

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 30 OCTOBER 1888

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 30 October, 1888.

Message from the Administrator of the Government—
Loan Estimates. — Petition — Bowen Railway. —
Motion for Adjournment—The Timber Regulations—
Manufacture of Locomotives in the Colony.—Marsu-
pials Destruction Act Continuation Bill — third
reading. — Stafford Brothers' Railway Bill — first
reading.—Messages from the Legislative Council—
Day Dawn Block and Wyndham Gold-Mining Com-
pany's Bill—Railways Bill.—Brisbane Municipality
Loan Bill—Consideration in committee of Message
No. 14 from His Excellency the Administrator of
the Government—first reading.—Brisbane Water
Supply Bill—committee.—Message from the Legisla-
tive Council—Public Works Lands Resumption Bill.
—Valuation Act Amendment Bill—committee.—
Supply—resumption of committee.—Adjournment.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR
OF THE GOVERNMENT.

LOAN ESTIMATES

The SPEAKER announced that he had
received a message from His Excellency the
Administrator of the Government, transmitting
the Loan Estimates for the year 1888-9.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRE-
TARY (Hon. B. D. Morehead), the Estimates
were ordered to be printed and referred to the
Committee of Supply.

PETITION.

BOWEN RAILWAY.

Mr. SAYERS presented a petition from the
residents at Mount Wyatt and the Normanby
district, praying that the Bowen railway may be

made to junction with the Northern railway at the 37-mile peg from Townsville, and moved that the petition be received.

Question put and passed.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

THE TIMBER REGULATIONS.—MANUFACTURE OF LOCOMOTIVES IN THE COLONY.

Mr. PLUNKETT said : Mr. Speaker,—I have a matter I wish to bring before the House, and shall conclude with the usual motion. The subject I have to refer to is the timber regulations recently issued, and the consensus of opinion is that the charges made by them are too high. The general opinion is that £7 annually would be quite sufficient for a cedar license, and £5 for pine ; but under the new regulations the fees are £10 and £7 for cedar and pine respectively, the dearness of cedar and the cheapness of pine being the reasons urged for the difference in the amounts fixed. Another grievance the timber-getters complain of is that they are not allowed to take out quarterly licenses the same as they were allowed by the regulations under the Land Act of 1884. If the Minister for Lands will allow quarterly licenses to be taken out it will give great satisfaction throughout all the timber-getting districts. I was absent through illness when the Estimates of the Minister for Lands were going through, or else I should have referred to the matter then. The agricultural statistics are a subject I may also refer to. They are now collected by the police, but are not published until about twelve months after the time they can be of any possible use to the farmers, who ought to derive as much benefit from them as farmers in the Southern colonies derive from the statistics compiled there. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. STEVENS said : Mr. Speaker,—I think the subject that has been brought forward by the hon. member for Albert is a very important one. Although the subject of the timber regulations has been very well considered, apparently they press a little hardly in some directions. Of course, I do not argue for a moment that the doing away with the timber royalty has not been a very great advantage to those interested in the timber trade, but I think the present regulations might be slightly altered in some respects, and allow the men engaged in that industry to work with more heart than they do at present. It is well known to hon. members that the life of a timber-getter is harder than that of any other man in the colony, except perhaps that of a prospector. The best timber has all been removed, and now it may take a man weeks before he can find a really good cedar-tree, and some weeks more before he can clear a road and open up a track. I, therefore, think that the license fee charged for cutting cedar is certainly too high. No doubt cedar is a very valuable timber—one of the most valuable timbers we have—but owing to the difficulty in getting it, the profit on a log is very small indeed. Instead of being £10 I think the license fee should be £7 or £8, and under the circumstances that would be high enough. In regard to the duration of licenses, quarterly licenses used to be issued, but now the shortest term is six months. There are hundreds of men in the colony who spend a portion of their time in getting timber, such as selectors and farmers. They have a certain amount of spare time from various causes, and put in part of their time—perhaps only a month or two—in getting timber, and it seems rather hard that those men should have to take out licenses for six months. If the Minister would revert to the old system of quarterly

licenses it would be a great benefit indeed to a great number of deserving men. In regard to No. 16 of the new regulations, the wording of that clause is much the same as in the old regulations. It refers to the sale of forfeited timber, and states that a portion of the proceeds, not exceeding one-half, shall be paid to the Ranger. As a fact, the Ranger never receives anything like one-half. As a rule, when the proceeds of a sale are, say £107, for instance, probably the ranger would receive the £7. The wording of the clause should be altered, and the term “gratuity” employed. Then, with regard to the selling of timber by auction, under clause 21 of the regulations, that would entail the paying down of a large sum of money at once for the purchase of the timber. To large purchasers that might be a matter of small moment, but it would exclude many men altogether from purchasing timber. This case might be fairly met by providing for a deposit of a certain proportion of the amount to be paid, and allowing, say, fourteen days for paying up. The timber should be sold at so much per 100, and paid for within fourteen days of removal, according to the quantity taken. I think it would be a good thing, too, if the purchasers of this timber had to pay a license, as it would enable the rangers to exercise a certain supervision over them, and would prevent various abuses. The alterations I have suggested would not, I think, injuriously affect the revenue in any way, and when we consider that the timber industry is a struggling one, and is carried on under great hardships, the easing of some of these regulations might fairly be considered by the Minister. I know they at present press hardly upon the men of whom I have spoken, and any assistance that might be given them in this direction would be very gratefully received, and would not result in any loss to the country.

Mr. MELLOR said : Mr. Speaker,—The timber regulations as now framed are as hard upon the timber-getters, and perhaps more so, than the royalties which have been done away with. In the Wide Bay district the amount the timber-getter paid in royalties came to about £6, but the license he will have to pay under these regulations will amount to about £7 10s. There is one most objectionable feature in the present regulations, which has been very grievously complained of, and that is in connection with the selling of timber by auction. It is sometimes very difficult to find out good timber, but under the regulations, when a man finds it out he has to report his find and the timber is put up to auction. Then the man who prospects and finds the timber gets no advantage whatever, and has to compete against the public. That should be altered in the interest of the timber-getters. There was not so much complaint against the royalty as against the administration of it, and I have heard since the royalty has been abandoned that it was a good thing it was imposed, as it provided a check on the measurements. The sawmill proprietors admit it was a good thing in that respect, and it was a great satisfaction to the timber-getters generally to have the check it provided on the measurements. The main object in imposing the royalty was to know what timber was being felled, as there had been a great waste of timber throughout the colony. Under these regulations that may again take place, as the size of the timber cut will not be so closely scrutinised as when the royalty was in existence, and unless great care is exercised, the destruction of timber in various parts of the colony will be very great. I think amendments upon these regulations, in the direction indicated by the hon. member for Logan, would give a great deal of satisfaction to timber-getters.

Mr. CAMPBELL said : Mr. Speaker,—I am very pleased indeed that the hon. member for Albert has brought this matter under the notice of the Minister for Lands, as there is great hardship arising out of it, imposed on many settlers throughout the colony, and particularly in those districts in which there is a large quantity of timber. The settlers in such districts occupy their spare time, at certain seasons of the year, in felling timber for the market, and they certainly find it hard to have to pay half-a-year's license for what may be the labour of only a month or five weeks. I trust the Minister for Lands will see his way to grant some concession to the timber-getters in that direction.

Mr. TOZER said : Mr. Speaker,—I had no idea that there was likely to be any discussion during this session upon these timber regulations; but as I represent a district where the timber interest is as large as in any district in the colony, a few words from me with respect to the ideas of the timber-getters may not be out of place. During the last election, I probably had a better opportunity than most hon. members of meeting and consulting with the timber-getters in a business way, and hearing their views. I may state that they have no desire to avoid paying a fair price to the country for the timber they take. They do not wish to shirk their responsibility in that respect. They expressed to me a desire to have the system of royalties slightly amended. They did not object to paying the amount of the royalty which had been fixed, though they thought some slight concession should be made in respect of the royalty on pine. Their great grievance was that they were not able, in the same manner as the discoverers of other property, to get the result of their discovery. They went out at some trouble into the bush and found timber, and that was by the regulations submitted to auction and would be secured by persons who could better afford to pay for it. What they desired me to place before this House on the first opportunity was their wish that the Government would assimilate the law with respect to timber to the ordinary common-sense views of persons who own property, and that when they discovered timber a price should be fixed upon it in proportion to the position of it, and the circumstances under which it could be drawn. They think the proper course would be this: There are land rangers in each district, and when a person finds a certain quantity of timber he should have a preferential right to the selection of, say, a quarter of a million feet. The land ranger should report to the Land Commissioner for the district what he considered the difficulties in the way of getting that timber, and the Land Commissioner should then fix the price of the timber, having regard to the difficulties the timber-getter would have in drawing it out, and time would be given by the Commissioner, according to the circumstances connected with the size and location of the timber. That was their idea. They thought that everybody who was concerned in the industry should, like miners, pay a license fee; they did not object to that. But I think it will be a good thing if the hon. Minister for Lands can see his way to alter the regulations in such a manner that timber areas may be dealt with in the same way as if they were owned by a private individual. For instance, suppose the hon. gentleman were the owner of property, and he had on that property a lot of timber, a man would go to him and say, "I want this lot; how much do you intend to charge me for it, and how long will you give me to remove the timber?" And the hon. gentleman would deal with the application according to circumstances. That is the way in which timber areas should be dealt with, so that where the circumstances justified it, the Commissioner might be in-

duced to let the applicant have the timber at a low rate. I can assure the hon. gentleman that there is a strong feeling against the regulations, which are nearly a transcript of the old ones, with the exception of the price. There is a feeling that the timber-getting industry will be burdened by them. There is no doubt that it is in a very depressed condition at the present time. I travelled all through the district of Wide Bay, in which there is magnificent timber, and I found very few persons engaged in the industry of timber-getting. There is another phase of the matter to which I would invite attention, and that is, that it is most desirable that whatever regulations are framed, the main object in framing them should be the conservation of the timber. One can hardly conceive the amount of waste that there has been in the timber of the colony during the last four or five years. The last timber regulations practically assisted in the destruction of the State forests, because under them a man could go and cut down timber without having to pay any license; timber was felled, and if it paid the man to sell it he sold it, but if it would not pay him he left it where it was felled. I hope, therefore, that in whatever regulations are framed, the prime object will be not to allow men to cut down any timber unless there is a demand for it, and unless also there is something paid to the State in respect of that timber before it is cut. The timber-getters I met were quite prepared to pay down 25 per cent. on the quarter of a million feet I mentioned as soon as the Land Commissioner informed them that he would grant them the right to the timber; and that payment would assure the State that the timber would not be cut down unnecessarily. With these observations I trust that during the recess the Minister will gather together the views of the men connected with this industry, and promise that, if possible, and he sees the regulations can be improved upon, he will, in amending the regulations, meet the wishes of those engaged in the industry, who, as I have already stated, have no desire to shirk their responsibility.

Mr. POWERS said : Mr. Speaker,—The district that I represent adjoins the district represented by the hon. member for Wide Bay, and the timber industry is very largely represented in those districts. Since the general election, I have visited those parts of my electorate where timber-getters are located, and I can assure hon. members that the action of the Minister in doing away with the royalty and allowing them to get certain areas of forest land on which they know they can work with safety has met with the approval of the large majority of timber-getters in those districts. One reason of their approval is that before, under the old regulations, when a timber area was discovered, any timber-getter or anybody else could rush it, and sometimes men appeared on them at daylight in the morning, sometimes by moonlight, and rushed the timber. The result of that was that sawmill proprietors sent their own men on the ground and used the timber which they obtained first, so that the timber-getters were placed at a great disadvantage. I am satisfied that, although the license fees now required amount to more than the royalty, they would rather have them than the oppressive regulations that were hitherto in force. I quite agree that it is very desirable that the license fees should be reduced if that can be done, because no class in the community has a harder time of it than timber-getters. I do not give way even to mining prospectors, because timber-getters have also to do a great deal of prospecting work in opening up roads. Any facilities, therefore, that can be given to them, should then be accorded, and such reductions made in the fees

as are fair and reasonable. As far as cedar is concerned, I think the license fee is rather high; persons have to go a long way for that class of timber, and the price of a license might therefore reasonably be reduced. There is one matter of considerable importance which has been referred to by the member for Gympie and the member for Wide Bay, which I am sure all timber-getters would like to see carried out, and that is that prospectors who discover timber areas should get the benefit of that discovery. Under the old regulations such land was simply put up to auction, and a sawmiller or some other person with capital came and outbid the prospector, so that he did not get the benefit of the land he discovered. Under the present regulations there is a provision that a man who finds valuable timber has a right to apply for 160 acres, but he has not an absolute right to the timber area in the same way as the man who discovers a rich mining area. The prospector who finds timber should, in my opinion, have the right to get 160 acres of the forest land he discovers, and he should not be forced to compete with the sawmill proprietor, or any other persons, and run the risk of not getting it at all unless he pays a high price for it.

Mr. ADAMS said: Mr. Speaker,—I have no intention of taking up the time of the House very long, but I must say that all the timber-getters whom I have met, both in my own electorate and elsewhere, are very glad indeed that the royalty on timber has been removed. A great number of people throughout the country who get timber are farmers—men who have gone out into the country for the express purpose of settling on the lands; and they frequently, in bad seasons such as we are at present experiencing, fill up their spare time in getting timber so as to raise a little money to carry on with. I think it is rather too much to ask such men to pay a six months' license fee when probably they do not work more than two months. It would, I am sure, be very desirable that three months' licenses should be issued. That would be a great boon to many men, and in the end a benefit to the colony. With regard to the sale of timber areas, the man who has the most money would be able to purchase, at terms possibly beyond the means of the timber-getter, and therefore, I hope the suggestion that has been thrown out will be followed by the Minister.

Mr. SMYTH said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish merely to confirm what has been said by the hon. member for Wide Bay, as to the great destruction of timber that is going on in the Wide Bay district. I know a place on the Mary River where men were engaged cutting pine and throwing it into the river in the expectation that they would get a flood, but there has been no flood there for several years. The result is, that in the course of a few months that timber turns blue—is utterly destroyed. I have seen rafts come down with timber in that condition, and the sawmills would not give 1s. a log for it. It is utterly worthless, and I hope some steps will be taken to prevent people from throwing logs into any creeks above tidal waters. If they are subject to tidal influence there may be a chance of getting the timber down. Again, as to timber reserves, I know one place near Gympie where nearly 100 axes went to work one night, and in a day or two the whole of the timber was cut down, and a great portion of it was not removed before it had become blue and worthless. Again, with regard to timber reserves, of course it is right to try and preserve growing pine, but there is a great deal of growing pine in those reserves which is fully grown, and the longer it stands the worse it becomes. It gets the dry rot and becomes useless.

I therefore think the girth of the trees in those reserves might be increased. As to the timber licenses, they seem very high, £5 for hardwood, £7 10s. for pine, and £10 for cedar; and I do not see any provision for ordinary licenses. The hon. member for Burrum said he thought the area ought to be limited to sixty acres.

Mr. POWERS: One hundred and sixty.

Mr. SMYTH: I think it should be 320 acres, because timber-getters have to go to a lot of trouble and expense cutting and clearing roads, and it is only fair that they should get a chance of recouping themselves. I believe there is more timber destroyed in the Wide Bay district than goes to the mills. The timber-getters do not care. If they get 100 logs out of 1000 to the mill it pays them.

Mr. COWLEY said: Mr. Speaker,—I endorse all that has fallen from the hon. member for Burrum on this question, and hope that the Minister for Lands will see his way to protect the prospectors, because in the Northern scrubs they have to go to great trouble and expense to find timber and make roads. I, therefore, think it is only right that they should be protected. I also hope the hon. gentleman will be able to grant quarterly licenses as suggested by the hon. member for Logan. I know in portions of my district many selectors, who have taken up homesteads, go out fencing for their neighbours during certain seasons of the year. They have to get timber for this fencing from Government land; in a month or two they could get enough to fence in 1,260 acres, and if they have to take out a license for six months it will come very hard on them. I trust the Minister for Lands will be able to grant the concession.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. Hume Black) said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very glad hon. members have taken this opportunity of referring to the timber regulations recently laid on the table of the House, which I think have met with pretty general approval. There is no doubt hon. members are quite right in some of the suggestions made, and they will receive every consideration from the department over which I preside. In framing these regulations I took the opportunity of obtaining the most valuable and reliable information from gentlemen on both sides of the House, and also from the timber-getters, as to what would be most likely to conduce to an improvement in the management of that important industry. I received many valuable suggestions, the result of which has been embodied in these regulations. I do not profess to say that these regulations cannot be improved. I am very glad to hear the suggestions hon. members have made, and I shall give them careful consideration. It appears to me that there is a general wish that licenses should be issued quarterly instead of half-yearly. That is a matter which I shall inquire into to see if it can be carried out without involving too great an expenditure in the shape of rangers. Hon. members know that, in consequence of these alterations, it is necessary to get rid of five rangers, as the duties to be performed will not be so numerous or arduous as formerly. I will therefore inquire whether we can ensure sufficient security to the revenue by having the same staff as we have at present, if we issue quarterly licenses. I think the State has a right to expect some reasonable return from the enormous timber wealth we possess, and I believe there is a pretty general consensus of opinion—with the exception of one or two members who rather advocated the old royalty system—that that system was an objectionable one which ought not to be perpetuated. In framing these regulations I have endeavoured, while preserving

the just rights of the State to certain revenue from our timber, to make the conditions as little harassing to the hardworking timber-getter as possible. As hon. members know, these regulations can be altered from time to time by the Ministry, and have the force of law by being gazetted. I shall take every opportunity of ascertaining in what direction they have any harassing effect upon the timber-getters, a class whose interests I wish to do all I can to advance. I think hon. members, on calm consideration, will see that these license fees are not at all too high. The only reference made to that point this evening was in regard to the £10 license for cedar. But it must be remembered that that is an exceedingly valuable timber, and that it will become more and more valuable as time goes on. One point hon. members have not referred to is this: that the £10 license fee for cedar also covers pine and hardwood. It embraces all three in the same way that the £7 license for cutting pine also gives the right to cut hardwood, the license for which is only £5. Another point that appears to have escaped the attention of hon. members is that amended regulations are in course of being issued to cover an error that has been made in clause 26, which I shall read:

"The holder of a special timber license may employ as many men as he thinks proper to cut and remove timber from the land comprised in the license: Provided that not less than three men (inclusive of the licensee) must be continuously employed in cutting and removing such timber, and that a license to cut and remove timber of the species which is being cut or removed is held by or in respect of every man so employed, and that all timber cut by the servants of the holder of the special timber license must be branded with his registered brand."

That was an error, and the moment my attention was directed to it I took steps to amend it. The holder of a special license, I take it, would probably be a sawmill proprietor. It is unreasonable to expect that he would be actually employed in cutting and felling timber. The amended regulation will be to the effect that the number shall be two men, exclusive of the licensee. That will be published in the course of a day or two, and the rangers' attention will be specially directed to it. All hon. members will, I think, admit that it is only just that any licensee taking up a valuable area of land for the purpose of supplying timber to his sawmill, should be compelled, by the labour conditions, which are new, to really work that area. Labour conditions prevail in all mining regulations, and I have endeavoured to introduce the same conditions into the timber regulations. Very large areas of land have been monopolised and locked up by sawmill proprietors for the purpose of driving the *bond fide* timber-getter further away from his mill, and to compel him to sell his logs to the mill-owner at—I will not say what price—perhaps less than he would have been able to get if those large areas had not been locked up in the immediate vicinity of sawmills, which the proprietors could always fall back upon in the event of their not being able to make what they might consider good terms with the timber-getters. The labour conditions are one of the specially good features in these timber regulations. The hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Smyth, considered that clause 21 was somewhat objectionable—namely, "special rights to cut timber may be sold by auction." That is a condition which has never been very largely availed of, although it was in the previous timber regulations. With regard to the license fee, I will see whether it would be judicious to allow quarterly licenses. The hon. member for Wide Bay, Mr. Tozer, suggested a principle which I do not think would be at all advan-

tageous; that is, a sort of sliding scale if a man discovered timber, which sliding scale was to be left to the discretion of whom he did not say, whether the Crown lands ranger, the Commissioner, or the Minister.

Mr. TOZER: The Commissioner.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: To make a sort of sliding scale at his own sweet will. That, I think, would be a most objectionable principle to introduce. It would be a principle over which the Minister could not be expected to have much control, and it would be apt to lead to very serious complications. I am certain that in many cases he would be accused of favouritism, in having allowed certain individuals to cut valuable timber at a price which others, who were unsuccessful applicants for that selection, would consider a great deal too low. I am pleased to find that most hon. members seem to approve generally of the regulations. The hon. member, Mr. Smyth, and one or two hon. members, think the 160 acres special license is insufficient, and the hon. member for Gympie suggested that it should be 320 acres. But there is nothing whatever to prevent the same individual taking up four, five, or six of the areas, providing he pays the license fee and complies with the labour conditions. He can take up as much land as ever he likes, so long as he complies with those conditions.

