to the front before very long, and he thought the sooner the matter was discussed the better. In respect to technical education, he wished to make one or

two observations. He entirely endorsed what had fallen from hon. members as to the desirability of imparting technical education, so far as it could be imparted, whether in their schools or by some other means. That had been attempted previously, and so far as it had been tried it had succeeded wonderfully. It had succeeded in the School of Arts. He did not know how many pupils there were in the technical classes in that institution, but he knew that in the carpentry class there was more than one pupil. His own son had been attending that class; so that he could speak of it from personal knowledge. His son had been there for some time, going to the class to fill up an hour in the afternoon, and he (Mr. Norton) did not hesitate to say that he had done some work recently that no trained carpenter need be ashamed of. He had brought home a box made by himself, which was a very good piece of cabinet-work. The gentleman who formerly instructed the class was a Mr. Weitemeyer, a gentleman for whom he had the very highest respect. He had now left, and there was another gentleman carrying on the work, and he carried it on very well. So far it had succeeded, although it had only been within reach of the few. It had also succeeded with respect to the mineralogical lectures, large numbers having availed themselves of the means of picking up mineralogical knowledge in that way. Those who did not go in for exhibitions to universities might have assistance in another form by giving them some sort of technical education, or, at any rate, putting it within their reach. Just now, in consequence of the state of the finances of the country, it was proposed to reduce the amounts which had been for years given to schools of arts. Those schools of arts might be made the means of imparting information of that kind. The schools of arts in country towns were used principally as libraries and reading-rooms, but inducements might be given to them to start classes, which might be held on even one day a week, at which the people in the town and neighbourhood would be able to get instruction of the kind referred to. What was wanted was to teach young men how to use their hands and fingers as well as their brains, and that could only be done by imparting some sort of technical education. He would like to see that system carried out much further than it was at present, and if possible the same advantages given to young men living in the country. A knowledge of carpentry or other work of that kind would be of great use to them through life. It would not bring them into competition with men who made their living by it as a trade, while it would teach them to do work for themselves, and add very much to their usefulness and to their own comfort.

Mr. ISAMBERT said there was no vote to which he consented so heartily as the Education vote. Many hon. members had asked, and justly asked, whether the State was getting full value or the utmost results for the expenditure incurred by the department. No doubt many hon. members based their doubts on information received from the teachers themselves. He would offer a few remarks, based on information he had received from teachers—not from teachers who were inefficient, or who were not satisfied with their superior officers, but from those who were considered efficient by the department, and who were thoroughly satisfied with the treatment they received from their superior officers. The objections to the present system were also borne out in the departmental report by some of the inspectors. He knew teachers who expressed themselves fully satisfied so far as the treatment went, but who complained that the moment a change of inspectors took place probably the good report of their schools would be changed for a

worse report, because the inspectors had no uniform value for results obtained in the schools. That opinion was confirmed at page 51 of the report, where Mr. Inspector Kilham wrote :—

“It is now eight years since the inspectors met in conference to compare notes, adopt uniform plans of examining for results, and to make suggestions for the more efficient working of our schools. I am fully convinced that a few days so employed would not only be beneficial to the inspectors themselves, but would also be advantageous to the colony at large.”

There they had it on very good authority that their educational system was not what it should be. Although he admitted that the department was perhaps as well conducted as any other department of the Government, yet it was too much inclined to become exclusively autocratic. Almost every inspector offered remarks as to the excellent tone which prevailed in certain schools, and as to its absence in others. Where the latter was the case, it generally resulted from the teachers not being properly qualified. That was a difficulty which could not be overcome until they had a training school for teachers—a place where the utmost results could be obtained from pupil-teachers before they were employed in the higher branches of the service. It seemed as if their services were obtained now under false pretences, and instead of offering the pupil-teachers every means of perfecting themselves, and so making their services more valuable to the State, they were disregarded, snubbed, and insulted, and properly qualified teachers were imported from England. That difficulty would not be overcome until that spirit of the hide and leather merchant and importer was driven out of the Minister for Education. A teacher might be ever so learned, but if he had not acquired the proper method of teaching he would not be so effective as he would otherwise be, and a training school was the place where that could be adequately taught to the pupil-teachers before they were permanently appointed as teachers in the department. He thought it would be an advantage if the suggestion of Inspector Kilham could be extended somehow. For instance, several of the inspectors made special remarks as to the excellent tone that prevailed in some of the schools, and their educational system would derive great benefit if not only the inspectors but also a certain number of the teachers of the schools in which such excellent tone and discipline prevailed were to meet annually in conference and advise the Minister and superior officers of the department as to the best means of improving the general management of the schools. Moreover, he thought that instead of wasting so much money in higher education, a few hundreds might be taken from the vote for that purpose and be given as premiums to deserving teachers to enable them to travel. Let them give teachers who had attained the highest results in good management of their schools a holiday for six or eight months and a few hundred pounds to travel and report upon educational matters in other countries. He was sure their educational system would derive more benefit from that than by sending a few small boys to the higher schools to be trained for doctors or lawyers, from whom the State seldom received any benefit. He was also informed that the drill now taught in the schools, which was so essential for self-defence—if not immediately, in the future—was not of a sufficiently uniform or effective character.

Mr. BLACK : Teach them boxing.

Mr. ISAMBERT : That might be taught too.

Mr. MOREHEAD : Teach them German.

Mr. ISAMBERT said that might be taught also with great advantage. If the pupil-teachers were given thorough instruction in drill in training schools, so as to be able to impart it to the

children under them, it would be a great advantage. That might be done by taking a few hundreds away from the vote for the Defence Force without interfering with its effectiveness, and the general effectiveness of the force available for the defence of the colony would be greatly increased. He was sure that if Mr. Kilham's views were carried out, and a congress was held to advise as to improvements that could be effected in the system, it would be far better than any suggestions made by laymen in that Committee.

Mr. CHUBB said the hon. gentleman objected to a few small boys being educated as doctors or lawyers, who, he said, were of very little use. The hon. gentleman would probably prefer to have them taught to make bad wine or bad soap—softsoap, perhaps. He (Mr. Chubb) was rather amused at some of the remarks made that evening. According to some hon. members the accident of birth was to count for everything, and education of even the poorest character should not be given free at all. He was a great believer in teaching the “three R's” free, and in making it compulsory. He did not see why, if a law was on the Statute-book, and it was beneficial, it should not be enforced. If he were in the position of the hon. gentleman in charge of the department he would certainly attempt to apply the compulsory clauses in preference to taking children off the street, having them brought before the police court as neglected children, and sent to the reformatory. Of the two evils he thought enforcing the compulsory clauses would be the least. He would not rush in violently and make a general sweep all at once, but the principle might be applied in a few cases to see how it would work. Reference was made to that in the report. Each teacher was required to send in the number of children, as far as he could ascertain approximately in his district, who did not attend school, and the report was not at all satisfactory on that point. A large number of children were receiving no instruction at all, so far as the teachers were able to say. Of course, they knew that there were a great many poor persons to whom the labour of their children was a consideration. They required the assistance of those children to enable them to get a living, and in such cases, where boys of twelve or thirteen years of age were not able to attend school, something in the way of night-schools might be established, where they might secure instruction for half-an-hour or an hour two or three times a week. With regard to religious instruction being given in schools, he thought the school-hours were quite long enough. They were from 9 o'clock in the morning until 4 in the afternoon, and it must be remembered that many children had to get an early breakfast, walk some miles to school, and then walk back again. Then again, if they were going to bring the clergymen in during school-hours, and the Anglican gave instruction for half-an-hour, and the Baptist, and the Wesleyan, and so on, did the same, the children would be kept there all day and the instruction disorganised. On the other hand, if the instruction was to be given before or after school-hours, there would be the objection that they were keeping children from play and there would be confusion amongst clergymen of different denominations. Then again, he would ask whether there were clergymen enough to give attendance every day? He did not think there were, and half-an-hour one day in the week would not be sufficient. Religious instruction to be any good at all must be given continuously. There must be a certain proportion given every day. He would not object to the Bible being read in their schools. He believed it would be a very good thing, but then it should be part of the curriculum of the school; there should be a certain period of the day for

