

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

MONDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 1889

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Monday, 9 September, 1889.

Petition.—Decentralisation Bill—first reading.—Brisbane Water Supply Bill—consideration of Legislative Council's Amendments—recommittal.—Supply—resumption of committee.—Adjournment.

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

PETITION.

Mr. ARCHER presented a petition from Maria Mills, widow of Samuel Howard Mills, formerly a tidewater at Rockhampton, praying for such assistance as the House might see fit to grant; and moved that the petition be read.

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

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

DECENTRALISATION BILL.

On the motion of the HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH, the House, in committee, affirmed the desirableness of introducing "a Bill to make provision for dividing the colony into financial districts, and for the keeping of separate accounts of the general and local revenue, and its expenditure in the colony; and for the expenditure within the several districts of the revenue raised therein; and for the constitution of grand committees of revenue and expenditure for the several districts," as recommended by message of his Excellency the Governor, of date the 5th instant.

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

FIRST READING.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH moved that the Bill be read a first time.

Question put and passed.

The second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday, 17th instant.

BRISBANE WATER SUPPLY BILL.

CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the motion of the HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Legislative Council's amendments in this Bill.

Amendments in clauses 2 and 9 agreed to.

On clause 10—

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH moved that the Legislative Council's amendment in clause 10, omitting the word "specifications," be agreed to.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it was very important that the specifications of the works should be sent to the Government, because a great deal might depend upon them. For in-

stance, the board might propose to lay pipes which were too small to carry the water, or they might propose to carry out the works in such a manner that in the course of two or three years large additional expenditure would have to be incurred. Parliament did not want to see the specifications, but they should be seen by the Government, as they were finding all the money. He thought the word "specifications" should be retained in clauses 11 and 12.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he did not think it a matter of much importance. The plans, sections, and estimates of cost would come before the Government, and the size of the pipes would be shown on the accompanying drawings. He had no objection to keeping the word in, and would move that the amendment of the Council be disagreed to.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH, a similar amendment in clause 11 was disagreed with; and a similar amendment in clause 12 was agreed to.

On the motion of the HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH, the Legislative Council's amendment inserting the word "pipes" in subsection (3) of clause 13 was agreed to.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the Legislative Council proposed to insert the following new clause, to follow clause 29:—

The owner or occupier of lands or premises situate within the district, but more than three hundred feet from any main pipe the property of the board, may in writing request the board to supply water for domestic purposes to such lands and premises.

In any such case the board may comply or refuse to comply with the request, and if it complies may authorise some competent person to construct all the works necessary for supplying to such lands and premises water for domestic purposes.

Provided that all lands and premises to which the board supply water under this section, and the owners and occupiers thereof, shall be thenceforth subject to the provisions of this Act in the same manner as if they were within three hundred feet of a main pipe.

The proposed new clause was consequent upon an amendment which had been made by the Legislative Council in clause 51 in connection with the lands to be subject to rates. The power of rating was limited to the frontages of a road on which the board's pipe track was laid down, and to a distance therefrom which had not previously been specified, but which the Legislative Council fixed by the amendment made in clause 51 at 300 feet from the main pipe. He thought 300 feet was too much, and therefore proposed to amend the new clause by the omission of the words "three hundred," with a view of inserting the words "one hundred and sixty-five" before the word "feet" in the 2nd line. Two and a-half chains was the depth of the ordinary lot of a quarter of an acre, and he thought that would be quite sufficient.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: It has to be taken into consideration with clause 28, and is not necessary.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he thought himself it was provided for in the Bill, but the new clause provided more specifically for it, and the only objection he had to it was the limit of 300 feet which had been fixed, and which he proposed should not be more than 165 feet.

Amendment agreed to.

On the motion of the HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH, the new clause was further amended by the omission of the words "in the same manner as if they were within three hundred feet of a main pipe."

New clause, as amended, agreed to.