Mr. TOZER: They do not want land; they want trees.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I take it for granted that a man does not apply for a special license until he has satisfied himself that the land for which he applies contains valuable trees. With regard to the right of the first discoverer of timber land to a preferential claim to that particular selection, I think that is a matter well worthy of consideration, and I will see if effect can be given to the suggestion by some amendment in the regulations as soon as I am satisfied on the point. It is perhaps not generally known to the House and to the country what the value of the timber of the whole of Queensland is to the country. Last year, up to the 31st December 1887, there were 1,880 annual licenses, at 5s. each, £470; 9 special licenses for 640 acres, £45; royalty on all log timber, £5,969 10s. 9d.; splitters' licenses, 402, at £3, £1,206; firewood licenses, £937 10s.; licenses to remove stone, gravel, and other material, 182, at £1 each, £182; and proceeds of confiscated timber, £744 7s. 10d. The total amount the colony derived from its timber wealth amounted last year only to £9,554 8s. 7d.; and that was under the royalty system, which, I think, has been generally condemned. Under the new system, allowing for all reasonable progress which I believe will accrue, now that we have a duty on imported timber, we estimate that there will be 450 licenses, at an average of £6, £2,700; special licenses, and sale of timber under section 20, £1,500; splitters' licenses, 400, at £3—the same as previously—£1,200; firewood, as before, about £900; removal of stone, gravel, etc., 100 licenses, at £5 each, £500; and proceeds of sale of confiscated timber, £800; the total amount being £7,600, or nearly £2,000 less than was realised last year. If hon. members will accept these figures as approximately correct, they will see that it would be hardly judicious, without imposing some additional taxation, which I hope will not be done, to reduce the licenses, unless we find that the imposition of the increased licenses really retards the progress of the timber industry. I can only say I watch with a great deal of interest the progress of that industry, and if I find that the license fees are too high I

shall take the earliest opportunity to have them reduced, so as to benefit the class for which these timber regulations are framed.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—Considering the important part which the timber industry is likely to play with regard to our future prosperity, it would well become the Minister for Lands to turn his attention to the necessity of introducing a Forests Act, such as exists in South Australia, and which has worked to very great advantage there, not only in the way of protection to existing forests, but in the growth and distribution all over the colony of plants suitable for timber. The Act has been in force there about nine years, and the returns derived under it have greatly exceeded the expenditure, and the department has been the means of distributing millions of young timber-trees all over the colony.—a standing proof that the Act is one which we should do well to facilitate. I think the timber we have in the colony should not only be conserved when it is grown, but some provision ought to be made with regard to the planting of young trees, and looking to the future wants of the colony, and in order to do that I would recommend that an Act—such as that in force in South Australia—should be considered by the Minister for Lands.

Mr. PLUNKETT said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very pleased that this discussion has taken place. The Minister for Lands stated that only the license fee for cedar could be considered high, but I think that on pine is also too high, and that it should be £5; the same as that on hardwood. With regard to issuing quarterly instead of half-yearly licenses, the Minister for Lands would do well if he acceded to the proposal.

MANUFACTURE OF LOCOMOTIVES IN THE COLONY.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—Before this motion is withdrawn, I would like to bring under the notice of the Government and members of this House a matter to which I referred yesterday. I see that in the *Courier* of this morning there is a paragraph which reads as follows:—

“A rather serious charge was made by Mr. Annear regarding the contracts recently let for the local construction of locomotives, that gentleman saying that he had information that many of the parts used in the composition of the engines were being imported by the contractors instead of being constructed by them in their own workshops, as provided in the contract. Mr. Nelson recommended Mr. Annear not to believe such statements unless he had good personal knowledge of the facts, as the Government inspector who watched the carrying out of the contract very narrowly would report at once to headquarters any variation from the specifications.”

After reading that paragraph I may say that several men waited upon me this morning to draw my attention to a shipment which has just arrived by the steamer “Jumna.” In speaking of any individual contractor I hope it will not be thought for one moment that I have any bias against any contractor in the colony, but this House decided to do a certain thing, and I consider that I or any other member of this Assembly would fail in our duty if, when this matter was brought under our notice, we allowed it to go unchallenged. It is a fact that at the present time link motions for locomotives, weighing about 1 cwt. of forged iron dressed, are being imported from Great Britain; and they are to be seen now, unless they were removed this morning, on Messrs. Parbury, Lamb, and Co.’s wharf, where the “Jumna” has just discharged her cargo. They were there yesterday, and they were consigned to Messrs. Springall, Frost, and Co., Ipswich, and we know that that firm is one of the successful tenderers for the construction of locomotives in the colony. I think I am correct in saying

that the Minister for Railways stated yesterday that it would be necessary to order ten locomotives from Great Britain in order to supply the demands of the traffic until some of these locomotives we have contracted for locally are completed. What does that mean? Why, it is an admission that the construction of locomotives in the colony is a failure; but I am certain that it need not be a failure. If one firm in the colony cannot make them, I know others who can, and I say it is unfair to the unsuccessful tenderers—some of whom are Brisbane firms—that this kind of thing should be allowed to go on, and it cannot, in my opinion, be too strongly objected to. What I now state is that the specifications are being departed from, as it is clearly stated in them that those link motions I have referred to shall be made and dressed in the colony; but is it making them in the colony to buy them ready-made in England, and bring them out in the “Jumna”? A good many of them can now be seen in the establishment of Messrs. Springall and Frost, in Ipswich. This is a very serious matter, as in one contract it is something like 11 per cent., and in another 15 per cent. in excess of the price which the Government would pay for locomotives in England. Why should Parliament give that extra price, except to encourage the industries of the colony, and to find work for the large number of mechanics we have? I shall not relax in any effort I may be able to put forth in bringing this matter before the House and the country. I am sure we shall hear a good deal more about this matter before many days are over our heads, as there is a great amount of feeling in this matter. I think there are nearly £200,000 being spent in the construction of locomotives in the colony, and if what I have referred to is allowed to go on we shall be allowing a departure from the specifications, which, in fairness to those tenderers who were unsuccessful, should be most rigidly carried out.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. M. Nelson) said: Mr. Speaker,—I think that I gave the hon. member an assurance last night, which he ought to have taken, that no such departure from the specifications would be allowed. The matter was reported to me some time ago, when the first breach of the specifications took place, and it was immediately taken notice of. I assured the hon. member last night that such a thing would not be allowed. The main object of the late Government in giving the construction of locomotives to local manufacturers was to encourage local industries, and the specifications were very strict. There were certain parts of the engines allowed to be imported, however, in a rough unfinished state. The first things that were imported in a finished state were some engine-frames, which, instead of being brought out in a rough state, were brought in planned. Immediately they appeared in the local establishment the matter was reported to me, and I reprimanded the manufacturers. I can only assure the hon. gentleman again that every step will be taken to insist upon the contract being carried out strictly to the letter. At the same time, it is just possible that there was, as has been suggested, a mistake made in the order sent home, and that the order was not properly executed. Of course, it would be an absurdity to say that those expensive pieces of machinery should be condemned because they were brought in in this finished state; and in order to get over that difficulty the only way I can see is to impose some penalty, but that is a matter that will be duly taken into consideration; but the provisions of the contract will be insisted upon—of that I can assure the hon. member and the House.

Motion put and negatived.

PLEURO-PNEUMONIA VIRUS PRESERVATION.

Mr. PALMER said : Mr. Speaker,—I wish to make a few remarks, and will conclude with the usual motion. My object is to give the Government an opportunity of stating their intention with regard to a motion standing in my name, relative to the cultivation and preservation of virus for inoculation.

The SPEAKER : I must point out to the hon. member that he cannot, under a motion for the adjournment of the House, anticipate a motion already on the paper.

Mr. PALMER : It is not my intention, Mr. Speaker, to anticipate that motion ; but seeing that the session will end in a few days, I wish to ask the Government what they intend to do with regard to the matter.

The SPEAKER : The hon. member can ask a question with the permission of the House, but it is usual to give notice.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I am prepared to answer the hon. member now.

Mr. PALMER : I beg to ask, without notice, whether the Government will undertake to carry on experiments during the recess with regard to the cultivation and preservation of virus for inoculation for pleuro-pneumonia ?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said : Mr. Speaker,—It is the intention of the Government to carry on those experiments ; and they have been in communication with the experts now in New South Wales with respect to those experiments. They recognise the very great importance of the matter, and are prepared to attend to it.

MARSUPIALS DESTRUCTION ACT CONTINUATION BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon. J. Donaldson), the Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

STAFFORD BROTHERS' RAILWAY BILL.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of Mr. SMYTH, leave was given to bring in a Bill to authorise William Stafford, Joseph Stafford, John Stafford, and James Stafford, of Bundamba, in the colony of Queensland, colliery proprietors, trading as "Stafford Brothers," to construct and maintain a branch line of railway connecting with the Southern and Western Railway.

Mr. SMYTH presented the Bill, and it was read a first time.

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

DAY DAWN BLOCK AND WYNDHAM GOLD- MINING COMPANY'S BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that the Council had agreed to this Bill without amendment.

RAILWAYS BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that the Council had agreed to this Bill, with certain amendments, in which they requested the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS moved that the message of the Legislative Council be taken into consideration in committee to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

BRISBANE MUNICIPALITY LOAN BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF MESSAGE NO. 14 FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE ADMINIS- TRATOR OF THE GOVERNMENT.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS (Hon. J. M. Macrossan), it was resolved, in Committee of the Whole, that it was desirable that a Bill be introduced to empower the Governor in Council to authorise the Colonial Treasurer of Queensland to advance by way of loan a sum not exceeding £40,000 from the public funds to the Council of the Municipality of Brisbane, as recommended by message from His Excellency the Administrator of the Government, of date 29th instant.

The House resumed, and the resolution was adopted.

FIRST READING.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS presented the Bill, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS, the second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

BRISBANE WATER SUPPLY BILL.

COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS, the House went into Committee to consider this Bill in detail.

Preamble postponed.

Clause 1—"Short title"—put and passed.

On clause 2—"Interpretation"—

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill should tell the Committee what the intentions of the Government were with respect to it. They had been promised a report from an engineer, who came up from Melbourne for the purpose. They were told on the second reading of the Bill that it had been introduced for the purpose of enabling a new and much larger scheme of waterworks to be carried out for the supply of the city of Brisbane, that the matter was then being reported upon, and before they went any further with the Bill the members of the Committee would be furnished with a copy of the report, and would get more definite information about it. The hon. gentleman should tell them what was the nature of the scheme it was proposed they should carry out, and he should also tell them what would be the nature of the change, if any, in the constitution of the Board of Waterworks. They had a right to information upon all those points before they went on with the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said they had not yet received the report of the gentleman who came up from Melbourne to examine the proposed scheme, so that he was unable to say anything about it. The scheme, as the hon. gentleman was aware, was one to obtain a larger supply of water for the city of Brisbane and its suburbs, including every place that could be reached as a suburb by gravitation. Of course a much larger supply of water would be required for that purpose than could be afforded by Gold Creek and Enoggera Creek combined. As to the constitution of the authority, the Government had determined to

leave the constitution of the authority which would have charge of those waterworks for a future Bill, which would be introduced when the Government had made up their mind as to what that authority should be—whether it should be an authority consisting of the mayors and chairmen of the municipal councils and divisional boards of the districts which would receive that supply of water, or any other authority. The scheme at present was to leave the carrying out of the work in the hands of the existing Board of Waterworks, with the improvements which were made in the Bill. He thought that should be sufficient to meet the demand of the hon. gentleman, as far as the authority was concerned. He was sorry he had not the report of the engineer to lay before the Committee.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he was very sorry that the report of the engineer was not forthcoming, because they were still in darkness as to whether that was a desirable thing to do at all. He had taken it for granted that the report would have been ready, because he saw some weeks ago that the engineer who was to report on the scheme had been all over the ground. Could the hon. gentleman tell them whether it was likely to be a useful scheme? It would involve the expenditure of a large sum of money, and it was not usual to ask Parliament to go into a scheme involving an outlay of some thousands of pounds without any information on the subject.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said, as hon. members were aware, he had taken charge of the Bill in consequence of the Premier, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, not being able to be in his place in the House. From a conversation he had with the Premier, he understood that the engineer had stated that the scheme was a practicable scheme, and would supply the quantity of water which it was expected would be required for the city and its suburbs, but the Premier had not at that time received a written report. There appeared to be no doubt that the engineer approved of the scheme of getting a supply of water from the Brisbane River.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—"Act to be read with principal Act"—passed as printed.

On clause 4, as follows:—

"It shall be lawful for the board to obtain from the Brisbane River and its tributaries, or from any creek or stream in the vicinity of the city of Brisbane, or from any other source, an adequate supply of water for the said city and the suburbs thereof."

Mr. BARLOW said that was the clause which he pointed out on the second reading of the Bill would somewhat interfere with, or give powers to the Brisbane Board of Waterworks which might affect the water supply of the town of Ipswich. He understood at the time, from the hon. gentleman then in charge of the Bill, that an amendment, having for its object the protection of the water supply of Ipswich would be favourably received. He had in his hand a plan of the country around the proposed source of supply, from which it appeared that a line drawn across the river at a place called Colledge's Crossing, and formed by a projection of the eastern boundary line of portion 41, parish of Kholo, would be sufficient to protect the present water supply of Ipswich, provided operations were not conducted by the water board above that point. He did not for one moment suppose that the rights of Ipswich or its water supply would be interfered with by the board, still he thought it was only right and proper that the matter should be embodied in the Bill, in order that it might be set at rest for ever. Without taking up any further time he would read an amendment

he proposed to move. It was that the following words be added at the end of the clause, namely:—

Provided always that the Board shall not in any way interfere with, divert, or impound the water of the Brisbane River at any point nearer to the source thereof than a line drawn across the said river and formed by a projection of the eastern boundary of portion 41, parish of Kholo.

He did not know that there could be any objection to that amendment, and trusted it would be accepted by the Minister in charge of the Bill.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said before the hon. member proposed that amendment he wished to point out that the clause required further consideration with respect to the earlier part of it. By the clause as it stood, general roving power was given to the board to go wherever they liked. He did not think a power like that should be given to anybody. The first Act in connection with the water supply of Brisbane authorised the Government to grant to the Municipal Council of Brisbane all such Crown lands as might be necessary for the construction of reservoirs in Enoggera Creek. They were also authorised to take lands for laying pipe-tracks, and making tunnels and reservoirs. That was all for that particular work. Since then the Board of Waterworks had made another reservoir at Gold Creek. Whether they had any authority to do that was doubtful. At any rate, it was proposed by section 8 of that Bill to sanction the work they had done there. Clause 4 would give the board power to go wherever they liked, or do anything they pleased, which was absurd. They had a reservoir at Enoggera Creek authorised by law, and they had another reservoir at Gold Creek, which was proposed to be authorised by the present Bill. Why, then, should the Bill not limit the board to the scheme which it was intended to carry out, instead of giving them power to go where they liked; and fix some point on the river, and say they should not go higher than that? The amendment of the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, was probably right; but all the words, in the clause "and its tributaries, or from any creek or stream in the vicinity of Brisbane, or from any other source," would have to be omitted, with the view of inserting whatever words were necessary to limit the power of the board to getting the water supply from the place intended. If it was intended to get the water from the Brisbane River, let them say so in that clause. He proposed the omission of the words, "and its tributaries, or from any creek or stream in the vicinity of the city of Brisbane, or from any other source." The object of the Bill was to enable the board to exercise definite functions, not to go wandering all over the country, and perhaps spending money uselessly.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said he had intended to amend the clause by omitting the words "or from any other source," and adding a proviso to this effect: "Provided that nothing in this Act shall be deemed to authorise the Board to take, divert, or impound any water from any point of the Brisbane River above portion 3, parish of Kholo, county of Stanley." That was a considerable distance below the source of the Ipswich supply, so that the rights of Ipswich were conserved by that proviso. He thought it would be too much to leave out the words "or from any creek or stream in the vicinity of the city of Brisbane, or from any other source." The words "or from any other source" should be left out, because they gave too wide a power. Under them the board might take water from the head of the Mary.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the board was not to be constituted to construct dams or anything of that sort, but to supply water to the city by means of pipes and other expensive works; therefore they should not be allowed to have a general roving power to make those works wherever they liked. It was the same as authorising the Government to make a railway from Normanton to Croydon, or elsewhere. The board might go to the Logan, the Albert, Bulimba Creek, or anywhere else for water.

MR. BARLOW said he would point out that portion 3, parish of Kholo, being 72 acres granted to J. D. Platt, was very near the Ipswich waterworks, and if the source of the Brisbane supply was taken from there it would probably interfere with an extension of the Ipswich waterworks to a place called Blackwall reach, which was situated opposite portions 51 and 50, parish of Chuwar. The point fixed by the plan submitted on the second reading of the Bill—portion 41—which, he understood, involved a gravitation scheme—would not interfere with the Ipswich supply, but to take power from the board to interfere with the Brisbane River as far as portion 3, parish of Kholo, would cut off the Ipswich people—in the event of the necessity arising for an extension of these works—from the supply at Blackwall reach, while the extension up the river would not assist the object in view.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: How far is portion 3 below portion 41?

MR. BARLOW said it was about a mile, following the windings of the river. Portion 41 was about half-a-mile nearer to the mouth of the river than portion 3. Under those circumstances he hoped the amendment would be agreed to.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said the hon. gentleman wanted to preserve the rights of Ipswich by coming down the Brisbane River instead of going up. He also wanted to take possession of the place which was considered most suitable for impounding water for the Brisbane supply—the Blackwall reach. That place, being below Ipswich, it could not possibly interfere with the supply to that town to make it the source of the Brisbane supply. They did not usually go down stream to get a supply of water; they generally went up stream to get it.

MR. SALKELD said he would point out that the Blackwall reach contained a very large supply of water, and ever since the Ipswich waterworks had been fixed in their present position it had been contended that they were in the wrong place, and that they ought to be at Blackwall. On several occasions the municipality had been put to considerable expense opening channels to allow the water to go down to the present source of supply, on account of the shallowness of the holes. It had been under consideration for a considerable time to remove the whole of the Ipswich waterworks down to the Blackwall reach, and if the Brisbane Board were allowed to take their supply from that source Ipswich would be cut off from it. The Blackwall reach was the natural and suitable source of supply for Ipswich, and was as near to the town as the present waterworks. He was sure there would be a very strong and decided objection to the Brisbane Board getting their supply from there.

MR. MACFARLANE said it was quite true that the Ipswich waterworks had been placed in the wrong position, and the consequence was that the higher parts of the town had never been supplied with water from that source. It was contemplated to remove the works below their present site, and if that scheme was carried out, every part of Ipswich would be supplied with water from the Brisbane River. If the Bris-

bane Waterworks Board intended to take their supply from the same spot, a wrong would be done to the people of Ipswich, and he thought that under the circumstances they would be justified in opposing the Bill. At present the Ipswich waterworks impounded every drop of water that came down the river, and Brisbane could only be supplied from the large waterholes, and the water in them was not the kind of water that the people of Brisbane required. It would be far better to wait another year and get a purer supply than was to be obtained from the waterholes between Brisbane and the Ipswich waterworks. He hoped every consideration would be given to the rights of Ipswich, and he did not think the kind of water to be obtained below the Ipswich waterworks was what the people of Brisbane desired.

MR. McMASTER said he thought the Bill was rather premature until a measure had been passed defining the rights of individuals on the various watercourses. He rose more particularly to call the attention of the Government to the fact that Kedron Brook, a stream that had never yet been known to fail, had become so polluted that the water in it was absolutely unusable. In years gone by, Brisbane had had to depend upon that tributary for its water supply. Before the Enoggera waterworks were constructed, and when the water in what was known as the "Horse Pond," in Roma street, got too thick to drink, people in the town used to send for their water from Kedron Brook, at a spot near Nundah. There were some places near Nundah where, in the driest seasons, the water had never been less than from 8 feet to 10 feet deep, but for the last fourteen or fifteen years it had been so polluted by tanneries and slaughterhouses that the inhabitants of the district were unable to use it. As that stream appeared to be included within the scope of the Bill, the Government ought to take steps to prevent it further pollution. There were some thousands of inhabitants now who were dependent upon that stream for water in dry seasons. A dam or reservoir could, he believed, be constructed in the vicinity of Nundah, by which the Hamilton, Eagle Farm, Nundah, and even Sandgate, could be supplied with water. During the twenty-three years that he had known Kedron Brook, it had never yet failed, but the water was now so polluted by those tanneries and slaughterhouses as to be utterly undrinkable. Some years ago the late Judge Lutwyche tried to prevent the pollution of the stream, but it seemed there was a very expensive process of law necessary before that could be done. He hoped the matter would be taken into consideration by the Government. If a reservoir were made in some place in the vicinity of Nundah, or on some of the high land near the Albion, water might be pumped up there and distributed from that height to all the lower localities in the district. That would be a great saving of the water which it was proposed to bring into Brisbane; but in the meantime he would say that the whole of the inhabitants along Kedron Brook, from the tannery to Eagle Farm, might use the waters of that stream if people were prevented from polluting the creek. Some steps should be taken to prevent the pollution of such a never-failing stream. Seeing the Government had all the watercourses in the vicinity of Brisbane set down, the first step for them should be to preserve that stream from being so polluted that the inhabitants along it were unable to obtain a supply of water from it.

MR. UNMACK said he should certainly support the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition, because it appeared to him, from what had been said, that there was a distinct project laid down in that Bill—that

was, to bring the water from the Brisbane River. Seeing that such a scheme would involve a cost to the country of half-a-million of money, he thought it was entirely out of place to endeavour to indefinitely extend the powers of the board in the way it was tried to be accomplished. He believed the Minister in charge of the Bill had suggested the omission of the words "or from any other source," but he did not see that that went far enough. By giving such a sweeping authority as that to the board, the country would be committed to an expenditure of money which was certainly not contemplated by that Bill. They had a scheme for conveying water from the Brisbane River, and he thought that ought to satisfy them at present; and, if further powers were wanted at any time, there could be no harm in giving them, the board coming before Parliament again to ask for such further powers. He had great pleasure in supporting the amendment of the leader of the Opposition.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that he thought it would be very gratifying to the residents of Toowong to know that the obstruction to prevent the city and its suburbs from getting a water supply came from the hon. member for Toowong. That clause did not in any way give too extensive powers to the board, more especially, as he took it, that in a previous session of Parliament it was intended to deal with that matter still further on the lines proposed by the leader of the Opposition in his Water Authorities Bill. He thought it was a matter of immense importance to a city like Brisbane, which was suffering even at the present moment from the short supply of water, that great powers should be given to any board or authority to obtain a sufficient supply of water from any source available, and he certainly should not—speaking as an individual member of the community, and a resident of the city of Brisbane—support any resolution to abridge the powers entrusted to the board. He did not think the opinions expressed by the hon. member for Toowong would be appreciated by his constituents at all. It was more than absurd that a limitation should be made in the powers of the board, as would be done by providing that they should only get water from the Brisbane River, when possibly a better and more economical mode of supply could be obtained. The hon. member for Toowong said that the clause would give the board control of a large expenditure; but on the other hand, if they were limited simply to the river, it committed them to one mode, and one mode only of supplying the city of Brisbane and its suburbs. He presumed that any authority would go to the best source of supply, and that would be the Brisbane River—even if they had the full scheme proposed by the clause before them. He certainly thought that if the motion of the leader of the Opposition were carried, the Bill would be destroyed, and it rested with those hon. members who represented the city and its suburbs to make their peace with their constituents, and to explain how, by the action taken, they had prevented, at any rate in the meantime, a sufficient supply being rendered available for the capital of the colony.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said the hon. gentleman had made the strongest speech that had been made against the Bill. After having been absent while the discussion was going on, the hon. gentleman came in and made a strong speech against the Bill. The leader of the Government had stated, in introducing the Bill, that it was a Bill to authorise the carrying out of a scheme for getting a water supply from the Brisbane River.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: And its tributaries.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said from the Brisbane River. It had been pointed out that the present board was only a makeshift, and was not intended to be a permanent board, whom it was not even desirable to entrust with the large powers proposed to be given by the Bill. During the discussion he had pointed out that the powers proposed to be given were too large to be given to any board, and there was no law in existence by which any board was authorised to do all they would be authorised to do. There was no law in the statute-book to authorise anything of the kind. The Brisbane Board of Waterworks had had limited powers. They had only been authorised to go to a certain place, and they had never been authorised to go outside their own boundaries to get a supply; but by this Bill there were no boundaries defined. The board or authority might go to the Logan or Albert, to the North Pine, Kedron Brook, Oxley Creek, the Bremer, or Stanley River, or anywhere else, and do what they pleased, and incur any expenditure of money in doing so. They had no information before them, and they had to take a good deal on trust. They had been promised a report before the Bill came on, but they knew it was not there, and they were quite willing to do without it. If the Bill were a Bill to authorise the supply being obtained from the Brisbane River, why should they not do as had been previously done, and say exactly where the supply was to be obtained from?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Are not the tributaries of a river portions of that river?