it, and the boys should be there. But, of course, there would be objection to that. There were differences of religious doctrine which could not be reconciled, perhaps. Another point referred to by the hon. member for Rosewood was military drill. He did not know whether the hon. member was aware of it, but in both the primary and grammar schools the boys were drilled now. At the grammar school the drill instructor was a paid officer of the Volunteer Force, and at the primary schools the teachers gave a certain amount of drill and were very well up in it. If the hon. member's idea was carried out they would require to have soldier schoolmasters, and that would involve probably more expense. If the teachers were to undergo a course of military drill in addition to their scholastic training and discipline, that, of course, was a question worthy of consideration. But he thought they must be satisfied with the amount of drill they had at present; which he understood was that at the grammar schools, where the boys were much older as a rule than at the primary schools, there was compulsory drill. If they were allowed to go to a grammar school and be taught for a moderate payment it should be part of their contribution to the State that they should be drilled. The Brisbane Grammar School had a cadet corps of about sixty boys, but there must be three or four times that number of boys at the school who did not belong to the corps. He would compel every boy at that and other grammar schools, who was not physically unfit, to be a member of the corps, because by-and-by those boys would form a valuable accession to the Volunteer Force, and be able to take their places in the ranks like other young men.

Mr. S. W. BROOKS said he supposed he should count as one of the heretics in regard to the educational system of the colony. He had said before, and he repeated now, that they were not on the right track in offering free education all round to everybody. He did not think it was any more the duty of the State to teach his child than to clothe or feed him. If they took upon themselves the duty of teaching him they might as well offer to take the other two duties upon themselves. There was no doubt that by having introduced the present system they had killed all chance of efficient private schools. As the system had been adopted, however, they must make the best of it and try to improve it. He was only going to talk on two points—religious education and life lessons. He believed in religious education. Perhaps he would be more correct in saying that he believed in teaching morality, not religion. He was pleased to hear from the hon. member for Port Curtis that the clergy were not so much to blame as some hon. members had thought. Some had thought that they made no attempt to take advantage of the provision in the Act for giving religious education, but it seemed that in some cases attempts had been made, and naturally enough they had failed. The provision was one that could never be of any practical use; still he thought the clergymen ought to have done the best they could under the circumstances; they ought to have made use of the provision as much as they could, and then they should have used whatever influence they had to secure some change. He could suggest one means by which a change could be effected. Instead of attempting to get the children together after 4 o'clock—none of them would stay after that time, and they would not care to come before 9 o'clock—instead of that, why not knock off some of the time wasted over grammatical analysis and devote it to the teaching of morality? He thought they had better let religion alone; but surely the teachers could do something in the way of teaching morality. To show what he

meant more fully, he would read a few words he had copied from a very interesting document published in New Zealand; and if hon. members had not seen it he would advise them to ask for it in the Library. It was a digest of the systems of primary education all over the world, boiled down to the smallest possible compass. It was compiled by Mr. Laishley, who occupied an official position in New Zealand, and it did not occupy more than sixty or seventy pages. Mr. Laishley urged—

"That morals and manners be obligatory in all standards, and that pupils be specially impressed with the importance of honour and truthfulness in word and act, justice, cheerful obedience to parents and law, manliness and womanliness, benevolence, resolution, industry, perseverance, punctuality, good manners and language, cleanliness and neatness; that dishonourable dealing, falsehood, deceit, trickery, unfairness, disobedience, baseness, vacillation, idleness, and faint-heartedness lead to disaster, and that sin is a logical sequence of false principles."

He (Mr. Brooks) took the liberty of adding "as punishment is of sin." If such principles were regularly and systematically taught as part of the system, the colony would be the better for it. Some reference had been made to Bible-reading. He was not one of those who believed that promiscuous Bible-reading in schools would be of the slightest value; he did not believe the Bible was ever intended for anything of that sort. He thought that to begin at the 1st of Genesis and read right through to the 22nd of Revelations would be a very unwise procedure; but that objection might be met by a judicious selection of passages.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Who is to select them?

Mr. S. W. BROOKS said he did not think that would be a very difficult matter. He would undertake to make a capital selection in a very short time. From the Book of Job, the Proverbs, parts of the Psalms, and a good many sayings of Jesus, could be made a grand selection; and by mixing them up with some sayings of those grand old pagans who knew nothing about religion, a hand-book of good, sound morality could be made up, containing sufficient to teach good, sound morality in all the schools of the colony. That might sound heretical to some hon. members, but he did not care for that. There was another matter to which he would refer—one to which some reference was made by the hon. member for Ipswich—something should be taught about the body in schools. A good deal more should be made of it. He believed that sort of teaching was spoken of as "life lessons." The children should be taught something about the bodies they carried about with them; what was good for those bodies, and what was bad for them. They might be taught the evil effects of alcohol on the system; that would, no doubt, please the hon. member for Ipswich. He (Mr. Brooks) was not a teetotaler; but that subject would be a very excellent one to introduce. The effect of tobacco on the system might also be taught. If those things were taught they would prove of great practical use to the children, and of great value to the community, more so than a great deal of that nonsense called grammatical analysis, which was carried to such absurd lengths that he hoped some Minister would put his foot down heavily and say it should not go on, and that there must be some modification, bringing the system more into accord with the daily needs of the daily life of the pupils. Those were the only points on which he desired to speak; to urge that some provision should be made for the systematic teaching of morality, and for giving religious teachers a reasonable chance of teaching their religious opinions. He hoped they would not teach many of those mysterious dogmas in the schools; but if morality was