On clause 51, which the Legislative Council had amended to read as follows:—

"Water-rates may be made and shall be levied in respect of all lands and premises, whether the same are actually occupied or not, abutting upon or having direct access to or from any road in the district in which, before the passing of this Act, a main pipe has been laid down, and being within three hundred feet of such main pipe, from which pipe the lands and premises could be supplied with water if the owners or occupiers requested the board to supply it.

"When a main pipe is laid down in a road after the passing of this Act, the board shall publish in some newspaper, generally circulating in the neighbourhood, a notice that such main pipe has been so laid down, and that the board is prepared to supply water to the lands and premises abutting upon or having direct access to or from such road within three hundred feet of such main pipe; and after the expiration of seven days from such publication rates may be made and shall be leviable in respect of such lands and premises according to the scale then in force.

"Rates may be made and shall be leviable in respect of all such lands and premises as aforesaid, whether the land is ratable land under the Local Government Acts or not."

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH moved that the Legislative Council's amendment inserting the word "direct" in the 3rd line of the clause be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH moved that the Legislative Council's second amendment in the clause be amended by the omission of the words "three hundred," with a view of inserting the words "one hundred and sixty-five."

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the pipes might be laid down on one side of the street, and if the measurement was made from the main the distance from the street on one side would be less than two and a half chains, while on the other side it might be three chains or more. He thought it would be as well to agree to the amendment as it stood. The object of the amendment made by the Legislative Council was to limit the distance within which persons should be rated, and the amendment now proposed would still further reduce the class of persons who might be called upon to pay water rates. He did not think it was desirable to reduce them any further.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said, with the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH moved that the amendment in the 5th line of the 1st paragraph be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 51—

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH moved that the Legislative Council's amendment, in the 5th line of the 2nd paragraph, inserting the word "direct" before the word "access," be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH moved that the Legislative Council's amendment, in the 6th line of the same paragraph, inserting the words "within 300 feet of such main pipe," after the word "road," be agreed to.

MR. PALMER said he would point out that according to the plans which he had seen the mains would follow the direction of the Brisbane River and pass a number of farms, the owners of which would have to pay water rates under that clause, although they had already permanent water on their land. In some cases the cultivation extended half a mile back from the road.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he apprehended that the pipe track would not be part of the district, which was defined in the interpretation clause to be "the district within the jurisdiction of the Brisbane Board of Water-works or the joint local authority, as the case may be, being the district comprised within the municipal district of Brisbane, and the suburbs proclaimed under this Act." It was not the pipe track but Brisbane and its suburbs.

MR. PALMER said the explanation of the hon. gentleman certainly removed the difficulty he saw, but the clause appeared to include properties along the pipe track, and its meaning ought therefore to be made clearer.

Question put and passed.

On clause 52, as follows:—

"The board shall define by by-laws the principle upon which the amount of rates shall be assessed, which principle may be in proportion to the annual value of the land rated, as determined by the last preceding valuation made by the local authority within whose district the land is situated, for which purpose the local authorities shall furnish to the board copies of the valuation lists then in use in their districts, or in proportion to the superficial area of the floors in the buildings upon it, or upon any other basis, and may be upon one basis with respect to some lands, and upon another basis with respect to other lands:

"Provided that when rates are made in respect of land which is not ratable under the Local Government Acts, they shall be assessed in proportion to such superficial area, which need not be the same as in the case of other buildings."

Which the Legislative Council had amended by adding at the end thereof the following proviso:—

"Provided also that the owner or occupier of any land or premises may elect to pay according to measure for water supplied for domestic purposes, but subject to the condition that the minimum charge for such supply shall be one pound per annum."