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said the hon. member did not seem to understand the Bill at all.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I understand that the tributaries of a river are parts of that river.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said that the scheme was supposed to be one to bring water from a particular place in the Brisbane River, in the parish of Kholo, at such a point that the water supply of Ipswich should not be interfered with. If it were wanted to take the water from the Brisbane River near the source, or from some particular place, let them give authority to do that, and that was all that was required; but they proposed to give the board more power than they would give even to a board possessing universal confidence. They should not give to any institution in the colony such powers, which were not even possessed by the Government; and yet it was proposed to give them to a board which, as had been said, was moribund, and in which it would not be convenient to make any alteration during the present session.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said he was very sorry he was not in a position to give more information; but he had already told the hon. gentleman the reason. The Bill was not a Bill to limit the board to a supply from the Brisbane River only. That was not intended. He was under the impression that the words "or from any other source" were intended to apply to an artesian supply; but as those words were so vague he was quite willing to leave them out. He did not, however, see any necessity for leaving out the words "and its tributaries, or any creek or stream in the vicinity of Brisbane." As to spending money unnecessarily, the board could only spend money they received from the Government, and the Government would not give them any money to spend until plans of the works on which the money was to be spent were

approved by the Government, so that there was very little in the contention of the hon. member. The real contention was between Brisbane and Ipswich, and not between Brisbane and any other source of supply. He was quite willing to amend the Bill so as to conserve the interests of Ipswich, and he thought that was quite as much as the Committee could expect.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the hon. member did not seem to know what the object of the Bill was. When the Premier introduced it he said :—

"The present Bill is for the purpose of giving the board power to take water from a certain spot on the Brisbane River, which they cannot do at the present time."

It was never intended by the Premier—he would be the last to approve of such a thing—to give the board or any other body power to go all over the country making reservoirs or dams.

MR. UNMACK said he was quite satisfied to let his conduct be judged by his constituents; and they did not require the advocacy of the Colonial Secretary to protect their interests. It was most unjustifiable to charge him with obstructing the Bill, because he had no intention of doing so, as he had said before. He hoped he was wrong in his supposition, but it appeared to him that it was the intention of the Government to abandon the Bill and throw the onus on the Opposition side, who were only too anxious to have the Bill passed. As the leader of the Opposition had pointed out, it was distinctly laid down that there was to be one certain scheme, and that was to take the water from the Brisbane River. There was no definition of "the vicinity of the city of Brisbane," and it might mean anything. It might be taken to mean the Logan or the Albert, but that was not the intention of the Bill. If that was the intention of the Bill, why not say so? But when a distinct scheme was placed before the Committee he did not see why they should not stick to it.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he had already stated that the Premier would not approve of such a proposal as would give the board power to go wherever they liked, and he found, on referring to the debate on the second reading of the Bill, that the Premier, after quoting the 6th clause, said :—

"As the Bill stands the board can go wherever they like, to any part of the Brisbane River or its tributaries or any other river near Brisbane. I do not think that is a power that ought to be conferred on them; it is not even conferred on the Government by any other law."

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said that the Premier was prepared to move the amendment he had moved.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the Premier was evidently prepared to move such an amendment as he had moved.

MR. GRIMES said the Committee would have more confidence in dealing with the Bill, if some definite scheme were laid before them. As the representative of Oxley, he was very much interested in the matter. The suburbs on the south side were very badly off for water, and so was the district of Oxley; and if the scheme proposed some provision for supplying the divisions of Yeerongpilly, Stephens, Woolloongabba, and Bulimba with water, he would feel more satisfied. If the supply of those districts was not included in the scheme, and the board had power to go to the head of the Oxley, it would cut off from those divisions their only natural source of supply. Therefore he should like to know something of the proposed scheme before the clause passed. The present board ought to be confined to the Brisbane River, and the tributaries should be left for the supply of the various

districts concerned. If there was no provision in the scheme for supplying the districts he had named, he protested against the board going to the head of Oxley Creek for a supply.

MR. O'SULLIVAN said he understood the Minister in charge of the Bill to say that he would give up all claim to going to any creeks or tributaries except the Brisbane River and its tributaries. There was a very large tributary of the Brisbane River called the "Bremer," and if the board were allowed to impound the waters of the Bremer a few miles above the junction, the impounded water would go back beyond the town of Ipswich and swamp out Ipswich altogether.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said that the clause, with the proviso which he proposed to add, would not give authority to the board to impound the water beyond a certain point. How the impounding of the water there could swamp Ipswich, he did not know. He had always understood that Ipswich was very short of water, and if impounding a little water in the Bremer would swamp Ipswich, they must have a very good supply there now. He hoped they would be allowed to get on with the Bill. He had no intention of abandoning it, and the hon. member for Toowong need not have insinuated in a kind of way that he hoped the Government would not throw the blame of abandoning it upon the Opposition. It was not for the purpose of abandoning it that the Bill had been brought in, and it was not for the purpose of abandoning it that Sir Thomas McIlwraith had asked him to take it up in his absence. The object of the Bill was to supply the citizens of Brisbane and its suburbs with water, not only at the present time, but when it would probably be three or four times its present size, and that object could only be attained by taking the water from sources sufficient to supply such a large population as they would have to supply.

MR. SALKELD said that from all he had heard, there was no present intention of going beyond a certain place on the Brisbane River. It was not likely that before next session there would be any necessity to go to any of the tributaries of the Brisbane River for water, and the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition might therefore be accepted. If afterwards it was found necessary to go to some tributary of the river, the Government could come before the House with a properly defined scheme, and there would be no difficulty in dealing with it. Everyone would like to see a good supply of water provided, not only for Brisbane but for other places as well. He suggested that the Minister for Mines and Works should accept the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition, and it would not hinder the operations of the board in any way. There was not the slightest likelihood of their wanting to go to any other place than the river, and if it was found necessary to do so a Bill could easily be brought in next session to deal with the matter.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: That is just equivalent to advising us to withdraw the Bill.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that was an unfortunate attitude for the members of the Government to take up in that matter, or at all events, those of them who had spoken. That was a Bill which they were all anxious to pass—he was anxious to pass it in the interests of his constituents, he was in accord with the opinions of the Premier on the subject, and yet that hon. gentleman's colleagues came in and insisted on thwarting the Premier's views and his own. There was a clause which the Premier on the

second reading had admitted was a mistake. He had referred to the Premier's speech and proposed the necessary amendment to give effect to the intentions of the Premier as stated by himself, and then the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill said he was obstructing. He could not understand the hon. gentleman, or the hon. gentleman did not understand the position.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: You always arrive at that conclusion.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said there was a provision which, they had been told by the author of the Bill, had got in by mistake, and he proposed now to omit it, and the hon. gentleman at present in charge of the Bill said that should not be done, though the powers given by the clause were never intended to be given by the Government, and were powers which the head of the Government said ought not to be given, and were not possessed by any Government or corporation in the world. The Premier explained that they must have got in by accident, and the Minister for Mines and Works said they should stop there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: What powers?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said they were contained in the words he proposed to omit, and which had got into the Bill by accident.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: No.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that, on the second reading of the Bill, the Premier had stated that those powers ought not to be conferred on the board, and the hon. member opposite now insisted that they should be conferred upon the board. The answer the hon. member had given to the speech of the hon. member for Fassifern showed that he did not understand the question. He said it would be equivalent to withdrawing the Bill to allow of the omission of those words. They knew what the Bill was about, however, and they understood that it was brought in to enable the board to bring water from a particular spot on the Brisbane River, and it was with that view that the House agreed to the second reading of the Bill. They never agreed to a Bill to enable the Brisbane Board of Waterworks to go anywhere they liked all over the colony and get water there. They certainly passed the second reading of that Bill as printed, but with the explanation of the Premier that those words got into the Bill by mistake, and ought to be omitted.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said the hon. gentleman always jumped to conclusions, and when people opposed to him did not agree with what he said, he told them they did not understand the matter. That was not the way to come to an agreement upon Bills or anything else. He had not accused either the hon. gentleman or the Opposition with obstruction, but members on the Government side had a right to opinions of their own, and had a right to express them. He had said that the advice of the hon. member for Fassifern was equivalent to advising the Government to withdraw the Bill.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Not at all.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said the hon. gentleman said those words got in by accident, and he (Mr. Macrossan) said they did not get in by accident, and he happened to know more about the matter than the hon. gentleman. They got in by design, and he had explained that the words "or from any other source" were intended to cover an artesian supply, and as they were so vague he intended to eliminate them.

He had had conversations with the Premier on the subject since the second reading of the Bill, and the Committee might depend on it that the Premier did not ask him to take up the Bill without talking about it. The words the hon. gentleman opposite referred to did not get in by accident but by design, as it was the intention of the Premier to confer powers upon the board by which they would be able to go to the Brisbane River for a water supply, and if that supply was not sufficient they might go to the tributaries of the river, and any stream in the vicinity of it. The first intention was to go to the Brisbane River, but the Premier wished that the board should have collateral powers as well as the power to impound the water of the Brisbane River. He had no intention of withdrawing the Bill, though hon. gentlemen opposite did not seem to like that part of it.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he wished the hon. gentleman had taken the trouble to read the speech from which he had quoted. The hon. member said those words did not get in by accident but by design. This was the opinion of the hon. gentleman who introduced the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: I have read it all to-day.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he would read a little more, for it was most reasonable and conclusive to his mind. On the second reading of the Bill the Premier said:—

"Another matter to be considered is to what extent should general and vague powers be conferred upon any authority proposed by the Bill. As the Bill stands the board can go wherever they like, to any part of the Brisbane River or its tributaries, or any other river near Brisbane. I do not think that is a power that ought to be conferred on them; it is not even conferred on the Government by any other law. Under the Railway Act the land proposed to be taken must be approved by Parliament; and under the Public Works Lands Resumption Act, which is a general Act that has been found to work very well—an Act that was passed long after the Waterworks Act—provision is made for giving the public notice of the land proposed to be taken, so that persons who may be injuriously affected may urge their objections. And if it is considered right that their objections should be upheld, the resumption may be vetoed. It would be much better to adopt some such provision with respect to waterworks. For instance, the Municipality of Ipswich might be entitled to be heard as to any scheme for taking water from the Upper Brisbane."

The hon. gentleman thought those general vague powers ought not to be conferred, and now the Minister for Mines and Works thought they ought.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said he had said all he had to say on the matter. He had explained how the case stood, and what the Premier's intentions were, and if the Committee thought the amendment of the hon. gentleman opposite should be carried, he had no objection, and he would not withdraw the Bill on that account.

Mr. STEVENS said he would like to ask whether, in the event of the Bill passing, it would prevent townships such as Rocklea and Oxley, on the south side of the river, deriving a water supply from the river between here and the head of the watershed?

Mr. BUCKLAND said he hoped the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill would accept the amendment of the leader of the Opposition. The electorate he (Mr. Buckland) represented would suffer considerably if the clause was adopted as printed, because there were three or four creeks there which supplied that district with water—Bulimba Creek, Tingalpa Creek, etc. By the clause as it now stood the board could take the water from any of those creeks, and if they did so, freeholders having

frontages to those running streams—for they were running streams—would have a just claim for compensation against the Government for having deprived them of the water which was found in the creeks. He hoped the amendment would be accepted by the Minister.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said the electorate of Bulimba, instead of being deprived of water, would be supplied with water under that Bill.

Mr. COWLEY said he thought the provision contained in the clause was a very wise one, because, as he understood the matter, it was the intention of the Government to hand over those waterworks next year to the joint local authorities, and if the provision now introduced in the clause remained, the local authorities would be able to initiate any other schemes they desired. They had heard from the hon. member for Fortitude Valley that there was an admirable supply of water in Kedron Brook, which would supply Nundah and other centres of population in that district. The mistake some members appeared to make was that they thought that measure applied simply to Brisbane, whereas it applied to Brisbane and its suburbs. If the joint local authorities, when they got the control of the waterworks, found that it would be less expensive to supply the inhabitants living near Kedron Brook from that source, they would be able to do so under that clause, and the same remark applied to places on the south side of the river. It might be found less expensive to dam up some creeks on that side, instead of bringing the water over the river, as was now done. Therefore he considered the provision was an admirable one, and did not require amendment in the way proposed by the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. GLASSEY said he understood the Minister in charge of the Bill to say that it was his intention to move an amendment to conserve the rights of the people of Ipswich. Would the hon. gentleman kindly indicate in what way that would be done? While they were desirous of conferring all necessary powers on the board of waterworks for the purpose of procuring the best water supply available from various sources, they ought not to allow the board to usurp the rights of any other persons. If it were intended to go above Ipswich in order to get a water supply for Brisbane, notwithstanding that he was a resident of the metropolis, he would certainly oppose the clause. On the other hand, if it was intended to fully conserve the rights of the people of Ipswich, he would like to know how that was proposed to be done before they voted on the amendment, if it was to go to a division.

Mr. BARLOW said he might be permitted to point out that there were two questions involved in that clause. There was the amendment of the leader of the Opposition, which proposed to take away from the board the extensive powers which would be conferred on them by that provision if passed in its present form; and there was the question as to the particular place at which the rights of Ipswich should be conserved. In the debate on the second reading of the Bill, on the 29th of August last, it was shown that there were two places particularly adapted for supplying water to Brisbane, and on that point he would quote the words of the Premier. The hon. gentleman said:—

“About fifteen miles from the town there is a place which is very well adapted for a pumping station. There is a hill in the neighbourhood, about three or four miles off, about 250 feet above Queen street, Brisbane. The water would be pumped into this reservoir, and the highest points of Brisbane will be supplied by gravitation.”

That place was called Williams's reach. In the few remarks he (Mr. Barlow) then addressed to the House, he was sensible that, on account of his inexperience in the House, he was not able to ventilate the matter as fully as he might have done. He then stated that the Brisbane waterworks were proposed to be constructed below the Ipswich waterworks.

“They were to start at a place called Lower Blackwall reach, and the proposed works were to be on a piece of ground known as the banks of Williams's reach, where the elevation above high-water mark is 360 feet only, and it is stated that there are thereabout 6 feet of water in the worst season of drought.”

The Ipswich waterworks had undoubtedly not been constructed at the best place for the supply of the town, and, as his colleague had pointed out, the people of Ipswich were constantly put to inconvenience by the deficient supply. If the supply was not sufficient for Ipswich now it would certainly not be sufficient for Ipswich in the future, and they desired to include within their boundary that stretch of water which was called Blackwall reach, which was just as well adapted for a water supply for Ipswich as Williams's reach was adapted for the supply of Brisbane. Which ever way the water supply was got it must be pumped up. There could be no system of gravitation that he knew of in connection with the supply of either Brisbane or Ipswich parallel to the water supply of the city of Melbourne, where the water was supplied by natural gravitation from the river Plenty and the Yan Yean Reservoir. The Blackwall reach, which he desired to include in the Ipswich boundary by taking in portion 41 of the parish of Kholo, was the very place of all others where the Ipswich waterworks would be removed to in the event of any change being made. At that place there was an abundant supply of water, and the highest land in the neighbourhood of Ipswich from which the water, after being pumped, could be made to reach the town by gravitation. He was sensible of the courtesy shown him by the Minister for Mines and Works by the manner in which the hon. gentleman had offered to meet his wishes, so as not to interfere with the interests of Ipswich. That could be done, as he had shown, by taking in portion 41 of the parish of Kholo, leaving Brisbane, Williams's reach, which the Premier had mentioned as being particularly adapted for the supply of water to Brisbane.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he found that he had made a mistake just now, and he wished to correct it at the earliest possible opportunity. He found that he was quoting from his own speech just now, and thought he was quoting from the Premier's. He hoped the hon. the Minister for Mines and Works would see that it was quite unnecessary and unprecedented to give the board such powers. The hon. gentleman would not suspect him of desiring in any way to interfere with the water supply of the city of Brisbane. But other hon. members, representing suburban constituencies, agreed with him that there was no necessity to give the board such wide powers, which might be made to operate very injuriously indeed. They would enable the board to take water from the Bremer, Oxley Creek, Bulimba Creek, Kedron Brook, the Pine River, and the Logan and Albert—a thing admittedly not contemplated—and powers ought not to be given to that extent. If the board should require powers of that kind, special powers could be given from time to time by Parliament, but they should not be given in that Bill. Nobody would ever think of giving a Government power to make a railway wherever they liked, and that clause, practically, was giving a similar power to the board. The course of legislation in those matters had

been perfectly uniform, and it had never been the practice of Parliament to delegate such powers as those to anyone. He was very anxious that the Bill should pass in the interests of his constituents; but at the same time he thought they ought not to depart from any well-recognised rules of legislation. He could not use any further arguments on the subject. The hon. gentleman had not shown the necessity for such a provision, and would not answer the arguments against it. If that point were settled, the rest of the Bill would not take ten minutes.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said the hon. gentleman had stated that he was anxious to see the Bill pass in the interests of his constituents. Of course, he did not suppose the hon. gentleman had any other object, and he was quite aware that as long as the hon. gentleman had his own way in that House things went very smoothly. But having discovered that he had made a mistake, by putting words into the mouth of Sir Thomas McLlwraith that he never uttered, if he read that hon. gentleman's speech he would see that the words he now proposed to omit were not inserted by accident, but that they were inserted by design. Perhaps he would also give Sir Thomas McLlwraith credit for being interested in the city of Brisbane—quite as much as he himself. He (Mr. Macrossan) did not suppose any harm could be done by giving the power to the board that the hon. gentleman objected to. He was very anxious to get the Bill through, but at that late period of the session they could not debate it as fully as they might at the beginning of the session. Hon. members were anxious to get away, and he thought that instead of debating the matter further they should go to a division, and if the Committee thought the board should not have the powers objected to, he would go on with the Bill all the same. As he had already stated, he would not withdraw the Bill, as he was anxious that it should become law that session. On the other hand, if the Committee decided that the board should have the powers given by the clause, he hoped the hon. gentleman would come to the same conclusion, and let the rest of the Bill go.

Mr. JORDAN said he was very glad to hear the hon. gentleman say that he would not withdraw the Bill if the amendment of the hon. the leader of the Opposition was carried, because it relieved him (Mr. Jordan) from a difficulty. He had been very much afraid that the hon. gentleman would withdraw the Bill if that alteration were made, and he was very anxious to see the Bill pass, as it was one of very great importance. The city was rapidly growing in population, and the question of water supply for the people was one of the importance of which could hardly be estimated. For many years, when writing reports in his position as Registrar-General, he had repeatedly called attention to the insufficiency of the water supply of Brisbane both as to quantity and quality. The population had doubled since then, and it was of the utmost importance that they should not delay the matter of getting an improved and greatly increased water supply for even six months. When the hon. the leader of the Opposition introduced his amendment he (Mr. Jordan) was afraid that, if carried, it would jeopardise the passing of the Bill, and for that reason he hesitated whether he should support it or not. However, as the Minister in charge of the Bill had said he would not withdraw it if that amendment were carried, he saw his way clear to support the amendment. He also hoped the hon. gentleman would see his way to accept the amendment suggested by the hon. member for Ipswich, because it would be very unfortunate if in

passing a Bill to provide water supply for the city of Brisbane it would interfere with the supply of water to the important town of Ipswich. He, therefore, hoped the hon. gentleman would try and meet the hon. member for Ipswich half way, and so give satisfaction to all concerned.

Mr. DRAKE said he was under the impression, when the Bill was before the House on the second reading, that it was understood that when it went into committee hon. members should be supplied with a plan showing the point on the Brisbane River from which it was proposed to take the fresh supply of water. He had not heard what had been said in reference to the matter that afternoon, but he should like to know why that plan was not before the Committee, because he had heard there was great danger, under the clause as it stood, of various creeks around Brisbane being tapped for that supply of water, to the great injury of those creeks and persons residing near them. Kedron Brook had been mentioned amongst others. That was a stream of running water, and was being used now for various industrial purposes, and would in future be much more largely used for those purposes. He should like to know the reason for the non-production of the plan before he could assent to the clause as it stood. It was giving the Government power to do a great deal of injury.

Mr. W. STEPHENS said he hardly liked the clause in its present state, although it would do no harm if a clause were inserted further on to the effect that the constitution of the present board would be altered. The hon. gentleman had told them he was not satisfied with the board as at present constituted, and it was admitted by everybody that it was not a representative board; and he could hardly understand why, during the last period of its existence, it should have greater powers given to it than it ever had before. He understood the object of the Bill was to enable the present board to carry out a scheme to get water from a certain point on the Brisbane River, and to make legal their action with reference to Gold Creek. But, on the whole, the clause would not do much harm, even if passed in its present form, because, before the board could enter upon any large works, they would have to lay the plans before the Governor in Council and apply for money to carry them out, and no Government would grant money for any purpose which would do harm to anybody. Whether the clause were passed as it stood or not, did not much matter; but it did matter very much that they got a good supply of water for the city and suburbs as soon as possible.