to be taught it must be done in school-hours. No boy who was worth the name of a boy would care to stop after 4 o'clock. Some of the goody boys, not fit for anything in this world, might do it, but those were not the boys who were wanted in this world. They wanted straight up and down men to grow; men who would do their duty to their fellow-men, and, so far as their knowledge went, do their duty to their Maker. Those were the sort of men they wanted. There should be those "life lessons," which term he would use rather than "object lessons," and as they grew up they would know what bodies they had about them, and how they should treat them, in order that they might treat them fairly and give them a chance of having the use of them as long as possible.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had listened very patiently to the debate on the Education question. It was the annual discussion, and so far as he could see it was a useless and objectless one. The same things were said year after year, and with the same result. He found there were two questions connected with the subject which seemed to occupy the attention of hon. members—namely, the non-enforcement of the compulsory clauses and the want of religious education. There was too much cry about compulsory education. If hon. members would take the trouble to inquire and to understand something about the attendance at school, they would not have so much to say about the compulsory clauses. By reading the report of the Minister for Public Instruction, they would find that the total number of children receiving no education in the whole colony was 1,100. He heard an hon. member say "Oh," but he could only take the statistics as they are given in the report. The hon. member who said, "Oh," might have some better means of ascertaining the truth; but if so, those means were not open to other members of the Committee. The best means at his disposal was through the report of the Minister for Education, who said the number was 1,100, and that statement had to be believed. Surely hon. members could not throw discredit upon the reports of the Minister for Education. He whom they were expecting to teach religion and morality would not tell lies. That number was even still more reduced, because the report did not give the number of children not receiving education who lived within two miles of a State school, and that was the only distance to which the compulsory clauses could be applied. Most of the children who were not receiving education were living in the pastoral districts, or in the far North, in some of the small mining districts, or in some rather sparsely settled agricultural districts. So that really the number of children receiving no education, and who lived within the reach of education, was reduced to about 500. Were they to go and set the compulsory clauses of the Act into force for the sake of those 500? There was no other means of arriving at those facts but by making inquiries. There was also the census which was taken last year, so that he did not see why hon. members should not believe what the report said. At any rate, there was no other source of information. Each hon. member might have his own opinion as to the number of children not receiving education; but what he had quoted was what the Government believed to be correct, and they had the best means of ascertaining the number. How many truant inspectors would they require to hunt up those 500 children all over the colony? If the 500 were all located in Brisbane it would be a very easy matter; but scattered all over the length and breadth of the colony as those 500 were, it would take 100 truant inspectors. If they were going to add to the expense of the Education Act by

100 truant inspectors at £300 a year each, they must make up their minds for more taxation. Hon. members tried to prove that the increase of larrikinism was owing to the non-enforcement of the compulsory clauses; but he did not think that was so. Larrikinism existed quite independent of the educational system, and if hon. members would take the trouble to ascertain, he believed they would find that the majority of larrikins had gone through the State schools and had received an education up to the standard. That was so in other colonies, and he believed it was so in this colony. He thought when hon. members came to discuss that point they should be prepared with something more than their own individual opinions. Those things did not depend upon opinions; they depended upon facts, which were to be ascertained by those who chose to find them out. He certainly would agree to the enforcement of the compulsory clauses of the Act, if there was any considerable number of children receiving no education in Brisbane or in the large centres; it could be done then easily. Two truant inspectors would be sufficient for Brisbane and one for a town like Ipswich, but they must ascertain the number of children who were not receiving education. Again, complaints were made about children not attending school the whole time; but in many cases he thought it would be cruelty to enforce the attendance of children for the whole time, so that he did not at all look forward in the immediate future to having a Minister for Education who would take the trouble to enforce the compulsory clauses. No Minister had yet thought fit to do so, and he thought it would be some time before any Minister would do so; the expense would be deterrent if there was no other reason. Then there was the religious question. He was very glad to see that the national conscience was beginning to be troubled. It was twelve years since they had altered the old Education Act, and the idea then was that they could do without religion altogether—in fact that they could get on better without it. But he was glad to see that hon. members were beginning to come to their senses. The hon. member who last spoke did not believe in religious education at all: he believed in moral education. Perhaps he believed in the education of Confucius?

Mr. S. W. BROOKS: Yes; where it is good.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Or of Plato?—any education, in fact, but that founded upon the teachings and sayings of Christ.

Mr. S. W. BROOKS: No, no!

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had no doubt there were many such people; but nevertheless he did not believe there were sufficient of them to influence public opinion in that colony or in any other English colony. If they were going to have religious education it must not be given by fits and starts; half-an-hour or an hour, or even two hours a week would not be sufficient. Religious instruction must permeate all through the studies of the children during their school-hours to have a thorough effect. A child must not be led to believe that religious instruction was something apart from the other instruction he was receiving. It must be put before the child so that it would influence his actions from morning till night. If that was not done, any attempt to educate children religiously would be a failure. He believed with the hon. member who last spoke that Bible-reading was not religious instruction; it was simply substituting one text-book for another. Bible-reading would not be sufficient in itself, although it had been taken to be sufficient in some countries—the one from which the hon.

member for Ipswich came, for instance, which he said he visited last year, and where he was surprised to find the Bible read in schools. It struck him with surprise that the hon. gentleman should use such an expression, because, as he understood it, the Bible had always been read in the schools of Scotland, and that it had been the common practice since the Reformation. But he believed the hon. member made the remark simply to bring in a little lecture on temperance.

Mr. MOREHEAD: And to show he has travelled.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman thought that temperance was the be-all and end-all of human existence. He did not seem to know that when he took his drink of gingerbeer he took a certain amount of alcohol. He blamed other men for taking alcohol, but it was only the quantity he objected to. The hon. member took alcohol regularly; in homeopathic doses, perhaps. The hon. member took it so long as he ate and drank. Now, there were one or two other points spoken of by the hon. members for Balonne and Northern Downs. They referred to the distribution of the money, and he entirely agreed with them. They both said that the money was not distributed so as to make the system a national institution. He quite agreed with them. If hon. gentlemen would take the trouble to analyse the report they would find that if all the children in the colony were brought together, including those in denominational schools and private schools, and taught under the State system, they would require to spend another £50,000 a year. Now, how could they call that a national school system, when others were contributing a fair share of the expenditure and not receiving one pennyworth of profit?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They can if they like.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Hon. members had only to take the number of children who were being educated privately and in denominational schools and multiply that by the average cost per head of the daily attendance, and they would get the figures. The hon. member for Ipswich interjected "They can if they like." Why, that hon. member could drink whisky if he liked, but his conscience would not allow him to drink it, and it would be a very strange law that would compel him to take it against his conscience. And so it was with education; but, at the same time, although the hon. gentleman was not compelled to pay for his (Mr. Macrossan's) whisky, he was compelled to pay for the education of the hon. member's children and received nothing in return for it himself. Now, he quite agreed with the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, when he spoke about technical education. He believed himself that technical education was one great want in the colony. It was of far more use than much of the instruction they were giving, although at the same time he did not think they were educating the boys too highly. He did not think the education they were giving boys in the State schools made them inclined for anything but hard work, and disinclined to take off their coats, and made them look for Government billets; but he thought that that was the tendency of the age independent of whatever education was given. That would in time find a remedy for itself, but technical education would help to counteract that tendency. Some hon. gentlemen were inclined to think that technical education was not of much use, but if they looked at the experience of Belgium and Germany, which had risen to their present industrial position by technical education, they must see the error of their belief. The