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that was a very important amendment. He had taken a great deal of trouble when the Bill was passing through the Committee to explain the principles upon which the Bill was based. He said that in framing the Bill they might have imitated the practice followed in the old country, where the conditions were somewhat different to those which existed here, that was to have constituted a board simply for water service with power to charge only for the water consumed. He had declared emphatically that that would not be the principle of the Bill, and gave reasons for not adopting that principle. The principle of the Bill was that it should be based upon rating with a power to the board, if the rating was not equitable and more water was consumed than was justified by the rates, to charge for the water by meter. That was a correct principle and one that acknowledged all the different interests which were benefited by the water being introduced into the city and suburbs. As nearly as possible it was made equitable. A great many properties might use very little water and still get immense benefit by the introduction of the water into the city or suburbs. Those properties would only pay by rating. Again, there was a class of properties where machinery was used and a large quantity of water consumed, and no amount of rates would reach them equitably. The principle of the Bill therefore was that the revenue of the board should be derived, in the first place, from the rates, and, in the second, from the meter system. That, as he had stated, was all very fully discussed when the Bill was before that Committee; but, as if he had never explained it, and so far as he could see without any discussion, the Legislative Council had so altered the principle by their amendment in that clause as to make the board simply a water-selling board. Before the amendment was made the board had the power to levy

rates on one class of consumers, and to make another class of consumers who consumed more water than the rates justified pay by meter. But the Legislative Council proposed that any owner or occupier of premises should have the right to come in and pay by meter alone. In fact the other Chamber had amended the Bill so as to destroy the principles he had informed the Committee it was framed upon, and they had passed it upon different principles altogether. They did not seem to have considered the serious features of the matter. He was not going to discuss the constitutional position at all, but the Council had no right to make such an amendment as they had, because it assumed a power which belonged exclusively to the Assembly—that was the power of imposing a tax. They had no right to say upon whom taxation should fall, and they had no right to amend the Bill at all in that direction. He was simply stating that point, and did not intend to go into it further. His first objection was that the Council had overstepped their privileges altogether in amending a money Bill in the shape they had done. The next objection was that the amendment would be very inequitable. What would be the effect of it? Of course they would hear hypercritical speeches in regard to the poor man who owned an allotment upon which there was no house erected, and who would have to pay water rates. But there were not very many poor people in that position. There were, however, a great many rich men who had allotments in that position, and he intended to fasten the tax upon those men and make them pay. That was part of the principle of the Bill. They could put aside the poor men who were the class who had been specially protected in the clause, and look at property as a whole, as he had done when he moved the second reading of the Bill. Look at the effect of the amendment proposed by the other Chamber. Take, for instance, a large store in town, which might be insured for £5,000, and contain stock insured at £25,000. There were a number of stores far more heavily insured than that, and to which the argument would better apply; but he would take that as an illustration. The very presence of water at a high pressure in the town would bring down the rate of insurance a very large amount. He could not say what the reduction would be in Brisbane; he had not calculated it; but he remembered very well when the Yan Yean water was brought into Melbourne insurance rates came down a terrible extent, at least 5s. in the £100, and he did not think it would be less than that in Brisbane. The presence of water in the streets of Melbourne caused a reduction of 5s. in the £100 in Melbourne; and, taking a store insured for £30,000, if the proprietor saved 4s. in the £100 it would make a difference to him in insurance alone of £60 in the year—he would save that by the mere presence of water in the place. It might be a store in which no water was used at all except for the clerks to drink and to wash their hands in, and at the low rate of sale by meter, £2 or £3 would pay well for the amount of water consumed in a year. The proprietor would be saved nearly £60 a year in insurance alone, and the amendment would give him the privilege of getting all the water that would be consumed for £2 or £3 a year. The thing was preposterous. In regard to the point raised by the hon. member for Burke, that hon. gentleman thought the people along the route of the pipes ought not to pay. But they ought to pay whether they used the water or not. The water was for the whole community, and a great part of the community would never use the water at all; but they would gain immensely by its being there. All those people who had