Mr. DRAKE said he would remind the hon. Minister for Mines and Works that he had not answered his question.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It has been answered over and over again.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said that, for the special information of the hon. member for Enoggera, he would repeat his statement. The reason why the Government had not got the information for which the hon. member asked was because the engineer from Melbourne had not sent in his report. On hearing that to-day, he at once sent for the engineer to the waterworks board, knowing that he could give him some information on the matter verbally; but that officer was so ill that he could not possibly come to the House to give him the information. That was the only reason.

Mr. GRIMES said the question was one of great importance, and they ought not to legislate upon it in the dark. It would put some of his

constituents to a great deal of unnecessary expense if the upper portion of Oxley Creek was dammed and the water impounded. They had gone in for irrigation, and they trusted to the water coming from the head of the creek to prevent the water getting so salt as to be unserviceable for irrigation purposes. If the head water was impounded, the strong salt water would flow further up the creek, and the irrigation works would be of no use whatever. They ought to have some idea of the scheme that was proposed by the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said the scheme was to bring waters from the Brisbane River for the supply of Brisbane and the suburbs. If that was found to be insufficient, power was given by the clause under discussion to obtain water from any creek or stream in the vicinity.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he would ask how long it would take before that was found out? They were legislating for a period of six months, and yet the hon. gentleman insisted upon the insertion of a provision which would not have effect for six years, and one which was of a most dangerous and objectionable character. The hon. gentleman had made no attempt to answer his arguments; he simply gave them the go-by. If it had not been so late in the session, and the hon. gentleman chose to pass by all arguments against a measure, he would not have the ghost of a chance to pass it. They were all anxious to pass the Bill, but in a rational form. The hon. gentleman, for some reason or other, wanted to pass it in an absurd form.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. member's argument always came back to the same thing—anyone who differed from him was absurd. There was nothing at all absurd in the clause. The Bill was brought in in the interests of the city of Brisbane; the supplying of a plentiful supply of good water to the people of Brisbane could not certainly be called a party question; but the hon. member instead of assisting to pass a good measure—

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I have been trying all the evening to do so.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman had a very peculiar way of trying to achieve his object. They had had a suggestion from the hon. member (Mr. Barlow) that a barrier line should be drawn between the water which should be considered as belonging to Ipswich, and that which should be considered as fairly belonging to places further down the river. If that were carried into effect it would completely defeat that scheme for supplying Brisbane with water. If any injustice was attempted to be perpetrated in any locality in the colony, there would always be a large majority in a representative House like that to prevent it. He failed to see what harm would be done by the passing of the clause as it stood. He had been told by the leader of the Opposition that he was ignorant, did not understand, could not comprehend. If those were his conditions, he might throw the responsibility upon a higher power, but he was not aware that in his business, or in his ordinary course of conduct, he was so ignorant, or was possessed of so feeble an understanding as the hon. gentleman would make out. His own opinion was that the clause as it stood was one which should pass, and that those large powers should be given to the board in the meantime. He admitted that a Water Authorities Bill should be passed later on, but in the meantime the necessity was a pressing one, and one which required immediate action, and after that immediate action had been taken under the Bill such as it was, further provision could be made

to regulate the conditions under which the board should act, if the board were to continue. But the hon. gentleman, by his opposition to the measure, really threw back a measure which affected his own constituents very materially. Of course it was for him to say whether, in taking the course that he was taking, he was doing his best for his constituents; but he (the Colonial Secretary) thought he was taking a course that would not be conducive to the benefit of the inhabitants of his constituency.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he was sorry the hon. member had stated that he had accused him of not being able to understand. What he had complained of was that no attempt whatever had been made to answer his arguments, and the hon. gentleman simply said that he had not the least idea of what they were. He had explained what the meaning of the clause was about ten times, and he would explain it for the eleventh time, and he would ask the Colonial Secretary to pay him the compliment of listening to the arguments used this time.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have listened to you.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it would be insulting to the hon. gentleman's intelligence to think that he had been listening, from the speech he had just made. The Bill was a Bill brought in, as the Premier had said, to authorise the Brisbane Board of Waterworks to get their water supply from a particular spot on the Brisbane River, as at present they had authority only to get water from the head of Enoggera Creek, and it was desirable that they should get it from a spot on the Brisbane River. To that proposition they had no objection; on the contrary, they had shown their desire to pass such a measure, but the Bill, as it was framed, gave powers of an extraordinary nature to a board which it was admitted was purely temporary, and was really moribund. That difficulty would have been provided for but for the unfortunate absence of the Premier; but they were all agreed that preliminary steps should be taken towards getting the new supply. Ministers now insisted that the Bill, instead of providing for that, was to authorise a moribund board to interfere with the rights of private ownership all over the colony, as well as in the neighbourhood of Brisbane. They might take away water from Kedron Brook, from the Bremer, or other tributaries of the Brisbane River, the Logan and Albert, and everywhere else. There was no justification for giving power to do any such thing to that board or to any Government even, and because they objected to that power the Government said that they were obstructing the Bill. If the Colonial Secretary would look at the Bill he would see that they could take away any water from any streams in the vicinity of Brisbane.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Logan is not in the vicinity of Brisbane.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the Logan was as much in the vicinity of Brisbane as the Upper Brisbane River. The Ministry wanted to give the board authority to take water from any stream, but he supposed the board would require money to do so. They need not confine themselves to the Brisbane River. The principle he was contending for was, that that Parliament should never delegate to any private corporation or subordinate authority, or to the Government even, such a general power to interfere with the rights of private persons. That was a general principle, and never to his knowledge had it been departed from. It would be a very dangerous thing if they gave to anyone a roving commission to do

as they pleased with other people's property, and to spend money as they pleased. They might say that the board would not spend the money, and that they would have to get it from the Government; but they had no right to give the Government a right to lend money in that way. If they were to give £100,000 to the Board of Waterworks they were entitled to know what the board would do with it. The power proposed to be given was unjustifiable. They were told that the board would not do these things, and the only argument used was that it did not matter because they would not do it, and that if they gave them those powers they would not exercise them. Legislation was more serious than that. It was absurd to say that they should throw about fire because there was nothing for it to burn. He should not take any further trouble with the matter.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said he did not know whether the hon. gentleman meant it to go to a division or not, but he was doubtful of that. The hon. gentleman said that the Bill contained powers to give to a private board the right to interfere with private persons, and that Parliament would never delegate that power. That Bill did not contain such powers, and he supposed the hon. gentleman meant that he would not permit Parliament to do so.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I did not use any such arguments, nor such words.

Mr. DRAKE said that he was going to object to one remark made by the Colonial Secretary, who stated that they should give those powers to the board at present, and that afterwards if the board did any injustice to private persons or to a constituency, that Committee would not permit it. He wanted to know what power Parliament would have to prevent such injustice, supposing the board were given such powers? Supposing under that clause they tampered with Kedron Brook, would it be the time next session to complain of it. The hon. gentleman knew that it would be too late then, and yet they were asked to give those powers to the board without knowing anything of the scheme of the Government, and the reasons given were that one gentleman from Melbourne had not yet sent in his report, and that another gentleman was ill. Those were not sufficient reasons to justify the Committee in taking a plunge in the dark and agreeing to a provision like that, giving a board the right to do injury to a private person, or to a constituency, without the Committee having any right to remedy the matter.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he thought the Colonial Secretary was scarcely fair in saying of the leader of the Opposition that when anyone differed from him they were told that they were unreasonable. They never found the Colonial Secretary or the Minister for Mines and Works interfering very much when the leader of the Opposition had helped them out of their difficulties in the past. They had agreed to the improvements he had made in their Bills, and had thanked him for them; and now when there seemed to be some little hitch in the way they said he was unreasonable. He thought that if the Colonial Secretary and the Minister for Mines and Works would just be as reasonable with reference to that Bill as they had been in the past in taking his improvements and amendments on Bills, they would be acting in a reasonable way towards the leader of the Opposition.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that with regard to what had fallen from the hon. member for Ipswich, he would only say that personally he could have no object to serve in the

passing or not passing of that Bill. That was absolutely a matter which affected only the inhabitants of Brisbane and its suburbs. He had done all he could to show the Committee as far as he could the benefits that would be derived from the Bill as it stood.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: You have not addressed yourself to the subject yet.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was almost purely a matter of local administration. It was not a matter that concerned the general public, and therefore he could not be accused of bringing any heat into the discussion. He had thought that hon. members who represented constituencies directly affected by the passage or non-passage of the measure would either have helped to pass it or have given sufficient reasons why such a Bill should not pass. It could not be construed into being a party measure. A Bill dealing with the water supply of Brisbane did not affect St. George or Cunnamulla, which were the principal towns in the district he represented, so that it could not be a crucial question so far as they were concerned. Nor could it be called a crucial question to many hon. members. It was a measure brought in to alleviate a great want which had existed during the last four or five years in Brisbane and its suburbs; and if the Government had erred at all, they had erred in trying to benefit the city of Brisbane and its suburbs. The Government had done what they believed to be the best thing, and if the Committee chose to reject the Bill or mutilate it to such an extent as to make it, in the opinion of the Government, inoperative, the responsibility of not passing the Bill must rest with the Committee.

Mr. SALKELD said that to hear the Colonial Secretary talk one would think that members who wished to make an amendment wished to throw out the Bill; but he failed to see how the suggested amendment would defeat the object of the measure. He agreed with the leader of the Opposition that a roving commission should not be handed to an irresponsible board, or even to an elective board; and when a definite scheme was brought before the Committee, it would be time to grant the board definite powers. The proposal of the Minister in charge of the Bill would form a most dangerous precedent, and he could not understand how it was that the hon. member hesitated to accept the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition. The Colonial Secretary said that the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Ipswich would destroy the scheme of the Bill, but such was not the case. If the clause were left as it stood the board would have power to go to the upper Blackwall reach and interfere with the future water supply of Ipswich. The Opposition had no desire to throw out the Bill, and he hoped the Minister for Mines and Works would accept the amendment of the leader of the Opposition and get the measure through.

Mr. GROOM said that in the debate on the second reading he called attention to the powers contained in clauses 4 and 6, and contended that no hon. member who was connected with municipal government, and who had the interests of municipal government at heart, would grant the powers in clause 6 or clause 4 to any board. He then understood from the Chief Secretary that when the Bill was considered in Committee he would be prepared to receive suggestions in regard to the clause; and he (Mr. Groom) mentioned the case of *Vernon v. Briggs*, in which the Supreme Court gave a verdict against the Government, and the country had to pay £1,065. And a very important case, in which a landholder on the Murrumbidgee was concerned, was recently decided on similar lines by Chief Justice

Darley, of New South Wales. He was sure the Minister for Mines and Works would not accuse him of any attempt to obstruct the progress of the Bill, but hon. members were bound to protect the interests of the public, more particularly the riparian rights of owners of lands abutting on creeks and watercourses. He thought the opinion of the leader of the Opposition was the correct one, especially in view of the decision of the Supreme Court on a case in which the Crown contested the point, and consented to a verdict for the plaintiff of £400 damages and £665 costs. The hon. member for Oxley had stated that the selectors on Oxley Creek were using the water of the creek. He believed that selectors were beginning to learn the value of irrigation; but if the clause were passed as the Minister for Mines and Works suggested, it would be taking away from selectors the rights to which they were entitled by the common law of the land, as laid down by the Chief Justice of the colony.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put, and the Committee divided :—

AYES, 25.

Messrs. Nelson, Morehead, Macrossan, Black, Paul, Donaldson, Luya, Murphy, Hamilton, Crombie, Watson, Adams, Murray, Agnew, Philip, Archer, Goldring, Little, Dalrymple, Rees R. Jones, Battersby, G. H. Jones, North, Powers, and Cowley.

NOES, 21.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Hodgkinson, Jordan, Groom, Foxton, Unmack, Smyth, Mellor, Buckland, McMaster, Morgan, Macfarlane, Sayers, Salkeld, Grimes, Drake, Barlow, Isambert, Glassey, Stephens, and Annear.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That clause 4, as read, stand part of the Bill—put.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that after the division that had just taken place he did not intend to concern himself further with the Bill. He had addressed the Committee several times and urged arguments against a provision that it was discreditable to Parliament to pass. His arguments had not been answered, and no attempt had been made to answer them from the other side, and yet when they went to the vote and the division bell rang the Government supporters ranged up in line and voted against the amendment he had proposed without knowing anything at all about it. He declined to waste his time in arguing under such circumstances. It would go on now he supposed, and no doubt some other day he would have to bring in a Bill to repeal it.

Mr. LITTLE said they on the Government side understood the Bill as well as the leader of the Opposition. They did not vote by direction of their leaders, but according to their lights, and it was not because the hon. gentleman was the leader of the Queensland bar they should not have just as much right as he had to express an opinion. They knew what they were doing, and for his part he would as soon go across and support the hon. gentleman as Sir Thomas Mellwraith if he thought he was right. He voted according to his lights, and he would not tolerate the hon. gentleman's insults. Hon. members opposite might laugh, and they might vote as they were told, but the electors sent him to the House, and he would vote according to his lights.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said the hon. gentleman opposite had no right to make such a speech as he had just made, and he certainly would not have made that speech if he had not lost his temper. To charge hon. members on the Government side with voting upon what they did not understand

was unfair and unparliamentary. The hon. gentleman might just as well have said that of his own supporters.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH : They were all listening to the arguments.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said they had not all been listening any more than all on the Government side. However, he did not want to get into a wrangle with the hon. member, and he was certainly not going to lose his temper over it. Whether the hon. member gave them any assistance or not was a matter concerning himself. He was always glad to accept the assistance of the hon. gentleman when he thought it was right; but when he thought it was wrong he would not take it, even though he was "the leader of the Queensland bar," as the hon. member for Woothakata had called him. He wished to know now whether he would be in order in moving the omission of the words, "or from any other source."

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH : They add nothing to the absurdity of the clause.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said that was a matter of opinion, but he wished to know whether he would be in order in moving the omission of those words.

The CHAIRMAN : I do not think the hon. member would be in order.

Mr. AGNEW said he did not think he would be justified in the interests of the electors he was proud to represent, in sitting there and accepting the gratuitous insult which had been offered to hon. members by the hon. leader of the Opposition. There was nothing so very complex in that measure that an ordinary member could not understand it. He had listened with as much attention as any hon. member to the arguments on clause 4. He had read it over half-a-dozen times, and believed he thoroughly understood it. There was nothing particularly difficult about it, and it was framed in ordinary English language, and could be readily understood by any member of the Committee. There were several little creeks in his electorate, one of which was Kedron Brook. The people in that electorate were hoping to get a supply of water by means of that measure, and it was possible that the Government might wish to have that supply obtained from Kedron Brook. Why, then, should he stand in the way, and prevent them having recourse to that stream? He did not think that he would be doing justice to his constituents if he sat there and listened to the gratuitous insult to members on that side without making any answer and throwing back the insult.

Mr. BARLOW said he would now move the amendment that he mentioned earlier in the evening. The only difference of opinion between the Minister and himself was whether the line of projection should be that of the boundary of portion 41 or portion 3. He wished to place the boundary at portion 41, in the parish of Kholo. He therefore moved that there be added at the end of the clause the following proviso :—

Provided always that the board shall not in any way interfere with, divert, or impound the water in the Brisbane River at any point nearer to the source thereof than a line drawn across the said river and formed by the projection of the eastern boundary of portion 41, in the parish of Kholo."

If that amendment was not in proper legal form he would be indebted to any hon. member who would put it straight.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said the difference of opinion between the hon. member and himself was this : The hon. member wanted the water supply for Brisbane to come from section 68 on the Brisbane River,

while he (the Minister for Mines and Works) wanted it to come from a point not higher than section 3 in the parish of Kholo. He was informed by the only authority he had at present in the lobby of the House who could give him any information on the subject—namely, the gentleman in charge of the Hydraulic Engineering Department, who was thoroughly conversant with the Brisbane River, and had surveyed it, that the adoption of the point indicated by the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, would destroy the Brisbane River supply scheme. Under such circumstances he could not accept the amendment, but, at the same time, he was quite willing to conserve the rights of the people of Ipswich. Mr. Henderson, as he had just stated, informed him that the acceptance of the amendment would destroy the proposed scheme, but did not profess to be thoroughly positive in his opinion; and under the circumstances, probably the best course to pursue would be to leave the matter till to-morrow, when he would have the advice of Mr. Stewart, the engineer of the Waterworks Board, who had traversed the whole area, but was too unwell to attend that afternoon. He therefore moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Mr. McMASTER said he would like, before the Chairman left the chair, to ascertain whether the Government intended to take any steps to prevent the pollution of the waters of Kedron Brook. He had had some knowledge of that stream for the last twenty-three years, and he could assure hon. members that it was a very important stream, one of the finest around the city of Brisbane. It supplied thousands of people with water, and in dry weather they were dependent upon it, but at present there were no means of getting pure water from that stream below what was known as Alderson's Tannery. Below that place the water was so polluted that it was unusable. There were some slaughter-yards close by, but the principal cause of the pollution of the water was the tannery. The water, in consequence of that pollution, could not be used for domestic or any other purposes, and that was a great hardship to the population of Nundah and the district of Eagle Farm down to the mouth of the Brisbane River, as they were dependent upon that watercourse for all their water, with the exception of what they obtained from their tanks. He did think the Government should take some steps to prevent the water from being polluted.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Why do not the divisional board authorities interfere? It is not Government business at all.

Mr. McMASTER said he did not think the divisional board had the power to do so. It was a question whether the board could deal with the watercourse, as, according to a decision of the Supreme Court, the property-owner on one side owned the land to the centre of the stream, and the property of the person on the other side also came to the centre. There the dispute ended and in the meantime the community suffered. He, therefore, thought that when adopting a scheme of that kind, the Government should take care that such streams should be kept pure for the use of the people, by preventing them from being polluted in such a manner as to render them unfit for use. He would ask the Minister for Mines and Works whether he had any intention of endeavouring to preserve those streams for the use of the people?

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said the only connection he could see between what the hon. gentleman was talking about and the question before the Committee

was that there was water in Kedron Brook and water in the Brisbane River. There was no connection whatever between the two things. The Government had not considered the question of abating the nuisance the hon. gentleman referred to, which had long existed, and was well known to that hon. gentleman. He did not know where that hon. member had got his new-born zeal from that night, but he might have moved in the matter years ago if he had chosen to do so.

Mr. McMASTER: We had no law.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said the Government could not make a law at once. All he had to say was that the Government had not considered the matter, and that, in his opinion, the divisional board should first take action, and if they had no authority they should ask the Government to give them authority.

Question put and passed.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

PUBLIC WORKS LANDS RESUMPTION BILL.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that they did not insist on their amendments in this Bill.

VALUATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

Upon the Order of the Day being read, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole, to further consider this Bill in detail.

On clause 2, as follows:—

"Notwithstanding anything contained in the principal Act, if at the hearing, by the justices, of any appeal against the amount of the valuation of any land any question of law shall arise—

- (1) As to the principle upon which the valuation has been made; or
- (2) As to exemption from valuation; or
- (3) As to the admission or rejection of evidence;

the justices shall state and record their decision upon such question, and if either party is dissatisfied therewith such party may appeal therefrom to the Supreme Court.

"Such appeal shall be in the form of a special case to be agreed upon by the parties, and if they cannot agree, the justices shall settle the special case, and such special case, when so agreed on or settled, shall be transmitted by the appellant to the Supreme Court, and be set down for argument in the same manner as special cases in action in that court.

"The Supreme Court shall hear and adjudicate upon any such special case, and may make such order as to costs as to the court may seem fit."

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said when the Bill was last before the Committee the hon. the leader of the Opposition pointed out that it did not carry out the purposes for which it was introduced. Since then he had had amendments drawn up which, he thought, would make the Bill suit the purpose for which it was intended. Hon. members would recollect that it was introduced in consequence of certain persons at Charters Towers having alleged that they had been illegally assessed for divisional board rates. He knew that there were other people in the colony who had also been rated illegally—who were exempt from rates—and the Bill had been introduced for the purpose of allowing persons who had been rated, and who ought not to have been rated, the right of appeal from the justices. Power was given to the justices to amend any valuation, but if they persisted in rating property which should not be rated, then, by clause 3, an appeal would lie

from them, under the Justices Act, to the Supreme Court. He therefore proposed to substitute clause 2 of the printed amendments for clause 2 of the Bill as originally introduced.

Question—That clause 2 as read stand part of the Bill—put and negatived.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS moved that the following new clause stand clause 2 of the Bill :—

The thirteenth section of the principal Act is hereby repealed, and the following provision substituted in lieu thereof :—

If any person thinks himself aggrieved by the valuation of the annual ratable value of any land whether in respect of—

- (1) The amount of such valuation ;
- (2) The principle on which such valuation has been computed ; or
- (3) The liability of such land or any part thereof to be rated ;

he may in any year, at any time within one month after he has received notice of such valuation, appeal against such valuation to the justices in such court of petty sessions as the Governor in Council may appoint, or, if none is so appointed, to the court of petty sessions held nearest to the land, but no such appeal shall be entertained unless seven days' notice in writing of the appeal is given by the appellant to the local authority.

The local authority may appoint and notify by advertisement in one or more newspapers generally circulating in the district, a day, not being less than thirty-eight days after the delivery of the notices of the valuations, for hearing appeals against valuations.