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people of those countries had been technically educated to such a degree that they were competing with the people of Great Britain in their own special work—ironworks, the making of machinery, and textile manufactures as well. If they in Queensland had any inclination other than to make their children wielders of pens, they must give their children a technical education, and the sooner they did that, and the more money they spent upon it, the better. He would be inclined to increase the vote by another £10,000 if they could give a good technical education, and he thoroughly agreed with the hon. member for Toowoomba, that they should teach their children the value of irrigation, and teach them to be engineers, for there was no doubt that the great public works of the future must be works for the conservation of water. He thought they had made nearly as many railways as they were likely to make for some time to come, and in the meantime they should conserve water so as to cultivate the land alongside the railways, and in that way make them a profit to the State. He also thoroughly agreed with the hon. member for Balonne, inasmuch as so long as a large proportion of the population received no benefit from the expenditure upon an educational system some means should be adopted by which those who received the benefit should pay something like a fair share of the expense. He believed there should be a local rate, and he did not think the system would be complete or satisfactory until the burden was borne locally. They all recollected the rough-and-tumble there used to be in that Committee when the Works Department vote was before them, how every member was fighting for a bridge, or road, or waterhole. All that had been done away with. They had nothing of that now that the divisional board system had come into existence. The burden was borne locally by the people, and he felt satisfied that money was better spent and much less money spent for more work than under the old system. The same thing would happen with the educational vote. He did not mean to point out how it could be done, but he believed it must be done shortly, and that the people would be more satisfied when it was done than they were at present, and there would be more satisfaction with the amount and quality of the education. He had just one more remark to make in answer to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. He said something about private schools and denominational schools not giving as good an education as the State schools. But the hon. member was entirely mistaken. If he examined the reports of the inspectors who inspected the denominational schools, and looked on the result of the examination in Sydney, he would find that the denominational schools were on an equality with the State schools. He did not think the hon. member made the mistake intentionally, but he was entirely mistaken in imagining that the education afforded by the private schools, and the denominational Catholic schools, was in any way inferior to the education given in the State schools; and in one respect it was better, because they were taught religion. In the denominational schools the scholars were taught that which hon. members were beginning to feel should be taught in the State schools. They were taught religion in those schools, and he believed it did not in the slightest degree interfere with the amount or the quality of the secular education they received there also.

The PREMIER said he agreed that that debate, which recurred annually, did not lead to much result.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is the fault of Ministers,

The PREMIER said it was not the fault of Ministers. It was an opportunity taken by hon. members to air their views on certain questions. Several hon. members had aired their views that evening and had assumed that their views were generally accepted by the Committee, because no one took the trouble to combat them at any length. Some hon. members seemed to think that the time had plainly arrived for enforcing the compulsory clauses. He agreed with much that had fallen from the hon. member for Townsville on that subject. He thought in the towns they might perhaps be enforced, but in the country it would be impossible to enforce them, and it would in many cases be very cruel even if it were possible. As to technical education he entirely concurred in what had fallen from the hon. member. But it must be taken into account that children could not be taught everything at once, and only a certain amount of knowledge could be imparted to them during the few school-hours of the day. Many people who talked of technical education for children forgot the small capacity of young children for such instruction. Children must reach a certain age before any technical instruction could be imparted to them, except such as could be given by object lessons, and the difficulty was that nearly all their children left school when they had arrived at that age when they could be taught those things. He rose particularly to refer to the question of religious education in the State schools. Some hon. members seemed to think that that Committee had changed its mind on the subject of education, and thought now that religious instruction should be given in the State schools. He knew he had not changed his mind, and he had not heard any arguments that evening to lead him to do so. The position seemed to him to be just the same as it was twelve years ago, when the decision was come to. The first difficulty in giving religious instruction was to have instructors competent to give it. That was the great problem—to get those competent religious instructors. Who was to select them? The Minister for Public Instruction could not do so or he would become Minister for Religion. That was a function that could not be performed by the State. The discussion that night could have no practical result in that respect, and when that matter came on for discussion in detail it would have to be discussed from many points of view. He believed the people of the colony had not changed their minds in the least from the views to which they had given very plain and distinct expression twelve years ago.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he was glad to hear the opinion of the Premier with reference to religious education, but he also was a little out in reference to that matter. He thought the people were making progress towards, at least, the reading of the Bible in the State schools. He did not see that religious teachers were required in their State schools, because it did not require a religious teacher to read the Bible. He had never approved of the reading of the whole of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelations, in the schools, but selected passages might be read. The hon. member for Townsville, he thought, had tried to misrepresent what he had said some time ago. The hon. member said, and was supported by the leader of the Opposition in saying that he (Mr. Macfarlane) was disappointed at finding that the Bible was read in the State schools in Scotland. That was not so; he was quite aware that at one time and up to the time he left Scotland, the Bible was read in every school in Scotland, but now with the board schools the majority of the school boards decided whether it should be read in a particular school or

not. He believed that in a very short time the Bible would again be read in all the schools in Scotland.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. Jordan) said he could not help adding a word or two to the debate. There was no more important question with which they could deal than that which they had been discussing for the last hour. The question was whether they were to have a denominational education—a religious education—imparted by ministers of different denominations to all the children belonging to their particular sects, or whether they were to have the purely secular education they had now, which was exclusive of all religious teaching. That he believed to be a mistake, and he did not think they had ever made a greater mistake than when they established the system now in existence, and which was called secular, free, and compulsory. It was not compulsory, because the compulsory clauses were not enforced. He thought it was desirable to have free education, and he thought they should have a national system of education. He did not think excluding the Bible entirely from their national schools had had the intended effect. The different churches, and the Catholic Church in particular, had not fallen in with their system of education, because they insisted, and very properly too, upon the absolute necessity of teaching religion. He was of opinion that the system established some years ago in Ireland and some years ago in New South Wales, and which was at first established in Queensland—that was, the national system under which selected parts of the Bible were read every day by the master—was the right system for a new country. In an old and densely populated country like Great Britain, where there was a great number of denominations, denominational schools might be carried on successfully, but in a new and sparsely populated country, what they required was a national system of education. Talk about morality, the foundation of all morality was religion, as was well pointed out by the member for Townsville, and nothing had given him greater pleasure than to listen to that hon. gentleman that night. There was no morality without religion.

Mr. S. W. BROOKS: Oh, yes, there is!