On the day so appointed and notified, or any later day to which the justices adjourn the hearing, or if no day is so appointed and notified by the local authority, on such day as the justices shall appoint, the justices present shall hear and determine all such appeals, and shall have power to amend any valuation appealed against.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said the clause, as now proposed, was a very great improvement on the previous one, but there was still a serious difficulty—one to which he drew attention when the Bill was last before the Committee—that had not been met. That was as to appeals on the ground of the liability of land to be rated. The liability of land to be rated depended entirely on the mode of its occupation, or rather, the exemption of land from rating depended on the mode of its occupation. Land might be exempted from rating for a part of the year, and be liable to be rated at another part of the year, or land might be properly valued and cease to be ratable before the rate was payable. The question of valuation was a different thing altogether from liability to pay rates ; and he did not see how they were to give an appeal to the justices as to the liability to be rated. All land was ratable unless, from the nature of its occupation, it came within the exemptions under the Act. According to the proposed scheme the question could only be raised within a month after the notice of the valuation was given. At that time the land might, or might not, be exempted from rating. That was quite a separate question. He did not see any objection to empowering the justices in the first instance to entertain the question of exemption from rating, but that ought to be allowed to be done at any time. What was really wanted was a provision that any person claiming to be exempted from liability to be rated might apply to the justices for a declaration of such exemption, and they should be empowered to determine that at any time.

Mr. GRIMES said he wished to call attention to the great inconvenience and loss that parties were put to, in having to attend appeal courts at a distance from the locality. In many cases there were no courts of petty sessions held in the district, and often parties had to travel from twenty to twenty-five miles to attend the court of petty sessions to sustain their appeal. If an amendment could be introduced into the clause

giving power to hold the appeal court in the divisional board's office in divisions where there was no court of petty sessions, it would be a great convenience to all parties. It did not matter so much when alterations had only to be made once in four or five years—in some districts there was a revision only once in four years—but under the Act of 1887 they were forced to have a revision, and to give the right of appeal every year. Under those circumstances it would put appellants and boards to a great deal of expense to take their witnesses so far away. He mentioned the matter in the hope that some amendment would be inserted in the clause giving the boards the right to appoint the place as well as the date.

Mr. McMASTER said that in his opinion there was no necessity for the Bill at all. He thought the object of the first clause was to give persons who felt aggrieved at being assessed the power to appeal from the lower court to the Supreme Court. If a person felt that he had been over-assessed, and the Court of Appeal confirmed the valuation, he thought that he had the right of appealing to the Supreme Court. The Local Government Act gave that power. Under that Act, if a person thought he was too heavily rated, he had the right of appeal to the Supreme Court. His hon. colleague had mentioned the case of All Hallows Convent school when the discussion had taken place on the second reading of the Bill. A case had been tried in Brisbane in connection with that school. The Municipal Council of Brisbane had rated that building, and a majority of the bench decided that the school was exempt from being rated, and ought not to be rated by the council. Then the Municipal Council appealed to the Supreme Court against that decision. His hon. colleague had stated that the Supreme Court had also decided in favour of All Hallows Convent school ; but as a matter of fact, the decision was the reverse. Under the Local Government Act any person who felt aggrieved at being over-assessed could appeal to the Supreme Court, and that was all the present Bill proposed to give. The Municipal Council felt aggrieved at the decision of the bench, and believing that they were justly entitled to levy a rate upon the Convent buildings, they appealed to the Supreme Court, who decided in favour of the council, and ever since they had rated that property. It was proved on that occasion that the school was a school held for the purpose of profit—that there were boarders there, and that there were pupils in that school who paid their board and who paid for their education a certain amount either weekly or quarterly, and that, therefore, the school was established for the purpose of profit. The council claimed the right to levy a rate upon it as a place held for profit, and if the people who held that property had felt aggrieved, in the event of the bench of magistrates deciding against them, they would have had the same right of appeal to the Supreme Court as the Municipal Council had. He had with him in connection with that case the arguments of the leader of the Opposition and the ruling of his honour the judge delivered on that occasion, and the arguments of the leader of the Opposition were exactly similar to those he had used on the second reading of the Bill. It had been decided in the case he had referred to, that the bench of magistrates had no right to decide whether a property was liable to be rated or not, their function simply being to decide whether a property was rated too high or too low. They had no right to say whether a property was exempt from rating.

Mr. STEPHENS said that he only wished to say a word or two. The only alteration he saw

was in the third part of the clause. That was really the only vital difference between the present Act and the proposed amendment. He would have liked to have seen the whole system of valuation altered, and there were many points which should have been amended in the present Bill, which, he supposed, had not been done owing to the Bill being introduced so late in the session. He had believed that the present would only be a short session—in fact, that they would really only pass the Estimates and do very little else; but he was glad to see that the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill had made that amendment he had referred to. If the property happened to be a church, or a school, or something of that sort, in which the question arose as to whether the property was liable to be rated or not, they could now appeal to the Supreme Court. He thought that when a difficulty of that sort arose, the bench of magistrates should get the opinion of the Supreme Court, if necessary, because people did not like to risk the expense of taking such cases into the Supreme Court, though they might like to have the decision of that court. The hon. member for Oxley had suggested that, where there was not a court of petty sessions in the divisional district, the divisional board office should be used as a court of appeal. On the face of it that appeared to be an improvement, but he fancied it would lead to a lot of hole-and-corner work. A couple of local magistrates might meet in the divisional board office and settle a whole batch of matters in rather a hurried manner; and it would be better to have them settled in open court, with a police magistrate on the bench. He intended to support the clause, because he considered that it was a great improvement on the old clause.

Mr. GRIMES said that the police magistrate for the district, could preside over the court even if it were held in the divisional board office. His amendment was suggested with a view of having cases heard nearer home, and curtailing the expenses of appellants.

Mr. POWERS said he thought that the Bill would be appreciated by divisional boards, and he hoped it would pass as nearly as possible in its present shape.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said he was quite willing to accept an amendment in the direction indicated by the hon. member for Oxley. He was not afraid of the hole-and-corner work of which the hon. member for Woollongabba seemed to be afraid. The ratepayers would look after their own interests in the matter of having a sufficient number of justices on the bench; and it would be a great convenience in those divisions in which there were no courts of petty sessions.

Mr. MURRAY said he wished to draw attention to the inconsistency of the present mode of valuation under the Divisional Boards Act. In the case of freeholds, the basis of valuation was the annual value; and in the case of grazing farms it was the rent. Under the present system a freehold of 20,000 acres would be rated at the annual value of £50, but a selection of 20,000 acres would be rated only at the annual value of £4 3s. The rates on grazing farms were scarcely worth collecting, and it was desirable that some alteration should be made.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said he had amendments drafted in the direction indicated some time ago by the hon. member for Woollongabba, and they included the amendments suggested just now by the hon. member for Normanby; but it would be impossible to get them through during the present session; and it was considered advisable, in the meantime, to amend the Act as proposed in the Bill before the Committee.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that the best way to make the amendment indicated by the hon. member for Oxley would be to give power to the Governor in Council to appoint special courts of petty sessions for the purpose of hearing appeals. The following might be inserted:—

The Governor in Council may appoint a court of petty sessions to be held in and for any district for the special purpose of hearing any matters arising under this Act, and for no other purpose.

With respect to the other matter in respect to applications for exemption from liability, that would have to be dealt with by a separate clause. He thought the following would cover the matter:—

Whenever a question arises between a local authority and any person as to the liability of any land to be rated, either of the parties may apply to the justices in that court of petty sessions, which has jurisdiction to hear an appeal from a valuation of the land, to determine the question, and the justices shall hear and determine the question accordingly, and may make such order on the application as they think fit.

Any such order may be varied upon a subsequent application by either party, if the facts have in the meantime been altered.

If the Minister for Works was prepared to accept those amendments, it would be necessary to leave out paragraph (3) and insert the word “or” at the end of paragraph (1).

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said he was willing to accept the amendments.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH moved the insertion of the word “or” at the end of paragraph (1).

Amendment agreed to.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH moved the omission of the words “computed, or the liability of such land or any part thereof to be rated” in paragraphs (2) and (3), with the view of inserting the word “made.”

Amendment agreed to.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH moved the insertion, after the word “authority” at the end of the paragraph, of the following words:—

The Governor in Council may appoint a court of petty sessions to be held in and for any district for the special purpose of hearing any matters arising under this Act, and for no other purpose.

Mr. STEPHENS said that before that was put he might state that it meant a great deal more than appeared on the face of it. In the first place, if they had a court of petty sessions they must have a clerk, as they must have books and keep records and all sorts of things, and there were lots of places where there were divisional board offices, but there was no policeman whose services could be availed of. He believed in giving people as much control as possible over the settlement of their own affairs, but there were many places in his experience where they would only get two to deal with a matter, as there was great difficulty in getting magistrates in some places, and things would not be satisfactory. That was his experience of country divisional boards, and the clause meant a great deal more than appeared on the face of it.

Mr. REES R. JONES said that he had an amendment to propose before that suggested by the leader of the Opposition. Hon. members would see by the clause that any person aggrieved by a valuation—

“May in any year, at any time within one month after he has received notice of such valuation, appeal against such valuation to the justices in such court of petty sessions as the Governor in Council may appoint, or, if none is so appointed, to the court of petty sessions held nearest to the land, but no such appeal shall be entertained unless seven days’ notice in writing of the appeal is given by the appellant to the local authority.

"The local authority may appoint and notify by advertisement in one or more newspapers generally circulating in the district, a day, not being less than thirty-eight days after the delivery of the notices of the valuations, for hearing appeals against valuations."

But then the right of appeal would have gone by at the conclusion of the month. If the hon. member would withdraw his amendment he would move that the words "at any time within one month after he has received notice of such valuation" be omitted, with a view of inserting at the end of that paragraph the words "within one month after he has received notice of such valuation."

Mr. STEPHENS said he would like to ask who was going to fix the time for the sittings of those courts of petty sessions to be appointed under the proposed amendment? How would the magistrates know when to come together? The ordinary courts fixed a certain day of the month for their sittings, but he did not know how the courts to be appointed would work.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. REES R. JONES moved that the words "at any time within one month after he has received notice of such valuation," in subsection 3, be omitted.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. REES R. JONES moved that the words "within one month after he has received notice of such valuation" be inserted at the end of subsection 3.

Amendment put and passed.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH moved that the following words be added at the end of the clause:—

The Governor in Council may appoint a court of petty sessions to be held in and for any district for the special purpose of hearing matters arising under this Act, and for no other purpose.

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

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH moved the insertion of the following new clause, to follow clause 2:—

Whenever a question arises between a local authority and any person as to the liability of any land to be rated, either of the parties may apply to the justices in that court of petty sessions which has jurisdiction to hear an appeal from a valuation of land, to determine the question, and the justices shall hear and determine the question accordingly, and may make such order on the application as they think fit.

Any such order may be varied upon a subsequent application by either party, if the facts have in the meantime been altered.

Clause put and passed.

On the motion of the HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH, the proposed new clause 3 was amended to read as follows—

Appeals to justices against valuations, and applications to justices under the last preceding section shall be deemed to be proceedings before justices within the meaning of the two hundred and twenty-sixth section of the Justices Act of 1886.

Mr. REES R. JONES moved that the following words be added to the clause—

No recognisances shall be required to be entered into by any person applying for appeal against the decision of justices to the Supreme Court.

He said without those words any person wishing to appeal from the decision of justices to the Supreme Court would have to enter into a recognisance under the 227th section of the Justices Act.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it had occurred to him during the discussion that while they allowed justices to sit and hear appeals

against valuations, although they were ratepayers they did not allow judges to do so when they were ratepayers. It was rather an absurd anomaly that because a Supreme Court judge had to pay 5s. rates in a certain district he should not be allowed to sit on appeals from that district. He thought a judge ought to be allowed to sit although he was a ratepayer. He, therefore, proposed to add a clause similar to one in the Valuation Act relating to justices.

A judge of the Supreme Court shall not be disqualified from adjudicating in any case of an appeal against a valuation solely by reason of his being the owner or occupier of rateable land in the district.

There could be no objection to that.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS moved that the following new clause follow the last new clause of the Bill:—

This Act shall commence and take effect on and from the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported the Bill to the House with amendments.

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

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House went into Committee of the Whole further to consider the Supply to be granted to her Majesty.

PACIFIC ISLAND IMMIGRATION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that £11,700 be granted for Pacific Island Immigration. There was a decrease in the total amount asked for of £2,500. It was originally the intention of the Government to discontinue the allowance to the kanaka hospitals at Ingham and Geraldton at the end of the year; but on notification having been made by the hon. member for Herbert that alterations would be made in the management of those hospitals, it had been decided by the Government to continue the expenditure for the next twelve months. Hon. members would observe that the Estimates they were now asked to deal with were payments from trust and special funds.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: What is the balance of the Polynesian fund at the present time?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied that on the 30th June last the balance was £11,241 14s. 7d.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: How does that compare with the previous year's balance?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the balance on the 30th June, 1887, was £8,370 10s. 8d., or a difference, roughly speaking of £3,000 in favour of the present year.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he would be glad if the hon. gentleman could give the Committee some information as to the operations of the hospitals during the past twelve months? He was afraid there was a loss on every one of them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that papers were in the hands of hon. members showing the result of the operations of those hospitals during the year 1887. At Maryborough the expenditure was £1,350 9s., and the revenue received was £924 5s., showing a deficit of £426 4s. At Mackay the expenditure was £2,901 6s. 3.

and the revenue £2,838 6s., showing a deficit of £63 0s. 3d. At Ingham the expenditure was £1,104 5s. 6d., and the revenue £712 3s. 6d., showing a deficit of £392 2s. On the Johnstone River—that was at Geraldton—the expenditure was £1,276 10s. 3d., and the revenue was £537 10s., showing a deficit of £719 0s. 3d. The total deficit was £1,600 6s. 6d.

Mr. O'CONNELL said that he had understood the Colonial Secretary to say that the hospitals at Ingham and Geraldton were going to be carried on for twelve months longer.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the hon. member for Musgrave was perfectly correct in thinking that it was the intention of the Government, owing to representations made by the hon. member for Herbert, to continue to support the hospitals at Geraldton and Ingham for another year. That hon. gentleman had said that they would be better managed and also that they would be more self-supporting than in the past. The hon. member for Herbert had shown that if Parliament did not grant that money very great harm would be done to the unfortunate kanakas, and therefore, owing to the hon. gentleman's representations, the Government had determined to continue the grant to these two hospitals.

Mr. O'CONNELL said if those hospitals could be made self-supporting it took away part of his objection to the vote. When he had been Pacific Islanders' inspector at Bundaberg, where there were as many islanders as in any other district in the colony, the islanders had always been treated in the local hospitals on the plantations, instead of being sent to a separate hospital. In the general hospital there was a small ward for kanakas, but they objected very much to being taken to the central hospital, preferring to be treated on the plantations. The cost of those hospitals, to the Pacific Island fund, he found, came altogether to £19,273 16s. 3d., and there was a deficit last year of £1,600 6s. 6d. in the working of these hospitals. It was stated in the report that the fund was overdrawn on account of that large deficit in the working of the hospitals. The amount to the credit of the return passages fund was £11,241 14s. 7d., and the liability on account of that fund was £16,790 10s. 6d. He thought that the districts in which the hospitals were should pay for the keeping up of those institutions, and that the other districts should not be made to help to keep them by the moneys they paid in to the fund. When he was acting as Inspector of Pacific Islanders, he had had to write to the office asking for some assistance to be granted to islanders who were out of their time, and in no one's employment, and he had received in reply the most insulting letters from the head of the department, Mr. Woodward, that ever any man had received in the world. One year he had spent between £4 and £5 in relieving those men, and Mr. Woodward had charged him with having spent that money for the sake of shielding some of the planters in the district from having to provide hospital accommodation for their islanders. It was owing to the treatment he had received that he had resigned, and he was glad he had done so. His was not a peculiar case, as he had since spoken to many other inspectors with whom he was acquainted, and they had all the same complaint to make; so that showed that his was not the only case of that kind. He could not agree with the Government in allowing that fund to be used for the purpose of giving advantages to certain districts, and if they were going to allow the Ingham and Johnstone hospitals to carry on at the expense of the general fund, he did not see what right they had to refuse to do the same with Maryborough and

other districts. There was no doubt that if it had not been for the excessive expenditure in the hospitals there would have been no need for increasing the capitation fee from 30s. to £3. In the district he represented they most decidedly objected to having to contribute to the hospitals in the other districts.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, with reference to what the hon. member had said in respect of the conduct of Mr. Woodward, that if the charge was absolutely formulated, of course, the Government would consider it; but, unless the charge was specifically formulated the Government were not called upon to offer any opinion upon the matter. With regard to the conduct of that officer, no charge had ever been made against him except the vague charge just made by the hon. member. With respect to the hospitals at Maryborough and elsewhere being done away with, no representations had ever been made to the Government as had been made by the hon. member for Herbert in connection with the hospitals at Ingham and Geraldton. If such representations had been made they would have been considered; but in the case of the Maryborough and Mackay hospitals no such representations had been made, otherwise similar concessions might have been made for the next twelve months, on the understanding that the cost of maintenance of those hospitals was to be reduced. On that distinct understanding such a concession would have been made had the same representations been made with regard to the hospitals at Maryborough, Bundaberg, and Mackay; or, if they were made in the future, they would receive the same consideration as the hospitals at Ingham and Geraldton.

Mr. O'CONNELL said the charge he brought against Mr. Woodward was, treating his subordinate officers in a manner in which no gentleman should be treated. If that was an indefinite charge it covered a great deal. The hon. Colonial Secretary could form a pretty good idea of the sort of letter that would make a man get up and swear he would leave the department, and that was the sort of letter Mr. Woodward used to write to him. No Government official should be allowed to almost accuse a subordinate of being a thief without allowing the subordinate officer some redress. He brought the matter under the notice of the late Government, but did not get any satisfaction.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said he did not remember receiving any communication from the hon. member on the subject, though every communication of that kind was dealt with by him personally while he was in office. The hon. member must have intended to write, but had forgotten to do so.

Mr. O'CONNELL said it was just before the hon. gentleman left for England, and he remembered using the words "Mr. Woodward must take me to be a rogue, or a fool, or both." He supposed the letter was in the office still.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that he was the head of the department in which Mr. Woodward was chief clerk, and he was there to defend that officer until a definite charge which could be proved was levelled against him. So long as he was the Ministerial head of the department he would see that neither Mr. Woodward nor any other officer of the department was attacked by a sidewind. On the other hand he would investigate any definite charge formulated against any officer in the department over which he presided.

Mr. O'CONNELL said that the passage from Queensland to the islands and back was computed by the Act of 1880 to occupy thirty days, but under the regulations vessels had

to take food for four months and a-half, though it was well known they got food from the natives when they reached the islands. Another thing: It was necessary under the regulations for the shipwrights' surveyor's report to be in the Brisbane office before the license was issued, instead of the inspector being trusted to get the surveyor's report, and issue the license when the ship was ready for sea. Vessels were often detained for a week or ten days by that regulation, which was a gross piece of absurdity and red tape. He had gone to the expense of telegraphing the shipwrights' surveyor's report verbatim to Brisbane, so as not to delay the vessel. That was the fault of Mr. Woodward insisting on having the original report before issuing the license.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that it was not Mr. Woodward's fault that vessels were delayed for the reason stated by the hon. member. So many vessels had gone to sea in an unseaworthy condition, notwithstanding the certificates of shipwright surveyors, that he was determined not to allow vessels to leave until he was personally satisfied that everything was regular. If anyone was to blame in the matter he (Sir S. W. Griffith) was prepared to take the blame. He made it his business to personally supervise the licensing of vessels, and he saw that everything was regular before he allowed any vessel to leave.

Mr. O'CONNELL said that the inspector was in a better position than anyone in Brisbane to see that the certificate of the shipwrights' surveyor was a true certificate, because he could go on board and see for himself whether the vessel was in proper order or not.

Mr. MORGAN said he wished to refer to a case which occurred recently at Bundaberg, where a Government agent committed suicide in the sight of the captain and the crew of a labour vessel. It appeared from the inquiry that was held that the man was suffering from *delirium tremens*; but he (Mr. Morgan) had been under the impression that a strict watch was kept on the liquor carried in labour vessels. It appeared, however, that the man had a case of whisky under his bunk; but the witnesses at the inquiry stated that they had not noticed any sign of liquor on the man. He thought that the captain and the crew showed great cowardice when the Government agent committed suicide; and he wished to know what had become of the captain, and what were the regulations with regard to the shipment of liquor.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that at the present time, and he hoped for all time, the captain was disqualified from commanding any Queensland labour vessel. With regard to allowing liquor to be put on board, that was a matter that had never been satisfactorily settled. Both the last Government and the previous Government tried to deal with the question, but the difficulty was so great, when vessels went from port to port, that all attempts to put down the abuse had not been even fairly successful up to the present time.

Mr. O'CONNELL said that a great deal depended on the character of the Government agent. That officer was put on board to look after the captain, and the captain in the case referred to was disqualified, because he did not properly look after the agent. That was the actual position of that case. The man sent up to look after the captain and crew of that boat became such an incapable drunkard that the captain had to be sacked because he did not look after him and keep him from getting too much drink. If the Government were more careful in their selection of the class of men put upon those ships, and gave them a little more

money, the position would then be worth keeping, and there would be no such cases as that of Mr. Murray, of the "Ariel," to be recorded. They knew that if there was only a quart of grog on those boats, the Government agent would be given it in order that there might be no falling-out.

Mr. MORGAN said those men might be a low class of men and addicted to drink, but if there was no drink on board the ships they could not get it. The Colonial Secretary had told them it was a very difficult matter to regulate, on account of the ships calling in at various ports, but in the case to which he had alluded the liquor was shipped at Bundaberg, the port of departure, and there had been apparently no effort made to check the quantity of liquor shipped on board that vessel. So far as any evidence of supervision was concerned, there might have been twenty cases instead of one on that ship. One was sufficient to put that man into the state he was in when he committed the deed, and if it had not been, possibly a second case would have been forthcoming. A very effective check should be put upon the shipping of liquor on those vessels from Queensland ports, because if those men were of a low class, as had been represented, those who wanted to get islanders would be likely to have additional facilities for catching those islanders if the Government agent became incapable from drink. The Government should place great restrictions upon the shipping of liquor on those ships, even for the use of the crew.

Mr. O'CONNELL said that, so far as a restriction upon the amount of grog shipped on those vessels was concerned, the immigration agent at the port of departure had to sign a list of the stores, and to see that the ship was properly victualled, and there was a certain amount of restriction exercised in that way. It was not that those men were a low class of men, but, some how or other, they were addicted to drink, and probably that was the result of their enforced idleness on board those ships.

Mr. MORGAN asked if an officer had been appointed to fill the vacancy in the office of the Pacific Island Inspector at Mackay?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the gentleman who was second in charge at Mackay had been promoted to the position.

Mr. MORGAN: Has the vacancy in the position of second in charge been filled?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I understand it has been filled by the appointment of a Mr. Nixon.

Mr. MORGAN said he would like to know if he was the Mr. Arthur Nixon who had been previously connected with the South Sea Island trade in the position of Government agent on one of the vessels engaged in the trade?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that Mr. Nixon had been employed as a labour agent some years ago.

Mr. MORGAN said as that was so he assumed that the gentleman was the Mr. Arthur Nixon who played so important a part during the recent general election in issuing to the world a pamphlet which he called "Facts to Know," but which he (Mr. Morgan) called "Falsehoods to avoid." He had had some correspondence with that gentleman during the election. Mr. Nixon had written to him offering to supply him with unlimited "Facts to Know" very cheap—he offered to supply them for nothing. He had also assured himself, and he believed other newspaper proprietors, that he had his "facts" from Mr. Hamilton, the member for Cook, and he seemed to think that was a sufficient guarantee of their accuracy. He (Mr. Morgan) wished to know whether the officer

second in charge at Mackay was identical with Mr. Arthur Nixon, because if he was it would be interesting to know whether in his previous connection with the department he had proved himself such a capable and efficient officer as to warrant his appointment to the office he now held?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had not the privilege of the acquaintance of Mr. Nixon, nor had he read his "Facts to Know," though he had heard a great deal about them. He was not prepared to say whether he was the author of them or not.

Mr. MORGAN: He is.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman seemed to know a great deal more about it than he did. He believed the gentleman had been employed previously as a labour agent, though he did not know by whom he had been appointed, whether by the last Government or the Government that preceded them. But whether he was the same Mr. Nixon or not, he did not see very much in the contention of the hon. member.

Mr. MORGAN: I simply asked for information.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not know whether it was the same man, or whether, if it was, what he wrote was fable, fiction, or fact. He had not the pleasure or honour of the gentleman's acquaintance.

Mr. GROOM said that it was quite true, as stated by the hon. member for Warwick, that the gentleman whose name had been mentioned was the author of "Facts to Know," and, he believed, of something else as well, as he had written a series of letters sent to a number of newspapers, headed "Political gossip," and containing the gravest lies and foulest slanders upon members of that House published in any newspaper in the world. The most scandalous lies and slanders were circulated by that man upon members now sitting in that House—members who had devoted years to the service of the public of the colony, and who had occupied the highest positions it was possible to occupy in that House. He said it was a disgrace that such a man should be admitted into the public service, and that the gentleman whom he had so foully slandered should be called upon to vote him his salary. He had had some of those documents sent to him, and precious productions they were. He consigned them to the waste-paper basket, and it would have been a good thing if the proprietors of other newspapers had treated Mr. Nixon's productions in the same way. Those lies and slanders were circulated in every possible direction, and were aimed not at members sitting on the Government side, but on the Opposition side of the House, who were at that time Ministers of the Crown. What was more, those disgraceful libels and scandalous slanders were written within the walls of that House. He had been called upon to act as Speaker during the interregnum, and he was surprised to find that man in possession of one of the rooms in that building and surrounded by sixty or seventy volumes of *Hansard*. He inquired how it was that a stranger was allowed within the precincts of the House, and he found he made use of the library, and that one of the boy messengers of the House was actually employed in carrying his slanders to the printing office from which they were issued. Those slanders were, as he had stated, against Ministers of the Crown, against gentlemen occupying the highest positions in the country, and for those blackguard slanders that man was now placed in the public service, and the gentle-

men whom he had attacked were called upon to vote his salary. He did not envy the Colonial Secretary having such men in his service.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was not at all sure that the advocacy of truth on the part of a journalist was a qualification for high office. In saying that he was speaking generally, and not of any particular case. With regard to the appointment referred to, the Government was, of course, responsible for it. If it was a bad one, it was a bad one, and he dared say it was not the first, nor would it be the last, bad appointment made by a Government. At the same time he did not know why the two members for Darling Downs, who were journalists, should make an attack upon a fellow-writer. He thought the attack would have come with better grace from someone else. He knew nothing about Mr. Nixon's character or conduct during the election, and had never, so far as he was aware, read a single article that gentleman had written, though, of course, all who read the newspapers read a great many things of the author of which they had no knowledge. So far as attacks on Ministers were concerned, "the fierce light that beats upon a throne" was one of the things they had to put up with. He did not believe in rewarding political hirelings by giving them positions in the public service, though it was done in other parts of the world. It was not a good thing. But so far as Mr. Nixon was concerned, he did not know what that gentleman had done to justify what had been said of him by the hon. member for Toowoomba. The man certainly had held a previous appointment—whether it was made by the late Government or not he was not sure—and he knew nothing against him with respect to his record while in the public service. Whether because his political proclivities had led him to make attacks on members on the other side, if that were true, that should debar him from employment in the public service, he was not prepared to say. They could not get colourless men in the Civil service; there was no doubt that all officers had their own opinions. Mr. Nixon had held an appointment before in the service to which he now belonged, and he (the Colonial Secretary) did not know that he had done anything discreditable while in that position.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said the previous appointment of that officer was not made by the late Government. He knew nothing about his conduct as a labour agent, but he did know this, that that officer was a man who entirely sympathised with kidnapping and the abuses in the labour trade, and that was a man who was appointed to supervise it. He knew this, also, that the man who wrote those things was a political assassin of the lowest type, little better than a hired Italian stiletto-man. He (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) would just as soon shake hands with a man who would take money to stick a stiletto in a man behind his back, as with a person who did the things that that man had done. He entirely deprecated that appointments to the public service should come and go with the Government. But he maintained that if a man of that character was put in office as a reward for such services as that man's he ought distinctly to understand that his tenure of office was only so long as his patrons remained in office. He (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) had said that before, about seven or eight years ago, about a person who, it was stated, would be appointed to a certain office, but the man was never appointed. If he had been he (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) would have kept his word.

Mr. ARCHER said he did not object at all to the language of the hon. gentleman who had just addressed the Committee, in calling a man

a political assassin, who used slander as a political weapon against his political opponents. But he was surprised that the hon. gentleman appeared to be so affected by such contemptible things. If the Government knew when they appointed that man that his character was such as had been described, they were of course responsible. The hon. member for Toowoomba, in speaking on the matter, said the gentlemen who were attacked were disgraced by the slanders. He (Mr. Archer) contended that they were not in any way disgraced, and he was utterly astounded that the leader of the Opposition, who spoke with some emotion on the subject, should be so affected by such things.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I am not, but I do not like to see such men rewarded out of the public funds.

Mr. ARCHER said he would just say one word more, and that was that other people had sometimes to suffer worse attacks than that, and they did not say anything at all about them. Members on the side of the House on which he sat had been accused by the leader of the Opposition of being scoundrels. In his published address to the electors of North Brisbane—a lengthy address, which he (Mr. Archer) read with care but could not now refer to particularly—the hon. gentleman stated that the party which followed him was the party that administered the affairs of the country for the benefit of the people, while those on the other side were the party who administered the affairs of the country for the benefit of their friends. That was the lowest kind of attack imaginable, and from a gentleman who occupied the highest position in the Government of the colony. The hon. gentleman actually described all those who disagreed with him in politics as men who administered the affairs of the country for the benefit of their friends.

Mr. SAYERS: This item proves that.

Mr. ARCHER said that was another statement made by an hon. member on that side of the Committee, and if he cared one fig for the hon. member's opinion about him, he would be very angry at what he said. He had a very high regard for the talent and position of the hon. gentleman who led the Opposition, but he had never complained that he attacked him, along with other members, in the way they had been attacked in his published address to the electors of North Brisbane. Yet, when he was made the object of a similar kind of attack the hon. gentleman called the persons who made it political assassins. The hon. gentleman had himself made an attack on a political party, which showed that, in his opinion, that party was guilty of moral corruption. He (Mr. Archer) had taken very great care when speaking in public never to accuse his opponents of corruption, and he thought the plan of using such expressions as those to which he had referred with regard to political opponents was a great mistake. It was a still greater mistake to employ others to do so, and if that man had been paid to do that kind of thing, he had a very low opinion of those who paid him. He had not the slightest sympathy with men being rewarded for that kind of work. On the contrary, he thought it was very objectionable, and should always set his face against anything of the sort.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH asked who would have thought that a passage in his electioneering address would be made the subject of a lecture by the hon. member for Rockhampton, because exception was taken to the appointment of a Government officer. That address was issued six months ago, and the hon. gentleman had not quoted from it, except from memory, and then very inaccurately; and from it he inferred that he (Sir S. W. Griffith) had accused him and his friends of corruption. If

the hon. gentleman had read the words he had used he would have seen that he was describing the Conservative party in a way that had been recognised in all parts of the world for a great many years—ever since there had been a Conservative party. Very much the same words had been used by Mr. Gladstone and many other leaders of the Liberal party in England. It was a well-known distinction—that the Conservative party considered a section of the community instead of the whole. That was the difference between the Conservative party and the Liberal party.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It depends very much on the size of the section.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said very likely. Sometimes an oligarchy was so small that it had to extend its borders to take in a few more, and they might then extend their sympathies a little, but they never covered the whole of the people. The hon. member for Rockhampton had actually taken advantage of that opportunity to lecture him, in order to divert an attack on the Government for making a disreputable appointment.

Mr. ARCHER said the hon. gentleman was entirely mistaken. He had not taken advantage of that opportunity to give him a lecture. He had not given a lecture at all, but had simply risen to explain that he was surprised that the hon. gentleman should appear to be moved by the mean aspersions of a man of the kind described—a vulgar assassin, who wrote anonymously, and who was beneath his notice. He had now the extract from the hon. gentleman's speech, and he found that his memory was pretty correct. The hon. gentleman said:—

"You are often invited to believe that there are no political parties in this colony. I maintain, however, that there are and always have been in Queensland, as in most other countries where stagnation does not prevail, two parties, actuated by widely different aims, and regarding public matters from widely different points of view. The immediate objects of the two parties may, of course, vary, with the circumstances of the country, but the difference is everywhere the same. The one party regards every matter from the point of view, 'What good will this do to us and our friends?' The other, the Liberal party, ask, 'What good will this do to the people generally?'"

That was one of the hon. gentleman's political expressions—not spoken, but, which was worse, written soberly. He talked about one party being the Conservative party, but he knew perfectly well that the party on that side of the House had introduced more liberal measures than ever he had. But that was a matter apart. He had only to say that he did not believe until that night that the hon. gentleman could be so affected by such a low attack as he said had been made upon him.

Mr. HAMILTON said the leader of the Opposition had stated that Mr. Nixon was a political assassin. He had made that statement from his place in that House with regard to a gentleman in the Civil service. That statement was untrue. It was based chiefly upon the statement that Mr. Nixon had written a pamphlet entitled "Facts to Know," and the Premier, in his place in that House, had justified every one of those attacks. He had challenged any one of them to be denied, and no one could say that they were untrue. He (Mr. Hamilton) said they were true. Every one of them had been proved up to the hilt, and could not be denied. The hon. member made a charge against a man of being a political assassin. But had they not heard charges made by members of that House—foul charges against gentlemen's characters? He would not say who those assassins were—they were very well known. Was not the leader of the Opposition part owner of the *Telegraph*?—and did they not know the untrue statements that

had been made repeatedly in that paper? Did they not know that members were made to say things they never uttered? Did they not recollect that during the time the elections were going on how the Premier was misrepresented, and statements utterly untrue made about him? Now, the leader of the Opposition said he had reason to believe that Mr. Nixon's sympathies were entirely with kidnapping. He had no reason whatever for believing anything of the kind. He knew perfectly well that Mr. Nixon was a Government agent under his own Government. At that time Mr. Douglas was Colonial Secretary, and he requested Mr. Nixon to keep a log-book while he was in the South Seas. On his return, Mr. Nixon presented his log-book to Mr. Douglas; there was a meeting of the Cabinet, of which the leader of the Opposition formed one, and it was resolved to publish the revelations contained in that report, which would be seen in a paper of which Mr. Douglas was owner at that time. Mr. Nixon was the person who objected to kidnapping, and sounded the first note of warning that if something was not done to see that the South Sea Islanders were treated more fairly and leniently the outrages would occur that did occur subsequently. He had been informed that during his absence from the House the late Speaker, Mr. Groom, had stated that one of the messengers was employed by Mr. Nixon to obtain *Hansard* for him. That statement was not true. It had also been stated by the hon. member for Warwick, Mr. Morgan, that Mr. Nixon had used *Hansard* for the purpose of obtaining extracts.

Mr. MORGAN: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. HAMILTON said he had been told so. He did not see why hon. members should be afraid of *Hansard*. It was an accurate report of the proceedings of the House, and he did not see why hon. members should be afraid of what appeared in it. He had employed Mr. Nixon on several occasions to collate some matters for himself, and he did not see in what way he was wrong in doing so. Every statement he had made in that House or outside of it he was prepared to repeat, and he was perfectly certain that no one could refute any statement he had ever made. He challenged anyone to prove that any statement Mr. Nixon had made was untrue. That gentleman had challenged the *Telegraph*, time after time, to specify any one instance in which he had stated what was not true, but, instead of doing so they attacked him and lied about him.

Mr. COWLEY said he would like to say a few words about the action the Colonial Secretary had taken with regard to the closing of the hospitals at Geraldton and Ingham. Strong recommendations had been made by the people of those districts that those hospitals should be kept on for one year more, because they thought they would be able to make revenue and expenditure meet, or very nearly so. The planters were prepared to take the management of those institutions into their hands, and, without interfering in any way with the comfort or care of the inmates, to keep the expenditure down. They hoped that with an increased revenue they would be able to make revenue and expenditure meet, and that there would be no extra drain on the Polynesian Fund. Another strong reason was, that since the establishment of the hospitals in those districts, the death-rate among the islanders had been reduced by about 50 per cent. That was one of the chief grounds on which it was considered desirable that those institutions should be maintained. Although the revenue and expenditure had not met, and there was a constantly-increasing debit every year against those institutions, still the general revenue

was not likely to suffer. The balance of £11,000 which now stood to the credit of the Hospital Fund was more than sufficient to meet all requirements. Another reason was, that as a great many more islanders were coming into those districts, it was absolutely necessary that care should be taken of them, because the death-rate was always greater among new arrivals than among islanders who had been some years in the colony. It was on those considerations that the Government had taken the action they had done, and he sincerely trusted it would meet with the approval and sanction of the Committee.

Mr. MORGAN asked, under what circumstances Mr. Nixon left the department on the previous occasion?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had inquired of Mr. Woodward, who informed him that he did not know the circumstances under which Mr. Nixon resigned. He was not, therefore, in a position to answer the hon. member.

Mr. MORGAN said it had been made abundantly clear during the debate that Mr. Nixon's appointment to the position of assistant inspector at Mackay, at a salary of £300, was simply a reward for political services. And as there was a very strong feeling amongst some hon. members that Mr. Nixon was not a fit person to hold that position, he would move that the vote be reduced by the sum of £300, which he saw from the schedule was the amount of salary paid to Mr. Nixon.

Mr. HAMILTON said he could inform the Committee under what circumstances Mr. Nixon severed his connection with the service. Mr. Nixon resigned. One hon. member took advantage of his position in the House to attack Mr. Nixon, and next morning Mr. Nixon called upon him at his hotel with a horsewhip which he used on that member's back with very good effect. He (Mr. Hamilton) had seen a letter from the Hon. John Douglas, the then Premier, written soon after Mr. Nixon's resignation, in which he stated that he was perfectly satisfied with Mr. Nixon's conduct during the time he was in the service.

Mr. UNMACK said he did not know Mr. Nixon, or anything about him, but if anything could show the Committee that Mr. Nixon was unworthy to be employed in the Civil service of the colony, it was the extraordinary statement that had just been made by the hon. member for Cook.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. member for Warwick had now brought matters to a tangible issue. The question now was that, in the opinion of the hon. member for Warwick, an improper appointment had been made by the Government, and the easiest way to settle the question was to put it to the vote.

Mr. SAYERS said the hon. member for Warwick must have a great amount of courage. That Civil servant might to-morrow attack him at his hotel.

Mr. HAMILTON said he thought more members ought to be treated in that way.

Mr. SAYERS said the man who attacked him in that way, whether a member of Parliament or a Civil servant, would find himself in a very peculiar position. He knew nothing about the question beyond what had fallen from the hon. member; but it seemed monstrous that a man who had attacked a member of Parliament, for doing nothing more than his duty, according to the account of the hon. member for Cook, should be appointed to a position in the Civil service of the colony. He did not speak for himself, for he was not afraid of any Civil servant, but the very fact of appointing a man to a position in the Civil service who had committed

such an outrage, was something monstrous. From what had been said it appeared that Mr. Nixon was the author of a certain pamphlet. That pamphlet had been distributed broadcast over the colony, and to all the newspapers in the colony; but until that night he had not been aware who the author of that pamphlet was.

Mr. HAMILTON: The Premier stated that long ago.

Mr. SAYERS said the Premier had not stated his name as far as he was aware. That information had been given him to-night.

Mr. HAMILTON: The Premier justified it.

Mr. SAYERS said that was immaterial to him—he had his own opinion. It seemed that certain members, when a question cropped up, ran outside to find other hon. members and tell them what had taken place. They ought to tell the truth.

Mr. HAMILTON: That is not a fact.

Mr. SAYERS said the Premier had never mentioned anything in connection with what the hon. member for Cook had stated.

Mr. HAMILTON: He did it two months ago, at the opening of the session.

Mr. SAYERS said the question had been mooted by the hon. member for Warwick and the hon. member for Toowoomba, and it had nothing whatever to do with the leader of the Opposition, who had never made any remark, or mentioned the name of the hon. member for Cook. It appeared that Mr. Nixon was one of the gentlemen who had received appointments from the present Government; and if he were the writer of those pamphlets, it would appear to the public that he had got his reward; and his reward, according to the Estimates, was £40 more as Assistant Inspector of Polynesian Islanders at Mackay than the inspector was receiving. Mr. Nixon was in receipt of £250 as assistant inspector, while the inspector only received £210. There was something in that which he would like to understand before that Estimate went through, and he should support the amendment of the hon. member for Warwick unless some information were given. He took it, as an opponent of the black labour and slavery, that there was a certain amount of truth in the statement, and he was going to read an article from the *Bundaberg Star*, which might be truth, or it might be lies. The article appeared in the issue of 7th January, 1888, and was as follows:—

"We have known for a long time that the McIlwraithian party would stoop to almost any device in order to gain a political point; and we have frequently known them to be 'bowled out' in such. But it has been reserved for one of their own particularly chosen myrmidons to give them over entirely to the enemy; and to Mr. Arthur Nixon, of Victoria street, Gregory terrace, Brisbane, this most singular distinction rightfully belongs. By yesterday's mail the editor of this journal received the following letter from this Mr. Nixon:—'Sir, I enclose you an article entitled "Political Gossip," which I have written in the interests of the McIlwraith party. Of course there are two sides to every political question, and our side has been led to believe that you are not averse to support it. If acceptable, I will send you once a week a "Political Gossip" letter containing the latest metropolitan political news gratis—'

The gentleman seemed to be liberal in giving his opinions—

"The only stipulation being that you forward me copies of your journal so that I may be posted up in the local thought of your district. I may mention that I write at the instigation of the "Opposition whip." Kindly let me know at once whether my letters are acceptable or not. I am, etc."

The editor then went on to say:—

"Was ever such a clean bowl out as this? The letter is before us, and we hasten to assure Mr. Nixon that his communication is 'as welcome as the flowers in May,' and further that we will gladly let in the light of day on any other of the questionable electioneering

dodges of the Opposition party. Mr. Nixon's knowledge of Queensland journals must be as limited as his presumption is large, if he thinks we would ever forego our allegiance to the Liberal party—the side of progress and public good; which aims at the full development and settlement of the country by the white race. The letter intended for publication is headed 'Election Gossip,' is utterly worthless from the standpoint of literary merit, and has clearly never fallen from the pen of any professional journalist. Indeed, the letter itself contains the proof of the status of the writer, who with the arrogance of amateurship, couldn't refrain from writing of himself. Mr. A. Nixon (so the letter runs) wrote a letter to the *Courier* in answer to the insinuations and assertions on the black labour question promulgated by the *Telegraph*, Mr. Nixon having been, it transpires, a 'Government agent' on a slaver named 'The Bobtail Nag.' This letter, which he has also been kind enough to enclose for us to publish, endeavours, clumsily enough, to throw back the onus of the black labour abuses on to Sir Samuel Griffith. But to resume—'Election Gossip' next reviews the Ministerial trip to the North; which it characterises as a 'magnificent electioneering dodge,' but which we would submit, if a 'dodge' is hardly so palpable a one as Mr. Nixon's endeavour to convert the *Star* to the side of Mellwraith and syndicates. Then comes an adverse criticism on Mr. Hodgkinson's appointment as Minister for Mines. Then it accuses the Premier of having—during his regime—utterly ignored the mining industry; and in its closing paragraph states that half the Orange vote will go to the Mellwraithians. The large amount of other matter given as 'election gossip' isn't worth review; the letter itself belongs to the very lowest order of claptrap, lacking the literary elegance which is indispensable in such manifestos. The article, as a whole, is a base and untruthful attack upon the political character of the Premier, and we are justified in the thought that Sir Samuel's career and reputation are such as to disarm even the most venomous yelpings of these literary jackals. As we have remarked before, we were pleased to hear from Mr. Nixon, and shall be pleased to hear from him again—when he has any other portions of his party's policy to disclose. We are further glad to have had an opportunity of testifying to the 'Opposition whip,' what extremely astute electioneering agents he has succeeded in retaining; and we would like to know what rewards would be given to such faithful servants were Sir Thomas Mellwraith to be again restored to power. We are also grateful for the insight, generally, which has been given us to the ways—'dark and devious'—of the Opposition; and we trust that the electors of a free and enlightened country will never allow themselves to be gulled into supporting any party which depends on a basis of political morality so rotten, worthless, and insecure. Mr. Nixon shall certainly have a copy of to-day's *Star*, to 'post him up in local political thought.'"