Mr. JORDAN said they could not teach morality without religion, and hence they had a revelation from Heaven; they could not afford to dispense with that in any system. They must teach the children to read the Bible; it must be made part and parcel of their daily education. Their religion should enter into everything they did throughout their lives—the great principles of revealed truth, the inspired Word of God. He was not ashamed of saying that in that Assembly. The Irish National School system, if tried in this colony, would be a great success. He had had the honour of being a member of the first educational board in this colony under that system. It was provided in the New South Wales Act that, in every school paid by the State, distinct provision should be made in that school for the convenience of ministers of religion, who might come to the school at any hour of the day and take the children belonging to their denomination into the private class-room to give them religious instruction—that was, dogmatic teaching. Besides that it was provided that selected parts of the Word of God should be read every day by the master. What difficulty could there be in selecting portions of Scripture? They were not left to the master's choice; they were provided by regulation under the Act, and they were very wisely selected. He believed that any intelligent conscientious Roman Catholic, who took the trouble to read through those selected portions, would not take any exception to them. He had

had the honour of taking part in the discussion upon the subject in the first session of the Queensland Parliament, and there were members of the Roman Catholic Church there who agreed that the system as then established was a suitable one, and he believed it might have been made perfectly successful. He thought they ought to return to the reading of those selected portions of the Word of God. The hon. member for Townsville had said that the larrikin classes were not those who had not been obliged to go to school; they had been trained in the primary schools; and why were they larrikins? To a great extent it was because they had never been taught religion; it had been utterly ignored. If children grew up to the age of thirteen or fourteen, without hearing the name of religion, without being taught the foundation of morality, they became immoral and careless, and joined the larrikin class; and the consequence was the gaols were filled as they were now. He did not believe with the hon. the Premier that hon. members had not altered their opinion; he believed that they had arrived at the conclusion that they must give religious teaching; and he believed they could do it by having selected portions of the Word of God read by the schoolmasters every day. He did not wish to take up the time of the Committee, but he could not conscientiously sit still without saying a word on that important question.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the question about the travelling expenses of the inspectors had not yet been answered. There were ten inspectors, and surely their travelling would average more than 180 days in the year.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said, of course they were not always travelling. During the first months of the year they were nearly all in Brisbane, examining the examination-papers. In reply to the hon. member's question about the Railway Department, he would endeavour to persuade the Minister for Works to give free passes; and he would make some arrangement so that inspectors in the Northern districts would have more allowance than the others.

Question put and passed.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTION.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that there be granted £200 for Drawing Instructors.

Mr. CHUBB said that on looking at the report of the technical classes at the School of Arts he saw that the classes for drawing were very largely attended—the attendance for free-hand drawing for the four quarters was twenty-five, twenty-two, nineteen, and seventeen, and for mechanical drawing twenty-eight, twenty-one, fourteen, and twenty. He thought the vote might be increased, and drawing taught even in the primary schools. The teacher of freehand drawing had referred to that matter particularly in his report. He said:—

"But a more serious difficulty interferes with the rapid expansion of the freehand drawing classes—that is the fact that elementary drawing is practically a forbidden subject in our primary schools. A youth joining the class should have conquered the mere elementary drudgery at school, and be qualified to begin working from the cast at once. I, of course, do my best to make this part of the work as pleasant as possible, but some get disheartened and give up after a quarter's experience.

"This matter is considered of such vital importance in England that the late Royal Commission on Technical Education recommended that elementary drawing should be bracketed with writing and taught as one subject throughout all the 'standards' from the lowest to the highest; and the suggestion has been adopted. Our school inspectors frequently call attention to this

grave defect in our educational system, and the present Under Secretary for Public Instruction has stated in one of his reports that in this respect 'Queensland is in rear of all English-speaking communities.'"

He read those remarks simply for the purpose of drawing attention to the subject. When they saw that those particular subjects were so largely attended by the scholars of Brisbane, it showed the wide field there was in the colony for encouraging that branch of technical education. He hoped that next year the vote would be increased, and that more instructors would be paid for teaching elementary drawing in the primary schools. There were now only two officers apparently.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Four—one in Brisbane, one in Ipswich, one in Maryborough, and one in Rockhampton.

Mr. CHUBB said they might be stationed in other places—Townsville, Charters Towers, Toowoomba. It would not cost more than £100 or £200 more per annum, and it would be money spent in the right direction.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the duty of the drawing instructors was to teach the pupil-teachers. They held classes on Saturday for pupil-teachers only. He quite agreed with the hon. member that drawing ought to be taught in the schools. The matter had been mentioned last year, he thought, by the hon. member for Maryborough Mr. Annear, and by one or two other hon. members. During the present year he had had the matter very much under his attention, and he believed it would entail very little expense indeed—that was, up to a certain standard. He was very nearly starting the thing himself, but he wanted to get further information as to the copy-books and other things. He had had a memorandum from the chief inspector, and he was satisfied that it would cost very little indeed to bring it into the school system. He believed it would be very beneficial to the rising young of the schools, especially if they got on into technical education, to which it was one of the stepping-stones.

Question put and passed.

SCHOOLS.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that there be granted for the service of the year 1887-8 the sum of £129,450 for salaries to teachers, allowances for capitation, and in lieu of rent, and also for instruction of pupil-teachers, and travelling and incidental expenses. There was an increase in that vote of £9,100 over the amount voted last year. There was of course a very much larger number of schools now than they had last year, and that estimate was framed at the lowest possible rate to meet the future requirements of the department as far as they could be foreseen. The greater proportion of the increase was in the salaries of teachers.

Mr. MACFARLANE asked how was the sum of £1,100 set down for travelling expenses expended?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is for shifting teachers from one school to another.

Mr. BLACK said the travelling expenses in that department seemed to be wrapped in mystery. There was £1,800 for inspectors, £1,100 for teachers, £700 for the buildings branch of the department, £150 for grammar schools, and £200 for orphanages; the total amount for travelling expenses on that vote was £3,950. But it was spread over so many votes that it was apt to escape the attention of hon. members. It was a very considerable item when they were all added together, and was something like the vote for contingencies in that department.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that when the hon. member for Mackay became Minister for Public Instruction he would find those votes very convenient.

Mr. SALKELD said he wished to call attention to a matter that was not at all a pleasant one to refer to. He had brought it before the Committee last year when the same vote was under discussion, and would now like to know whether anything further had been done in connection with the matter. What he referred to was the obligation of persons in the Education Department and in all departments of the Public Service to pay their just debts. The case he particularly alluded to was that of a teacher whose salary was, he supposed, included in that vote, but he did not mention the name of the teacher on the previous occasion. The man obtained credit, and when he got into debt was treated very leniently. He promised to pay, but never carried out his promise. A verdict was obtained against him, but when it was attempted to enforce an execution it was found that he had given a bill of sale over his furniture. In fact up to the present time he had set the verdict of the court at defiance. He (Mr. Salkeld) had seen a peculiar letter written by the teacher, in which there was an attempt to induce his creditor to prevent any further notice being taken of the matter in that Committee. The man stated that he would commence to pay by-and-by so much a month, but only on condition that the creditor abandoned all attempts to call attention to the case in Parliament. It was really a sort of threat.

Mr. PATTISON said he would like to know whether the matter to which he was referring was one of public interest. It really appeared to be a little bit of spleen. Why should the time of the Committee be wasted in discussing whether a man should pay his just debts? That was a matter which should be reported to the Minister.

The CHAIRMAN said: I think it is not a matter for the hon. member to bring before the Committee.

The PREMIER said he did not wish to protract the discussion, but he thought it would be unfortunate if the Chairman should rule that in Committee of Supply it was out of order to discuss any grievance against Civil servants or the control exercised over them by the Ministers.

The CHAIRMAN: It will be in order to hear the hon. member.