One of the rewards given to such a faithful servant was that he received an appointment as assistant inspector at Mackay at a salary of £40 more than the inspector was receiving.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I will explain that.

Mr. SAYERS said that he had known nothing about that matter until he had come into the Committee that night. He had never heard one word on the subject, except what he had heard at the opening of Parliament, and he had never heard Mr. Nixon's name mentioned until it had cropped up that night. He had had no more idea that the writer of that pamphlet had been appointed to that position than he had that Parliament had ceased to exist. Unless some information were given to him of which he was not aware he would support the amendment of the hon. member for Warwick, and, if necessary, he would move the reduction of the salary pound by pound. If the money was for services rendered to the then Opposition whip—if the money of the taxpayers was to be devoted to that purpose—he would sit up forty-eight hours before he would let the vote go through. He thought that the conduct of that man was a contempt of the Assembly, and he would now read the 45th clause of the Constitution Act. That clause provided for the punishment of anyone "assaulting, obstructing, or insulting any member in his

coming to, or going from the House, or on account of his behaviour in Parliament, or endeavouring to compel any member by force, insult, or menace, to declare himself in favour of or against any proposition or matter depending, or expected to be brought before either House." If what he had heard from some hon. members on the Government benches really took place that man had no right, for that reason alone, to be appointed to any position in the Government service. There were gentlemen belonging to the Civil service sitting in the gallery night after night, and if an hon. member who was physically weak thought it his duty to make some remarks about the head of a department there was no reason why that hon. member should be horsewhipped by a Civil servant who objected to those remarks. He (Mr. Sayers) might physically be able to take another man with one hand and throw him over a fence; but he should consider himself a thorough coward if he were to do so. There would be no honour or courage in that. True courage was to listen to a man and refute his arguments if possible, but there was no courage in a physically strong man blackening the eyes of a man who was physically weak, and knocking him to pieces in consequence of what he had said.

Mr. HAMILTON: We are not talking about hon. members fighting.

Mr. SAYERS said the matter was alluded to in connection with a Civil servant and a gentleman who was a member of that Assembly. He contended that it was no proof of courage for a physically strong Civil servant, who might be an athlete, a pugilist, or a wrestler, to knock a member down for something he had heard that member say while sitting in the gallery set apart for Civil servants. It was a proof that the man was a coward, because he was taking advantage of his strength. In the case to which he had referred, the man must have known that he had a certain advantage, because it would be against all rules for a man who was a member of the Assembly to stand up and fight.

Mr. DALRYMPLE rose to a point of order. Was the subject of discussion a question of ethics? The hon. member was giving the Committee a lecture.

The CHAIRMAN said he hoped the hon. member would confine himself to the question.

Mr. SAYERS said he was speaking on the vote before the Committee, and he was very much obliged to the hon. member for Mackay for his interruption, because he was getting thirsty when the hon. member rose. He maintained that if members of that House were to be attacked by Civil servants for what they said in that Chamber, it was monstrous, and it was a thing that the electors would not tolerate. It seemed that certain hon. members looked upon the man Nixon as a hero. He thought that hon. members went there to advance the interests of the country, not to be assaulted, if they were physically weak, by Civil servants paid by the country. He protested against the appointment of a Civil servant who had horsewhipped an hon. member—if what had been stated to him was correct—for something that hon. member had said in the House.

Mr. HAMILTON: He slandered him.

Mr. SAYERS said that what one person might look upon as a slander might not be considered so by another person, but there was no doubt that a man who horsewhipped an hon. member for an expression that had fallen from him had no right to be reappointed to the Government service. It was stated by certain gentlemen in the colony that five years ago the Griffith party made a great catspaw of the black labour

question, and—as was also stated by the Press—that at the last election they tried to use the same catspaw, but that the thing had ceased to exist—that was, the black labour question. Now, he thought when the country came to know that a Civil servant had assaulted a member of the House and was then appointed to a lucrative position in the Government service, they would disapprove of it. During the late election Mr. Nixon, according to the *Bundaberg Star*, acted under the auspices of the Opposition whip and circulated those documents broadcast over the colony. He did not know whether the article appeared in the *Bundaberg Star* by authority, and it remained for the gentleman accused to say whether that took place or not. He believed that the *Star* was a Liberal paper, and was a good one at that. Still it made a certain assertion. It stated that a certain thing appeared in a letter sent to them, and they copied the letter verbatim. He did not know whether that ever took place, but he had read the letter to the House, and left it to hon. gentlemen to say whether such was the fact, or whether Mr. Nixon wrote the letter. He believed the *Bundaberg Star* was not the only paper written to. There were two proprietors of newspapers in the Committee who had stated that they received similar letters from Mr. Nixon, and if he was the man mentioned in the vote, he (Mr. Sayers) was prepared to oppose the vote as far as he possibly could, and if it was carried against him he would leave the country to decide who was right and who was wrong.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, with regard to the amendment, if it was moved in the way proposed by the hon. member for Warwick—namely, a reduction of £300, his object would not be served. The motion should be to reduce the amount by £250. The £210 set down for an inspector at Mackay was really a salary of £400, £140 was given from the immigration funds, and there was £50 allowance for forage. If the hon. member wanted to get a test vote he should withdraw his motion, and move that the vote be reduced by £250.

Mr. HAMILTON said, although Mr. Nixon had been attacked in a gross and untruthful manner, not one statement against him had been proved. It had been said that he made false statements, but the Premier at the beginning of the session justified every statement, and there was not one person to reply to him. Was Mr. Nixon the only person who had been appointed for political considerations? Had they not heard of the administration of justice being disgraced by convicts being appointed to the bench? Did they not hear of a person named Lord being appointed to the Civil service as a political reward? The hon. member for Charters Towers had read the letter published by the journal he referred to, but he did not read Mr. Nixon's reply. In that letter in reply he gave an explanation with reference to the term "being instigated by the Opposition whip," and he explained in his letter that he had read a speech of his (Mr. Hamilton's), in which he proved that the labour vessels which had committed all the atrocities had been licensed by, and approved of by, the late Government. He said that he had informed him (Mr. Hamilton) that he could have given more information, and that he had warned the Government when Mr. Douglas was Colonial Secretary of the occurrences that were going on long ago, and he could disprove the statement of Sir Samuel Griffith made in extenuation of having appointed untrustworthy captains and agents to the ships that had committed the atrocities, by showing that he had warned the then Government of what was going on. He said in his letter that he (Mr. Hamilton) said, "If you are aware

of that, you should make it public," but the hon. member, Mr. SAYERS, took good care to not read that letter—

Mr. SAYERS said he rose to a point of order. The hon. member for Cook should address him by the name of his constituency. He represented some place, and probably an equally important place to that of Cook. As a new member he had been called to order by the hon. Colonial Secretary for the same offence, and he objected to the hon. member addressing him by name. If the hon. member would furnish him with the reply to which he referred, he would read it to the Committee. He wanted everything fair and above-board, and would not be a party to anything unfair or cowardly.

Mr. HAMILTON said he apologised for having mentioned the hon. member by name, because the only consideration he could show him was on account of the constituency he represented. He recollected at the time that Mr. Nixon was accused of being a paid scribe, also of having given the information gratis. All information was given either gratis or was paid for. It did not matter whether the information was given gratis or was paid for. The question was whether the statements were true or not true. Mr. Nixon challenged the *Star* or the *Telegraph* to show where in one single instance he had made an untrue statement, and that challenge was never accepted. He noticed that some members were very tender regarding the sanctity of members. They thought that members should not only be allowed to slander individuals in the House, but that they should be allowed to do it without having their skins made to tingle for doing so. No member should throw a slight upon any man under cover of the privileges of the House by saying anything inside the House that he would not say outside, and any member should be willing to accept the responsibility of any statement he might make in the House. There were very few members in the House who, if they held positions in the Government service, would allow other persons to take advantage of their positions to slander them. He considered a man would be a mean man who would allow his honour to be attacked and his character to be slandered, and lie like a worm under those imputations for the sake of receiving a salary of £200 or £300 a year.

Mr. SAYERS said he must say that he had not had an opportunity of reading the reply, if ever a reply did come from Mr. Nixon; but, if that reply were furnished to him, he would read it to the Committee. He would give fair play to him in any shape or form. He would not have spoken at all if it had not been for the statements that had been made from the Government side of the Committee. A member of Parliament was in a different position as regarded Civil servants from any other individual. If members of Parliament were not allowed the privilege of saying what they chose they would soon reach the condition of affairs that existed in America. In that country, if a man attacked another simply because he thought he had more physical force and more pugilistic science, the man so attacked pulled out his revolver and shot him like a rat, and he (Mr. SAYERS) considered he would be justified in doing so. A man sent to represent an electorate might possess good brain power, and might make the best representative the electorate could send; but, at the same time, he might not be a powerful man physically, and was such a man to be allowed to go back to his electorate and be horsewhipped by a Civil servant, who would be rewarded for doing that service by the next Government? It was degrading Parliament to the lowest possible pitch. He had been as wild as any other young

man in his youth; but had reaped the benefit of years, and saw the folly of such things. It was one of the most cowardly things a man could do to coerce another man, because he knew he had certain physical powers that the other had not. A Civil servant might devote his spare time to going to boxing saloons and train himself, and might assault a member of Parliament for raising a question in the House. He had nothing whatever to say against Mr. Nixon, as he did not know him; but it had been stated that he had, when a Civil servant, assaulted and horsewhipped a member of that House, because he said something that Mr. Nixon thought was not true. Mr. Nixon had then received an appointment from the present Government. If he had said anything wrong he was willing to apologise.

Mr. HAMILTON said they had heard a long dissertation from Mr. SAYERS on cowardice, and, no doubt, he was well up in the subject—

Mr. SAYERS said he rose to a point of order. The hon. member had again referred to him by name. He had been compelled to apologise for doing the same thing, and wished for a ruling from the Chairman as to whether the hon. member was in order or not.

The CHAIRMAN said the Standing Orders said that no member should refer to any other member by name.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said that only applied in the cases of single electorates; but where there were two members representing one electorate, one of them must be distinguished by name. There were two members for Charters Towers, and the proper way to speak of the hon. gentleman was "Mr. SAYERS, the member for Charters Towers."

Mr. SAYERS said he might state that the other night when he spoke he addressed the Minister for Mines and Works, as "Mr. Macrossan." He did it moderately and without any intention of disrespect; but he was a new member; while the hon. member for Cook had been in the House for many years. The hon. member for Cook had repeated his offence, and he had again called him to order. As to there being no senior and junior member for a constituency, he found they were put down as "No. 1" and "No. 2," and he was called to order for referring to the hon. member for Townsville as "Mr. Macrossan." He claimed the same privileges in that Committee as any other member, and if they were not accorded him, he should call for the ruling of the Chairman on the subject. The hon. member for Cook probably had a very high opinion of himself, but there was an old saying that if a person bought a man at their opinion of him, and sold him at his own opinion of himself, there would be a large percentage of profit.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the question might be made the subject of a squabble in a debating society, but it ought never to be brought before a Committee of that House. No doubt the hon. member for Cook was technically in error in mentioning the name of an hon. member before he mentioned the name of the constituency which he represented.

Mr. SAYERS: You called me to order for it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was only pointing out that the mistake was made in mentioning the name of the individual before that of the electorate which he represented. Technically, the name of the electorate should be mentioned before that of the member representing it; but he did not himself look upon it as a matter of supreme importance.

Mr. HAMILTON said that members frequently inadvertently mentioned the name of an hon. member instead of the constituency he

represented, but, as a rule, members were not so little-minded as to take exception to it. He was stating that the hon. member for Charters Towers, Mr. Sayers, had given the Committee a long dissertation upon cowardice, and he deferred to the hon. member as an authority on that subject. With regard to the dissertation on boxing-saloons, what had that to do with the question? The statement made was that a gentleman in that House had made untruthful statements concerning a gentleman outside, and that that gentleman attacked him with a horse-whip for doing so—he had not said whether he was a bigger or a smaller man;—and most people would have done the same if a man insulted them. The statement simply was that one gentleman had horsewhipped another for slandering him.

Mr. ANNEAR said they had gone quite far enough, he thought. What they were doing now was only to make a hero of Mr. Nixon, and make it appear that the pamphlet "Facts to Know" had been of some effect during the general election. During the last election, the floor of the large hall in Maryborough, when he addressed the electors there, was carpeted with those pamphlets, and though he had never read one of them, he knew they had had no effect upon the people. He knew Mr. Nixon, and he was not going to say anything about his appointment. He supposed if they were to go through the whole of the appointments in the service and inquire into the private character of every man, very few of them would come out entirely clean. He knew Mr. Nixon as a gentlemanly man, and he had never seen anything in his conduct that would cause him to think that he was a man who would not conduct himself as a gentleman. The unfortunate occurrence in that matter was that Mr. Nixon had sent his letter to the wrong paper. He sent it to the *Bundaberg Star*, which was the Liberal organ of the district, when he should have sent it to the *Mount Perry Mail*, the organ representing the present Government. His friend the hon. member for Cook must have given Mr. Nixon the wrong address. He was not going to blame Mr. Nixon for a slip like that. The hon. member for Warwick had moved an amendment upon the vote, and some hon. members had aired their eloquence on the subject, but he thought they had gone far enough. He did not care what Government was in power, or what appointments they made, there was always someone to take exception to them.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he had been waiting for a long time for some member on that side of the Committee to throw a little oil on the turbulent waters of the debate. It was evident to every member of the Committee that he occupied a somewhat peculiar position, and when the proper leader was away it did not do to attempt to assume too much power. If that Committee was anything it should be impartial, and the Colonial Secretary, at the commencement of the discussion, had stated that he did not know Mr. Nixon, and knew nothing about his having written that pamphlet. The Colonial Secretary was, he thought, sufficiently well known to hon. members to have enabled his assurance on that point to be accepted without question. The hon. member for Rockhampton, whose character and service to his country entitled him to the respect of every member on both sides of the Committee, had taken a proper view of that matter, and that was that they should treat such emanations with contempt. The mire of ill-natured criticism, unjust censure, or what they might term lies, was one through which every man had to tramp who aspired to attain political distinction. He did not know Mr. Nixon, and he had learned for the first time that evening that he had been the subject of

abuse by him. He (Mr. Hodgkinson) was proud of the fact. Whenever he saw a disparaging remark about him in any newspaper in any portion of the colony he felt to some extent proud of it, because it showed that he was considered worthy of attack. It would be a great deal better if they adopted the view set forth by the hon. member for Rockhampton, and treated such remarks with contempt. He had not heard any evidence—such evidence as would stand for one moment in a court of law—to show that Mr. Nixon was the author of the letters which had been referred to. With respect to the matter of which the member for Charters Towers had made a great deal of capital—namely, that an assault was made on a member of that Committee, he held that every member should have a perfect right to express any sentiments he chose in that House without being subjected to the terror of physical assault outside the House. If a member so far forgot himself as to make that House the arena for venting his private vindictiveness, or uttering slanders against any member of the community, punishment was bound to fall upon him sooner or later, and he would be despised by nobody more than by members of that House in which he made his statements. He was speaking now in perfect ignorance of Mr. Nixon and his alleged offences, and he was of opinion that, assuming a member of the House did make a statement which Mr. Nixon felt to be a slander on him, and took means to punish the member for it next day, there was something wanting. Mr. Nixon was not convicted of that fact in a court of law, and there appeared to be something wrong, or the member would not have stopped there, but would have taken steps to vindicate his position. He (Mr. Hodgkinson) thought that if he were treated in that way he would have resented it, and if he were a man of weak frame, and incompetent to take his own part, and the statement which gave offence were made in pursuance of his duty to his country, he would have brought Mr. Nixon to a court of law. Then, standing on that floor that evening, he would have said to the Colonial Secretary, "Are you aware that this man has been convicted by a tribunal of his country of an assault on a member of this House?" If the hon. gentleman replied that he was aware of the fact, then he would have said that the giving of such a man an appointment in the Civil service was a disgrace. But he was confident that the Colonial Secretary would never dream of doing such a thing. If that House made laws, they should be the first to observe them, and it was unfair to assume that Mr. Nixon was guilty of an offence of which he had never been convicted. Those acrimonious discussions did not tend to the benefit of the country, and they were only a discredit to the House.

Mr. SMYTH said he did not rise for the purpose of obstruction, but to refer to the proposed reduction of that vote by £300, the amount paid to the assistant inspector of Polynesians at Mackay. If hon. members looked further down the Estimates, at the item "hospitals for Pacific Islanders," they would find that the assistant surgeon, who last year received £350, was struck off. It was well known that the sugar industry had suffered a good deal, and that many plants were lying idle, therefore, less labour must be required. If there was no work for the assistant surgeon, there would surely be no work for the inspector. Talking about Civil servants abusing persons for giving expression to their opinions, he could give an instance which occurred at Maryborough. There was a Government agent, a man about thirty years of age, named McMurdo, who was not now in the service, sitting at the dinner table

in a hotel, and also Mr. Booker, who was a man about sixty years of age. McMurdo said to Mr. Booker, "What was that you said about me on the last voyage?" Mr. Booker replied "If you want to talk business with me come down to my office after lunch, and I will talk to you." McMurdo went down and struck him twice. Was that an act for a Civil servant to do? Yet Mr. Booker never complained.

Mr. HAMILTON: It is not a fair thing for any man to do.

Mr. SMYTH said if the Government Whip would not interrupt so much, the Colonial Secretary would get on much faster with his Estimates. He could assure the Colonial Secretary that the Whip had a great deal to answer for with regard to the obstruction that evening. But he (Mr. Smyth) did not rise for the purpose of obstruction. He merely wished to point out that if there was no need for the assistant surgeon at Mackay there was no need for the assistant inspector.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not think that the Committee could say that any member of the Government had done anything to obstruct business, or act unfairly towards the Committee. With regard to that particular vote he might say that, if the hon. member had been in his place earlier in the evening he would have heard that it was the intention of the Government practically to keep those hospitals on for another year, at an additional cost to that which appeared on the Estimates. He would also direct the hon. member's attention to the fact that the Committee were discussing a matter which, on the face of it, was not a question of taxation of the people, but that they were in reality dealing in that Estimate with funds provided by a certain class of people in the colony. With respect to the assault which was said to have been committed by McMurdo, hon. members would agree that that was a matter which did not in any way concern the Committee. Even if the man had been retained in the service Mr. Booker had his remedy against him in the police court. He merely referred to the matter to show that it was hardly a thing which should be brought before that Committee.

Mr. LITTLE said Mr. Booker was an old friend of his, and he was certain that if any man assaulted him he would give him back his change without summoning him over it.

Mr. SAYERS said with regard to what the Colonial Secretary had said about a man who was assaulted having the right to summon the person who assaulted him, every one who was assaulted and disfigured by a person who was his superior in physical strength did not care to go into a police court. If the head of a department met him at the gate of that House and disfigured him for something he had said in the House, he could summons him for a common assault; but was that all the protection the House gave him for anything he might say in it? What he wanted to keep before the Committee was that the man who had committed the assault referred to had been appointed to a position in the Government service.

Mr. MORGAN said he wished to withdraw his amendment with the view of moving another.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. MORGAN moved that the vote be reduced by £250. In reply to what had been stated by the hon. the Colonial Secretary, he might say that, although the money for that vote was paid out of trust funds, the principle on which the appointments were made was the same as if the money was paid out of revenue.

Mr. McMASTER said he wished to make some remarks on emigration from the West coast of Scotland and the North of Ireland. He would, therefore, ask the Chairman whether that matter could be discussed on that vote or on a subsequent vote?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, speaking to a point of order, he was not aware that South Sea Islanders lived in either of the places indicated by the hon. member—the West coast of Scotland or the North of Ireland. He thought they had better confine themselves to the vote before the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN said the hon. member would have an opportunity of discussing the question he referred to on the next vote.

Question—That £11,450 only be granted—put.

The Committee divided:—

AYES, 10.

Messrs. Sayers, Barlow, Glassey, Isambert, Smyth, W. Stephens, Morgan, Macfarlane, McMaster, and Unmack.

NOES, 21.

Messrs. Macrossan, Nelson, Morehead, Hodgkinson, Black, Donaldson, Crombie, Smith, O'Connell, Little, Hamilton, Dalrymple, Stevens, North, Cowley, Murray, Battersby, Corfield, Philp, Agnew, and Murphy.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. MORGAN said that, when he initiated the discussion on the item, he did not do it with the intention of wasting time. He thought that a most unsatisfactory and indefensible appointment had been made to the public service, and he was still of that opinion, notwithstanding the division in which, owing to the absence of many hon. members who sympathised with them, they were in such a sad minority; but he did not think the question was one of sufficient importance to justify any abuse of the rules of the House, and he was prepared to allow the vote to go with the protest they had entered. The Colonial Secretary, as head of the department, had, he believed, acted with the best motives, and was unaware of the man's character. He (Mr. Morgan) was still of opinion that the man was utterly unfit for the position, and that experience would prove it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had no wish to shrink from any responsibility that attached to him as Colonial Secretary, but he was not the official head of the Polynesian Department. The appointment was actually made by the Chief Secretary, and confirmed by the Cabinet.

Mr. SAYERS said that earlier in the evening he had expressed his intention to dispute the item pound by pound. But he had no wish to obstruct, and after the courteous way in which that side had been met by the Colonial Secretary, he would not move any further reduction in the vote.

Mr. McMASTER said the question of European immigration was one that interested every member of the Committee. Last session he called attention to a certain class of people who, he believed, would—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was sorry to have to call the hon. member to order, but the subject before the Committee was that of Pacific Island immigration. The question of European immigration would come on later in the Estimates.

Mr. McMASTER said that if the question was on Pacific Island immigration, he would say what he had to say on it in a very few words. He should always protest against black labour being employed in the colony, either on shore or at sea, within the limits of Queensland waters.

Question—That the sum of £11,700 be granted—put and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that £3,180 be granted, from trust and special funds, for the Chief Inspector of Sheep.