Mr. SALKELD said the matter was a very important one, and it was quite within the province of any hon. member to call attention to a case of that kind. They voted money to teachers in order that they should teach certain matters of morality, truthfulness, and that sort of thing, to their children, and surely the persons employed ought to teach them to pay their just debts. A teacher could not do that if he did not pay his own. As for there being any petty spleen in the matter, he had never spoken to the gentleman to whom he was referring, and had only seen him on one or two occasions. But one of his constituents brought the matter before him, and he deemed it his duty to call attention to it in that Committee. The gentleman he alluded to was the teacher at Walloon, Mr. Sturgess, and the creditor was Mr. Francis, a storekeeper in Ipswich. It was not a case of hardship, as Mr. Sturgess, in 1885, was receiving £185 per annum. Whether he was getting any more now he (Mr. Salkeld) could not say. Mr. Sturgess had since offered to pay £1 a month; he seemed determined to set the law at defiance. He (Mr. Salkeld) believed that, in all other departments of the public service, persons against whom verdicts were given had to pay the amounts of the judgments or leave the service.

Why there should be any difference between one department and another he did not know. If it was necessary for any Government official to respect that rule, it should be those engaged in the education of the young. It was a matter that ought to be put upon a proper basis, and he should not feel satisfied if it was not carried out in all departments of the public service. They should all be made to pay their just debts, or leave the service. The case to which he called attention was one where the creditor had taken every legal remedy, had obtained a verdict, had waited year after year for the money, and when he attempted to enforce the verdict he was met with defiance from the debtor who was getting £185 a year and a free residence. He would also remind hon. members that when a Civil servant became insolvent he was compelled to leave the service.

Mr. CHUBB said he had no hesitation in saying that the creditor who had induced the hon. member to bring that matter before the Committee was a mean man. He (Mr. Chubb) knew the circumstances of the case very well. The debt was contracted before the officer referred to became a public servant of the colony. It amounted to some £60. The unfortunate fellow got into trouble in some way—nothing degrading—and he could not pay all his creditors. But he went to that particular gentleman, that Mr. Francis, an ex-member of Parliament, and a man well off, and paid him £50 out of the £60 odd, leaving a balance of some £10 owing, which he was unable to pay. He served all his other creditors in the same way, paying them as far as he was able. That teacher had been in the service for some years, receiving the magnificent salary of £185 a year, with some small capitation allowance, upon which he had to support a wife and a family of nine or ten children. The unfortunate man had to give a bill of sale over his property, in order to get some advance, particularly, he believed, to pay Mr. Francis. Mr. Francis wanted his £10 or his "pound of flesh," and sent a bailiff into the house. There was a piano which the bailiff attempted to levy upon, which was found to belong to the teacher's daughter, who had bought it on the time-payment system for the purpose of augmenting her father's income by giving music lessons. Ever since then the teacher had been persecuted by that Mr. Francis writing letters to the department, drawing attention to the fact that there was an officer in the service who had not paid his debts. He (Mr. Chubb) was surprised that the hon. member should have been prevailed upon to take up the case of such a mean man as Mr. Francis showed himself to be.

Mr. SALKELD said the hon. member for Bowen ought to be more certain of his facts before making a statement of that kind. He was informed that the teacher in question had never owed Mr. Francis £60, and that the most he ever owed him was what he owed him now, and that was between £13 and £14. As to persecuting the man, that was idle talk, and it came with a very bad grace from the hon. member to call a man mean because he was trying to recover a just debt. If everybody were willing to let all their debts go there would be very little for the hon. member for Bowen to do; his occupation would be gone. Mr. Francis had exhausted all the legal remedies; if he had not done so he (Mr. Salkeld) would never have said a word about the matter.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said that when the case came forward on the previous occasion he caused a letter to be sent to Mr. Sturgess advising him to try to pay off the debt, as he could.

Mr. NORTON: Out of his savings?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said that was the course that had always been pursued in similar cases, both in the Colonial Secretary's office and in the Education Department, because the law was sufficient for any creditor to get his debts paid. That particular case seemed rather a hard one, and he thought the hon. member for Bowen had put it very clearly before the Committee. It tallied perfectly with the statement Mr. Sturgess had made to him.

Mr. CHUBB: Mr. Sturgess was my authority.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said Mr. Sturgess informed him, in reply to his official letter, that among his liabilities was a balance of £13 18s. 1d., since increased by legal charges due to Mr. Francis on a total sum of £60, which was the original amount owing.

Mr. DONALDSON said that did not bear out the statement of the hon. member, Mr. Salkeld, that the amount owing was never more than £14 or £16.

Mr. SALKELD said he could affirm that the amount was never more than £14 odd, and he had the very best authority for doing so. Mr. Sturgess never at any time owed Mr. Francis £60, although he might have had dealings with him from time to time amounting altogether to £60, but those sums were paid at the time they were incurred, and were not owing to Mr. Francis in the sense in which the word was usually meant.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he was rather astonished at the morality shown by hon. members on the other side of the Committee. Mr. Francis paid for his goods, which he would not have done had he been a mean man; and having done so, why should he not be paid in return? If it was right that men should be paid their just debts, was it wrong to bring a matter of that kind before the Committee?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Yes.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he could understand that from the hon. member for Blackall, Mr. Pattison, who had a gold-mine at his back, but the question presented a different aspect to a tradesman doing his best to get a living, and who was incurring bad debts very frequently, which he (Mr. Macfarlane) could inform hon. members from experience were neither few nor small. To hear hon. members talk of a man who tried to get what was due to him as a mean man, and of an hon. member who had introduced the matter to the notice of that Committee as a mean man—he thought it was mean of them to talk in that way. It was really not honest to talk in that fashion. He would also say that it was not in that department only that men refused to pay their just debts, and defied the law. He knew a gentleman in Brisbane who had written to the Treasury Department—he did not know whether the Premier knew anything about it—complaining that a man there defied his creditor. He had got a judgment against him, and it turned out that he was in the same position as the man in the case already referred to—he had given a bill of sale over all his property, and his creditors had no redress. He (Mr. Macfarlane) thought hon. members opposite were as earnest and as honest as those on the Government side, but in that particular case they seemed to think there was a meanness in a man demanding his own. He (Mr. Macfarlane) did not think so.

Mr. PATTISON said whatever doubt there might be about his using the word "meanness" there was no question at all that it was a misuse of power for a parliamentary representative to get up in that Chamber and abuse his position as the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Salkeld, had done that night by bringing such a paltry matter

before that Committee. Was it a crime for a man not to pay his debts when he was using his utmost endeavours to do so? As the hon. member for Bowen had stated, that poor man had a wife and ten children to support on the magnificent salary of £180 a year, and if he could pay his way out of that, he deserved to be applauded for the good management of his household affairs, without having to make provision for old debts. It did not appear to him (Mr. Pattison) that he could save even half-a-crown a week; and whatever might be said about the meanness of the action, he repeated that a great misuse of power had been made by the hon. member for Ipswich that evening in his parliamentary capacity. Possibly the gentleman in question was not the only Civil servant in the same position, and if parliamentary representatives were to be at the beck and call of any one of their constituents, why, he should have lots of similar cases from the electorate he represented and the surrounding country, to bring before that Assembly. He contended that it was a misuse of power for a representative to do anything of the kind. It was descending from the lofty pedestal he should occupy, and lending himself as an agent in a mean transaction. He repeated that it was mean to bring such a paltry little mean thing as that before that Committee as had been done by the hon. member for Ipswich. That was his (Mr. Pattison's) second session in that House; that was almost his last night there, but he trusted that he should never be guilty of such an act as that hon. member—that he should never become a collector of accounts in that Assembly. That was the position the hon. member for Ipswich occupied that night. He (Mr. Pattison) was a good collector for other people, but a very bad one for himself, and he should never occupy the position of a collector such as the hon. member for Ipswich did on that occasion. The matter was one that might have been represented to the Minister, and pressure might have been brought to bear upon him to endeavour to get it settled. That would be going to the full extent of the hon. member's power, and he was certainly not justified in intruding such a paltry matter upon the attention of that Chamber.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I think we had better transform this Committee into a petty debts court.