Mr. MURPHY said he was sorry the vote had come on so late in the evening, as it involved a matter of great importance to stock-owners. He wished to point out to the Government that there was, in regard to quarantining of sheep, a great anomaly. Supposing he were to buy a number of sheep in Melbourne and they were brought to any port in this colony by one of the intercolonial steamers, they would be put into quarantine for three weeks, and he would be put to the expense of dipping them three times. The expense of keeping those sheep very often amounted to more than the original cost of the sheep. But if those sheep were brought overland through New South Wales by train they could cross the border without going into quarantine. That was an anomaly and an absurdity, but still that was what could be done. The quarantining had been established to prevent the introduction of scab into Queensland, but there was no scab in Victoria or in New South Wales. He wished to draw the attention of the Government to that matter. Every pastoral tenant knew the anomaly he had pointed out, and it was a crime and a shame. He hoped the Government would take steps to remedy it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman had raised a question, which was a very vexed one, even amongst the stock-owners of the colony, and he did not hold the opinions of the hon. gentleman, speaking individually. The facts mentioned by the hon. member for Barcoo as to the state of affairs was correct, but the argument might be made to apply the other way. He would rather have the quarantine applied to sheep that came overland as well as to those that came by sea. Although the sheep in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia were free from the infection, those in New Zealand were not, and surely it was better to take the safe side, even at the cost of some little inconvenience and expense to the stock-owners, rather than that the colony should run the risk of bringing disease in among their sheep. The hon. gentleman's argument was a good one—that was to say, sheep were allowed into the colony which were taken in landward without any quarantine, while with regard to sheep that came seaward, the same precautions were taken as had been taken with seaward coming passengers when the smallpox mania was on, but which had not prevailed with people crossing the border by railway.

Mr. MURPHY: Yes; it did.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman would excuse him contradicting him, but people had come by railway without any medical examination at all. He did not at all agree with the hon. gentleman in condemning the quarantine system. He had had to give an answer within the last few days to an application made by Tasmania to allow Tasmanian sheep to come here without being subject to the usual number of dippings and the twenty-one days' quarantine. He held that no great damage could result to the stock-owners of the colony through that precaution being taken. About ten days ago he had been waited upon by the Chief Inspector of Sheep in Tasmania, and he had found on inquiry that he evidently wanted to get the Government of Queensland to consent to the concession, and to use that concession as a lever to get similar concessions from the other colonies. He had been informed by that gentleman that Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia were all willing to admit Tasmanian sheep without quarantine, but that as yet those colonies had done nothing. Queensland was selected as the first to

grant the concession, as it was the furthest away. If the Governments of the other colonies moved in that direction it might be advisable for the Government to follow. He thought that security was better than running into any risk. With regard to that vote, the only difference from the amount voted last year was £28, which was only a transfer from one part of the Estimates to another.

Mr. MURPHY said that, notwithstanding what the Colonial Secretary had stated about that vote, he still maintained that stock-owners were suffering a great injustice, and notwithstanding the hon. gentleman's arguments, the thing was an absurdity. He did not see how any sensible man could argue in favour of such a system. There was no disease among the sheep of Victoria or New South Wales, and they could be bought wholesale and brought by train over the border from either of those colonies; but if they bought high-class sheep, and gave £100 for a ram, as was constantly done in Victoria, and brought them by sea, they were put into quarantine, under the care of anyone whom the Government might have pitchforked into the quarantine station, and he might do anything he liked to the sheep—he might drown them or kill them by dipping if he liked, and the owner of the stock would have no remedy. Only the other day he had lost about £1,000 worth of stock on the quarantine grounds at Rockhampton—sheep that had cost him £3 8s. a head in Victoria. He had bought 400 of them, but unfortunately his agents, instead of sending them by rail, had shipped them for Rockhampton, where they were put in quarantine for twenty-one days, and during that time fully 150 of them had died, and he had no remedy. He did not know what had killed them—whether it was the dipping or what it was. At any rate, a lot of the sheep died after they got home. Some people said it was because the dip was too strong, or had some chemical in it, which poisoned the sheep. Such a thing as that was enough to deter people from introducing high-class sheep into the colony. Those sheep were pure-bred Lincoln sheep that he could not now replace in Victoria for any money. He was introducing them for the improvement of the general flocks of the colony; and though he was doing it from selfish motives, it was to the interest of stockowners generally that good stock should be introduced. He thought that the matter he complained of was an anomaly which the Government ought to put right. He did not agree with the arguments of the Colonial Secretary, nor did anyone who understood the question. He did not think the Colonial Secretary understood the question, or he would not have used such arguments. There was not a pastoralist who was not of the same opinion on the subject as he (Mr. Murphy) was, with the exception, perhaps, of a few who had high-class stock, and wished to keep others out. Perhaps they had got hold of the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. GOLDRING said that, notwithstanding the remarks of the Colonial Secretary, he felt that the hon. member agreed with the arguments of the hon. member for Barcoo.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not. I say what I believe.

Mr. GOLDRING said he had heard that many pastoralists were under a great disadvantage in the matter of importing sheep. He did not say that the regulations should be wiped out; but greater care should be taken in the selection of those in charge of quarantine stations, so that the stock would be well cared for, instead of being knocked about, at considerable expense to the owners.

Question put and passed.

REGISTRAR OF BRANDS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that there be granted, for the service of the year 1888-9, a sum not exceeding £4,365 in connection with the department of the Registrar of Brands. The vote for the travelling detective placed on the Estimates last year was not wanted, because an inspector of brands had been put in his place.

Mr. O'CONNELL said he would ask whether the inspectors of slaughter-houses came under that vote? In many places they did not do their work at all. The butchers sent in their returns, but they were never checked by the inspectors.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that, so far as he knew, all the inspectors of slaughter-houses were policemen, and did not come under that vote. He would inquire into the matter mentioned by the hon. member.

Question put and passed.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION FUND.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that there be granted, for the service of the year 1888-9, a sum not exceeding £5,593 5s. for pensions in connection with the Police Superannuation Fund. The money had to be paid under the Act.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that there be granted, for the service of the year 1888-9, a sum not exceeding £7,313 for salaries in connection with the Government Savings Bank. The small increase on last year's Estimate was due to the extension of branch offices throughout the colony, and some small increases to one or two clerks.

Question put and passed.

AGENT-GENERAL.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said he knew there were a number of members in the Committee who were extremely anxious to get home, and that they should not proceed any further with the Estimates at present. But he would like them to bear in mind that they had now reached almost the very end of the session, nevertheless there had been a great deal of unnecessary talk. No one on either side of the Committee objected to fair criticism, but when it came to a great deal of idle talk and personalities he thought both sides were opposed to it. He did not say that one side of the Committee was worse than the other; but he would put it to hon. members this way: Sir Thomas McIlwraith wished to be present to-morrow to take his own Estimates, and to make the statement that had been spoken of, and promised by the Minister for Railways. The Estimate he was at present proposing was actually Sir Thomas McIlwraith's; but he was trying to relieve him of a certain amount of work. They all knew that the Premier was not able to do it; in fact, he wished to relieve him of the Estimates the Premier wished to take to-morrow if he could persuade him to allow him to do so. He was certain that his colleagues would assist him in doing so; but the Premier wished to do it himself. They wanted to allow him to get through his Estimates in the early part of the afternoon if possible, so as to let him get home. He did not see that there would be any difficulty in getting through the Estimates he was about to propose, within an hour from the present time, if they were fairly criticised, and hon. members refrained from idle talk. He saw a list of members in the hands of an hon. member—a list of members who were anxious to get away from the colony, and who would go if

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they finished their business on Friday night. He also saw another list containing the names of a number of members who actually would go; and with the number of members who would go away and the number who had actually gone, they would really after Friday night not have more than half the House present. It was scarcely fair to expect half the House to do the work of criticising the remainder of the Estimates when the other half had gone. It would be much better if they could manage to get through those Estimates while there was a fair number of members present, and they might expect fair and honest criticism. The Government did not object to any criticism so long as it actually applied to the Estimate under discussion. He hoped hon. members would not lose their tempers. Some hon. members thought it very hard to be kept there five nights a week. He knew it was hard; but was it harder for any hon. member in the Committee than it was for him? Was there a single member who was not stronger than he was? and yet he did not object to it, because he knew it was necessary that it should be done, and he was prepared to sacrifice a certain amount of comfort, and not only comfort, but even health, to remain there in order to push on the business before them. He hoped, therefore, that hon. members would approach the Estimate which he was about to propose in a good spirit. He moved that the sum of £3,682 be granted for the Agent-General of the colony—general staff and emigration staff.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he was afraid that owing to the tone which had been imported into the debate, it would be impossible to go on with business. He thought it would be better for the hon. member to postpone the consideration of those Estimates until to-morrow evening, and to allow the Premier's Estimates to be taken first. He was sure, under those circumstances, the Committee would assist as much as possible in the speedy passage of the Estimates. He might promise that members on that side of the Committee would be as anxious as gentlemen opposite to assist in passing the Estimates through if the hon. Minister for Mines and Works would have a little regard for the feelings of hon. members that night and postpone the consideration of the Estimates he now proposed. Personally he was anxious to get through the business, but he really felt they would not get through much that night.

Mr. UNMACK called attention to the state of the Committee.

Quorum formed.

Mr. UNMACK said he was sure it was perfectly useless for the Minister in charge of those Estimates to attempt to pass any votes that night. The reason the hon. gentleman had given for pressing on the Estimates would not hold water, as they were all delighted to hear that Sir Thomas McIlwraith would be in his place in the House next day, and they would all gladly assist him in passing his portion of the Estimates with as little delay as possible. Nothing could be gained by going on with the Estimates now proposed, as they could be passed on Thursday evening just as well. He could not see why there should be such indecent haste in rushing through the business. He had always understood that legislation meant deliberation, but he must say the way in which the business had lately been conducted was not creditable to those who had been engaged in it. He had been one of them himself, but he could not help himself. There had been a measure passed in the House that night, and not one member in a dozen knew what had really been done. The

whole thing had been taken in hand by the leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for North Rockhampton, and the Chairman had occasionally read out something, but the members of the Committee could not hear one-half that was said. He did not call that legislation, nor was it legislation to attempt to pass these Estimates at that hour of the night. What was all that haste for? He had alluded to that once before. No member could credit him with any intention to obstruct, but it was not reasonable to ask hon. members to sit five days a week and then commence fresh business at a quarter to 1 o'clock. The immigration question was too important to be dealt with in that way, and if any attempt was made to go on with its consideration, he should be prepared to read two or three volumes—and he was physically able to do so—to show the difference of opinion existing on that subject.

Mr. PHILP said he had no desire to assist the other side, but if they were going on, as the immigration question was rather a big question, there were one or two things he would like to get some information upon. The Chief Secretary had told them when the vote was postponed that he intended to give some explanation of the immigration policy of the Government. He would remind the hon. gentleman in charge of the Estimate of the call for labour for the North of the colony. A large majority had said that they must not get any more black labour, and in a year or two they would have no chance of getting Polynesian labourers for the plantations in North Queensland. He would like to ask the Minister in charge of the vote whether the Government proposed to assist the planters by getting labourers from Europe. He had heard only the other day of large numbers of Italians going to the Brazils to take the place of slaves who had been emancipated in that country; and if they could be got to go there it was quite possible they could be got to come here. It was a large question, and one he should like to see fully discussed in a full House, but as the Government were prepared to go on with the Estimates, they might as well have a little discussion on the subject now.

Mr. HODGKINSON said the Minister for Mines and Works must understand from his parliamentary experience what possibility there was of doing any work that evening. Was it not possible that if they went home now they would return on the morrow in good humour with each other and would be likely to more than compensate for the time that would be wasted that evening. There were many hon. members on his side who were determined that those Estimates should not pass that evening. The hon. gentleman would acquit him of any intention to cause obstruction, but it was his duty, at any rate, to support the members of his party in their reasonable objections.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said he was perfectly prepared to discuss the Estimate, as the hon. member for Townsville had asked for some information concerning it. At the same time, the hon. gentleman who was acting in the place of the leader of the Opposition had asked him to retire from the position the Government had taken up in trying to pass those Estimates, so far, at least, as the first two votes were concerned. They were directly in the charge of the Premier—the Agent-General and the waterworks and water supply votes. If the hon. gentleman opposite would accept the compromise he was going to make he would be willing to accept the proposal the hon. member had made, with the understanding that the Opposition would assist Sir Thomas McLlwraith to-morrow to pass his Estimates.

Mr. UNMACK: We do not require to be asked that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said the compromise he proposed was that the first two votes, which belonged to the Premier's department, should be passed, and he would then be willing to forego the consideration of the Estimate for Harbours and Rivers, which belonged to himself as Secretary for Mines and Works. If any member of the Committee wanted any information on the first two votes he was quite ready to give it. The officer in charge of water supply was in attendance, and he would be able to give him all necessary information. He would forego his own Estimates, but he would ask that the two votes to which he had referred should be allowed to pass.

Mr. GLASSEY said that as far as he was concerned the compromise suggested by the hon. gentleman could not be entertained, and he did not think it would be accepted by members on that side of the Committee. There might have been some chance of a compromise if it had been proposed to postpone those two votes and go on with others on which there would not be so much controversy. It was unfair to ask them at that hour of the morning to pass the vote for the Agent-General, which involved the whole question of immigration. If passed in its present form they would necessarily have to continue the stream of immigration they had had in the past, and that was a matter that required full discussion.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said he wanted to point out to the hon. member that he appeared to be labouring under a mistake. The very first vote on the Chief Secretary's Estimate, at page 12, was the Agent-General for the colony. Therefore, it was just as well to have the discussion that evening, as the Opposition were, he believed, quite willing to allow the Chief Secretary's Estimates to pass with very little discussion. The immigration vote really came up twice, and they might as well have the discussion now as to-morrow, when the Premier would be in the House.

Mr. SAYERS said the vote before them raised the whole question of immigration, and if the Government attempted to force it through at 1 o'clock in the morning, in a very thin House, after members had left having no idea that that vote would come on, he agreed with the hon. member for Toowoong that it was not legislation at all. Every member now sitting on the Opposition side of the Committee was willing to assist the Chief Secretary to pass his Estimates, and he believed the whole of them would go through to-morrow night in half the time they would go through at that hour of the morning. It really seemed as if the Government thought "it is 1 o'clock in the morning, half the Opposition have left, and we will force this vote through." It was not fair to ask them to proceed with any further business at that late hour, seeing that they were sitting five days a week, and had sat till 12 o'clock the previous evening. He did not believe that three members would talk five minutes about the matter if the Chief Secretary were in his seat. The constitutions of many members on that side would not allow them to sit so late. The Minister for Mines and Works might laugh, but the leader of the Opposition had stated distinctly that his health would not allow him to sit so late.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: I exclude him.

Mr. SAYERS said the hon. gentleman was their leader, and they objected to fresh Estimates being started at that hour of the morning without being able to hear him express his views

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said the hon. member for Charters Towers spoke very much like a new member, and did not know what had been done in that Committee previously. The hon. member did not know that at a later hour than that, after a two hours' discussion, £10,000,000 were voted, and he (the Minister for Mines and Works) was only asking for £20,000. If the hon. member had known that he would not have spoken as he had done. As to the leader of the Opposition being too unwell to be in his place, the hon. gentleman never made it a practice to be in his place at that time of the morning, unless he sat on the Treasury benches, when he was compelled to be there. He (the Minister for Mines and Works) would be very glad if every member on the Opposition side followed him. He hoped members were in a good disposition and that they would pass that vote. It was now the 31st of October, and he might state that he did not think the Chief Secretary would be there that day, if that state of affairs was likely to continue.

Mr. LITTLE said the hon. member for Charters Towers claimed protection because there was a thin Committee. Why did not hon. members on that side abandon their position? The members on the Government side were there, and would sit till daylight if required. The Minister for Mines and Works had asked for a reasonable concession and it ought to be granted. As far as he (Mr. Little) was concerned he would not leave; he could stay for a week. The hon. member for Burke, who was acting as leader of the Opposition would not, he was sure, oppose the vote. He (Mr. Little) would like to go home, but he was not tired, and would stay there a week if necessary. If hon. members opposite would take instructions from their present leader, the hon. member for Burke, they would at once pass the two small items that had been mentioned. It was well known that the Premier was not in the best of health; that ought to be a matter for consideration, and he hoped that that hon. gentleman's Estimates would go through without any more discussion than was absolutely necessary.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he could assure the hon. member for Woothakata that if the leader of the Opposition were present, he would not think for a moment of giving instructions to members on that side of the Committee. Every member there had perfect liberty of action. If he did not do so, his position there was not a proper one. He (Mr. Hodgkinson) would not attempt to assume the authority his leader would assume. He merely voiced the feeling of hon. members on that side of the Committee. No doubt the immigration question excited a very strong feeling amongst many members on that side, and there was a distinct refusal on their part to do any further business at that hour of the morning. The Government had his assurance individually, and he believed he could give it collectively for hon. members on that side, that there would be as strong a desire on their part to save Sir Thomas McIlwraith the slightest unnecessary exertion as there was on the part of his warmest and most devoted supporter.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he thought the proposal of the Minister for Mines and Works must commend itself to every member of the Committee. If they only looked at the two items proposed to be passed, they would see that there were very few points of difference between them. There was the salary of the accountant—

Mr. UNMACK: It is not the amount of money. It is the system of immigration.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the system of immigration was the same as that in force last year. Did the hon. member object to that? He understood him to say he did. Then he occupied a very ludicrous position. He did not suppose the hon. gentleman intended to deal with the immigration system by sweeping away the £1,582 for the emigration staff. If they were going to discuss the question of the staff, they might as well do it then as to-morrow. Those two items would then have to be taken by the Chief Secretary, and it would be only putting additional burdens upon shoulders that were already too much bowed down by overwork. If the Committee insisted upon adopting that course, he supposed Sir Thomas McIlwraith must abide by it, but he thought it was both ungracious, and he would say cruel, to do so. If hon. members wished to discuss the question in the abstract, let them table a motion that immigration be stopped. The session was not closed yet, and they would have plenty of opportunity of discussing it. He was certain that although some hon. members might agree theoretically that immigration should be stopped, they would not be parties to giving that proposition practical effect. Surely they were not prepared to say that because the labour market was overstocked—which was a very arguable matter—he doubted it very much—they would not say that, therefore, the colony was to be used as a sort of cattle-breeding station, to breed within themselves, stock the country, and have no more immigration. He should be very sorry to see such a condition of affairs. The emigration staff was not a question upon which the whole immigration question should be raised.

Mr. MACFARLANE said hon. members on that side had made up their minds calmly, without any feeling, that they would discuss the subject until morning. It was just as well that they understood each other. They had abstained from speaking on several occasions in order to get the Estimates through, but when a new vote was commenced at that hour they were prepared to go on till 6 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. AGNEW said, if it was simply a question of stonewalling, he did not see why they should hesitate to meet the taunts thrown out by hon. members opposite. Something had been said about the absence of the recognised leaders of the House, but members on that side recognised the hon. member for Burke, Mr. Hodgkinson, as the leader on the other side. There was no doubt that, if ability was to be taken into account as a qualification of leadership, then that hon. gentleman was entitled to the position. He looked to that hon. member as the recognised leader of the party. Personally, he was willing to accept the position as he found it, and that was, that the majority were not going to be over-ridden by the minority. If hon. members on the other side desired to challenge them to a trial of strength, he for one was prepared to accept it.

Mr. O'CONNELL said that, if hon. members had made up their minds to stop there and talk, they might as well talk to the question, and get the question of immigration settled before they adjourned.

Mr. ANNEAR said he would remind the Colonial Secretary that the Committee had already that evening passed items belonging to the Chief Secretary's Department to the amount of over £130,000, without even caring which member of the Government it was who moved them. They were all sorry to hear of the Premier's illness, and would do everything in their power to relieve him from the strain of

passing his Estimates. They would be quite satisfied if the hon. gentleman made a short statement as to his railway and public works policy, about which the country was very anxious. In his electorate they wanted a railway constructed to the sea; and he noticed with pleasure that there was a sum down on the Loan Estimates for the bridge at Maryborough which was mentioned the other day. He hoped to see the Premier in his place that night, and he quite agreed with the Colonial Secretary that there was nothing much debatable in those two items. Those items should have been passed before, and they could be passed on the next night in five minutes. An hon. gentleman had stated that they had on that side no person whom they could look upon as a leader. No one could respect the hon. member for Burke, Mr. Hodgkinson, more than he did; but at the same time, their leader was the hon. member for North Brisbane, the Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith, and when he left the hon. member for Burke as the acting leader of the party, he left a good man in a good man's place.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that he was glad to hear what had fallen from the hon. gentleman, as it cut the ground from under the feet of some hon. members on the other side. The hon. gentleman had stated that those two items—the only ones they asked the Committee to pass—could be passed in five minutes on the following night. Why could not they be passed in five minutes now? There was only a slight alteration in the vote. Those were items which formed part of the Chief Secretary's Estimates, and he was sure every hon. member of the Committee was desirous of relieving the Premier from the slightest possible trouble.

Mr. McMASTER said he was sure there was no hon. member in the Committee but would give the Colonial Secretary credit for trying if possible to carry that vote. He was quite certain the hon. gentleman was able to carry out what he proposed, but unless he got that money voted he could do nothing by himself. So far as the hon. gentleman was concerned, he would always try to do what was for the best interests of the country, and he would not ask the consent of hon. members on either side of the Committee what he should or should not do. The hon. Colonial Secretary was a gentleman for whom he had the highest respect, and he and the hon. gentleman would not allow any man to take one single inch out of the Victoria Park. That remark appeared to cause a great deal of merriment, but he held to the anchor of the Victoria Park, and as long as the Colonial Secretary was a trustee for that park, there would be no danger of its being taken from them.

Mr. PHILP rose to a point of order. He would ask whether the hon. member was in order in talking about the Colonial Secretary, the Victoria Park, and an anchor, on the Estimates of the Agent-General?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Fortitude Valley must confine himself to the question.

Mr. McMASTER said he was not going to waste the time of the Committee. If the Committee wanted him to waste time, he could speak for ten or eleven hours. He had carefully read the report of the Immigration Agent, and there was one matter which he wished to bring under the notice of the Committee. A number of people in England seemed to think that Queensland was the proper place to which to send people discharged from their gaols. Hon. members who believed that they ought to introduce that class of people here were mistaken, and he wished that to be recorded.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again at a later hour of the day.

ADJOURNMENT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. The first business on the paper this afternoon will be Supply.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at a quarter to 2 o'clock.