Mr. NORTON said if they discussed the other items of the estimate as long as they had discussed that particular item they should be there until morning. It did seem a little inconsistent to discuss a small item for two hours and a-half, and then let an item of £129,000 go in a few minutes. The first portion of the proposed vote could scarcely be discussed, because it was more of a technical character than otherwise, but he would like to know from the Minister for Public Instruction how it was that the number of female pupil-teachers, who were paid a munificent salary of from £20 to £50, had decreased from 300 last year to 285 in the present year?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the numbers put down on the Estimates were the numbers actually in the service of the department at the time the Estimates were made up.

Mr. NORTON: How have they decreased?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he could not say exactly. Some of the young girls had left the department; why they had done so he could not say. Of course there had been some promotions.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the matter was quite susceptible of a clear explanation. They had an increase in all the different classes

mentioned in the vote with the exception of female pupil-teachers, which, as he had stated, had decreased from 300 to 285. Of course some might have been promoted, but one would naturally suppose that that class of teachers would be kept up, and that instead of decreasing the number would increase, as was the case in all the other classes. He thought there should be some explanation of it; it could not be an accident.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said, if the hon. gentleman would look at the number of classified teachers he would see that there was a considerable increase, to the extent of forty-seven teachers. Having so many classified teachers, of course they did not require so many pupil-teachers. The number of pupil-teachers put down was the number employed in the department at the time the estimate was made up. Of course they might have increased in.

Mr. MOREHEAD said there was an increase of seventy-one teachers, at an average of about £100 a year, according to the increase in the total amount, and that appeared to be much higher than the general average.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said that part of the increase was in the item for contingencies.

Mr. MOREHEAD said there was an increase of £77 in that item, which would make a difference of about £1 on each of those seventy-one teachers; but that did not in any way affect the statement he had made.

Mr. NORTON asked whether the whole of the £22,500 voted last year for capitation allowance had been expended?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said that the sum of £21,925 was expended last year.

Mr. NORTON asked whether the teachers and pupil-teachers, for whose instruction provision was made, were taught principally at one school?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said they were taught at schools all over the colony, wherever there was a pupil-teachers' class.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked who were paid for teaching the teachers?

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the item was for teaching pupil-teachers only. It was an old form that had been followed; and the word "teachers" should be struck out.

Question put and passed.

BUILDINGS AND SUPERVISION.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that there be granted for the service of the year 1887-8 the sum of £27,655 for Buildings and Supervision. The vote was the same as last year; but last year only £26,500 was spent.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the amount voted would be exceeded, during the present year, because the expenditure would not decrease.

The PREMIER: They keep about the same.

Mr. NORTON said, if that was so it was because necessary works were not carried out.

Mr. BLACK said he assumed there were some exceptional circumstances connected with the fencing at Woollongabba, for which the Government had paid the sum of £274 3s. 4d. He noticed that all the other schools throughout the colony requiring fencing contributed, according to the usual system, one-fifth of the

cost. Fencing had been done at Bundaberg, Cairns, Gympie, Hendon, Ingham, Lytton, Merritt's Creek, Newtown, Plainview, Rocklea, and Woollongabba; and in all of those cases, with the exception of Woollongabba, the different districts had contributed one-fifth of the cost. In the case of Woollongabba the local subscriptions appeared to have been *nil*, and he would like to know whether there were any exceptional circumstances accounting for that.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said it was necessary that the fencing at Woollongabba should be done, and the committee were written to for their local subscriptions. They stated that they would collect the money, and the case being urgent, the department went on with the work on the tacit understanding that the local subscription would be paid by the committee as soon as possible. Since then the committee had been requested to pay, but up to the present time they had not done so. The department still hoped, however, to get the money.

Mr. NORTON said that if a fence was put up in a place like Woollongabba, and the hon. member only lived in hope of getting the local subscription, he ought to refund the subscriptions that had been paid in other cases.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said that guarantees had been taken in plenty of other cases—in the country districts, too.

Mr. NORTON said it was not fair that a guarantee should be taken, except from responsible people, who could be made to pay. People in poor districts were made to pay to the uttermost farthing, but in a place like Woollongabba the work was done, and the committee were allowed to pay their subscription when they liked.

Mr. NELSON said the present vote was £27,655. In the Auditor-General's Report, page xxvi., they would find that up to the 30th June last, the end of the financial year, there was spent £28,670. Then, taking the statement which was laid upon the table of the House of the expenditure between the 1st July and the 30th September, they would find that there was £4,875 spent in that direction, which would make a total of £33,545, and which was a considerable increase.

Mr. MOREHEAD said there were several questions which had not been answered. There was the one raised and asked by the hon. member for Mackay in regard to the Woollongabba business, and there was the point raised by the hon. member for Northern Downs, in regard to the amount expended last year in buildings, which was considerably above the amount stated by the hon. gentleman in charge of the vote.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he had nothing more to say. He had explained exactly what occurred so far as the Woollongabba school was concerned—that there was a tacit understanding that the money was to be collected, and so the matter went on. When he first took the office there were a large number of guarantees out in country places for erecting schools, some amounts not having been collected to that day. Since then he had never accepted a guarantee. But that of Woollongabba was a case of necessity. There were roads surrounding the school, and it was necessary that it should be fenced in, and the work was carried out on the understanding that the money should be collected.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would like the hon. gentleman to tell them what was the meaning of the phrase "tacit understanding."

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he had not a dictionary in his pocket. There was a letter written stating that they would do their best to collect the money.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was under the impression that that system of expenditure had been done away with. That was the system when he first was a member of the House. People in the outside districts were compelled to contribute to the uttermost farthing for the erection of schools, while the people in and around Brisbane had them erected for nothing.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: This is the only case.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said there should be no such tacit understandings. The same system should be applied all over the country without exception.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said, as he had stated, that was the only case. He thought, from the letter he had received, the money would be collected by the time the fence was erected, and he was sorry he had misjudged the people.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman had said there had been many precedents; but that was the only case in which he had done so.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Yes.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman ought to put the Committee in possession of those precedents, because that would go a long way to justify the action he had taken.

Mr. NORTON said he knew there was no tacit understanding in the case of his constituency. He had often had to apply to have a school erected or altered or something, and from the present Government and from the last Government it was always "pay up your money," and they did pay up to the last shilling. There was no tacit understanding of the nature mentioned by the hon. gentleman. The only tacit understanding there was, was one that made them pay before they received any return. Under that old system, before the present Government came into office, the people had to pay for additions to buildings as well as for new buildings. But under the new system small schools were put up at some particular localities, and if it was found that they would not be large enough for the requirements of the district, the Government had to enlarge them at once. That was done the other day. There was a school put up in his district for, he thought, sixty children; but by the time it was finished it was found that it would be necessary to accommodate 200 children, and the Government increased the building so as to make it capable of containing that number. That showed that the present system was not fair.

The PREMIER: It is perfectly fair.

Mr. NORTON said it struck him that the parents of the 200 children contributed their share as well as the parents of the sixty; but he was not complaining of that particular case because he knew what the system was.

Mr. BULCOCK said that Woollongabba was not the only place where there had been a difficulty in getting the subscriptions. There were nineteen other places. There were Tambo, Charters Towers, Maryborough, Townsville, Yeulba, and other places.

Mr. BLACK said those amounts were for additions, which was quite another thing.

Question put and passed.

PROVISIONAL SCHOOLS.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £15,650 be voted for Provisional Schools. That was a little over the last year's estimate.

Question put and passed.

GRAMMAR SCHOOLS.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £3,033 be voted for Grammar Schools—scholarships, exhibitions to universities, etc.

Mr. NORTON asked if the hon. gentleman was quite sure that that would be all that would be required for the vote?

The PREMIER said the amount spent last year was £2,961.

Mr. NORTON: Will £3,033 be all that will be required for this year?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. NORTON said there was an error in adding up the figures of £150. Which item would the hon. gentleman strike out? It was just as well to have the amount correct.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the £150 voted for 1884 ought not to appear in the column. That had been expended.

Mr. CHUBB said he did not know how the difficulty could be remedied, but one of the conditions of competing for the university exhibitions was that the candidates should not be over nineteen years of age on the 31st December of the year of examination, and he would put two extreme cases. A was nineteen on the 1st January next year, and he could compete in this year's examination. B was nineteen on the 31st December, and was disqualified. Of course there must be some hardship, but it might be possible to fix two dates so as to get nearer the standard required.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it was a matter for regret that, although the Estimates had been prepared by a department that was supposed to be the most highly educated, yet they now found that department was incompetent to add up a simple column of figures.

The PREMIER: The Treasury does that.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then the Premier did the addition? He thought it was the permanent official head of the department who was responsible for the correctness of the Estimates, and possibly he was incapable of adding up a column of figures. The Premier had stated that his late colleague, the ex-Treasurer, was incapable of adding up a column of figures, and possibly the Under Secretary for Education might be so imbued with the higher system of education that addition and subtraction was quite outside of his ken. At any rate there was the fact that through the gross ignorance or neglect of the Under Secretary for Education a most lamentable blunder had crept into the Estimates. He was glad to find the education system had failed; he always thought they were over-educating the people, but now he found they were under-educating their under secretaries. A mistake in simple addition had been discovered which would be discreditable to a schoolboy, and he thought the gentleman who occupied the position of Under Secretary for Education ought to be severely censured. Straws showed the way the tide ran, and small things like that showed how improperly the Education Department was supervised.

The PREMIER said it was not understood to be the duty of the Under Secretary to add up the different items.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Perhaps he cannot do it.

The PREMIER: Possibly not; and he would not undertake to do it himself, but there was an officer in the Treasury whose duty it was supposed to be.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the difficulty ought to be remedied in some way, and the easiest method was to move the reduction of the sum by £150.

Mr. MOREHEAD said they must have it indicated on the Estimates what particular item was excised. There were four different items of £150, and it was possible they might strike out any one of them, or diminish some other item by £150. If the mistake had been made let it be corrected.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the total sum of £3,033 did not include the £150. If the sum had been added up properly it would have been more than that. It was the first item of £150 that should not be there.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Move that it be omitted, then.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said the total was the same.

Mr. NORTON said he would simplify matters by moving that the sum of £450 be reduced by £150.

The PREMIER: That is not right.

Mr. NORTON said perhaps the Minister for Public Instruction would move what was right then; if so, he would be happy to withdraw his amendment.

The PREMIER said there was no necessity to move the omission of the item, because the vote was correct. The usual method adopted in cases of that kind was to move that the total amount be reduced by the amount that was not wanted. It did not make any difference if the addition was correct.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The addition is incorrect.

Mr. PATTISON: It is perfectly correct.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was glad to find the hon. member for Blackall found it correct. Possibly he was so enormously wealthy that the sum of £150 was a matter of indifference to him; but they were dealing, not with the hon. member's funds, but with the funds of the State. That sum must be excised. If the figures had been correctly added up the Premier's argument would have been correct, but if the lesser sum in that case was voted it would be £2,883. One of those sums of £150 must be omitted, and the Minister for Public Instruction should indicate which, or otherwise they might find it would be taken from the vote for travelling expenses and contingencies.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said if it would please and soothe the hon. member he would move that the first item of £150 be omitted.

Question put and passed.

Original question put and passed.

BRISBANE SCHOOL OF ARTS.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that the sum of £600 be granted for the Brisbane School of Arts in aid of technical education. It would be seen that the vote was the same as last year.

Mr. NORTON said he did not want to discuss that item, but he did wish to discuss the next item, and the hon. gentleman might adjourn after the passing of that vote. He wished to get certain information on the subject of the orphanages, and in connection with the Museum. He had no desire to delay the Estimates, but thought they might adjourn after passing that vote.

Mr. PALMER said he would like to know if there was any probability of an extension of the vote to other parts of the colony. The benefits of technical education were generally admitted; all the colonies were encouraging the system, and from the report it seemed to have been attended with some benefit here. He could not see, however, why Brisbane alone should receive the benefit.

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said there was not at the present time any intention of putting on a sum of money for the purpose in other towns. He might add that there had been no application from other towns for the purpose.

Mr. NORTON said there would be plenty of applications if there was any chance of getting a vote.

The PREMIER: It would be necessary to show that they would be of some use if established.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that petitions had been sent in from Charters Towers and other mining centres for some money to be devoted to the teaching of mineralogy. He did not see why Brisbane should get the sole benefit of that vote. There were much greater facilities in Brisbane for general and even technical education than in the North or the far West or in the principal mining centres—Charters Towers, the Burrum, Gympie, and Maytown—and there were people in those places willing and anxious to learn if they could get an opportunity. They could get no assistance from the State in pursuing their business, which was material to the prosperity of the colony.

Mr. NELSON said the hon. member was wrong in that matter, as if he would look a little further on in the Estimates he would find about £2,500 to provide for a school of mines at Charters Towers, and there was about £2,000 more voted for lecturers. Those items were included in the Mines Department Estimates, but might be more properly included in the Education Estimates. He thought perhaps too much was being made of the mining interest, and possibly if more money was devoted to the agricultural interest it would benefit the colony quite as much.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that the House do now adjourn. If there should be time for Government business to-morrow we propose to go on with Supply.

Question put and passed, and the House adjourned at 11 o'clock.