idle allotments in the towns, and who never intended to build upon them, why should they not be taxed? Of course they ought to be, because the value of their property would be increased. The healthiness of the town was a great factor in determining the value of property, and as the owners of allotments would benefit to a great extent by that water scheme, he thought they ought to be taxed. They ought to pay according to rating, whether there were buildings upon the allotments or not. Taking the case of a small house: the consumer would have to pay only a couple of pounds a year, but if he had a cheap kind of meter such as now talked about it would cost about £10. A very small householder would pay £2 or £3 in rates, and if he fancied that he did not consume so much water, and wished to pay by meter, he would have to pay £10 down, or something like that. But let them consider the case of a large bank, the Queensland National Bank buildings, for instance, which were worth from £30,000 to £40,000; if the bank simply paid for the water actually consumed, they would elect to pay by meter, and the water would only cost from £3 to £4 per annum. That was not the principle of the Bill. In the first instance, the man who used the water would come in as one of the contributors to a large scheme, and he should say nothing more about that except he was perfectly astounded that the Council should have made such an amendment, and, if it were agreed to, it would simply destroy the Bill. There would not be any revenue, and he would put it aside. Why should he father a Bill which would be a failure from the start? Why should not property-holders pay if they had a water scheme? Who should pay but they? He moved that the amendment be disagreed to.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he did not rise to support the amendment, as he entirely agreed with what the hon. gentleman had said. It was an objectionable amendment from every point of view; but instead of rejecting it altogether, he should like to take advantage of the opportunity to correct what he thought was a flaw in the Bill. He regretted that he did not notice it before. Clause 59 said:—

“The board may, instead of making and levying rates for water supplied for domestic purposes, sell and supply water to consumers.”

Of course, that was intended to mean that instead of levying a rate in any particular case the board might sell water by meter, but it might be argued that they must adopt one scheme or the other—either make rates or sell by meter. His attention was called to the matter through a case which had arisen in one town since the Bill went through the Assembly, and he had forgotten the application of it to the Bill until that afternoon. They might amend the proviso so as to be to the effect that if the owner or occupier of any land or premises was supplied with water by meter, no water rates should be payable in respect of such premises. They could then make consequential amendments in the 59th clause to remove all doubt there. They all knew what the intention of the Bill was, but it might be arguable from the clause that a man was liable to pay water rates as well as meter rates, which was not the intention.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the objection to the hon. gentleman's suggestion was that, as he had explained, there should be a charge, and rightly so. There was a very good plan adopted in some places in Victoria—namely, that a certain minimum amount of water attached to the payment of a certain amount of rates. If the board considered that that amount was being exceeded, they had the power to put on a meter, and to make the consumer pay for the amount

over and above what was credited to the rates. That would be the system adopted here; and that would be blocked by the adoption of the suggestion of the hon. gentleman. In large works, such as breweries and factories, they would have to pay the rates as property holders, and in addition, they would have to pay for all the water above the amount covered by the rate. He did not wish to do anything that would hamper the board in any way.

The PREMIER (Hon. B. D. Morehead) said he understood that the minimum charge was the rating charge to which the property was subjected, and that the meter system would only come into operation where more water was being used than was covered by the amount of the rating.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that was the intention of the Bill.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he thought the difficulty could be got over by a by-law enabling the board to prescribe a maximum amount to be used, and if it was thought that more was being used, to insist on putting on a meter, and making an additional charge for the extra amount used.

Amendment put and disagreed to.

On the motion of the HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH, the whole of the Legislative Council's amendments in clause 74 were agreed to.

On clause 81—

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the amendments in that clause consisted in altering the power of the board to sell unoccupied or unimproved lands, on which the rates had not been paid for a certain time, and giving them an increased power of leasing such lands. From inquiries he had made from members of the board of great experience, he thought the clause as amended by the Legislative Council would be quite sufficient for the purpose. He moved that the amendments be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH, the amendment of the Legislative Council in clause 82 was agreed to.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that the Legislative Council had inserted a new clause, to follow clause 107, as follows:—

When any person declared elected to the office of a member of the board under this Act has been elected unduly or contrary to this Act, or any person who is incapable under the provisions of this Act of holding or continuing to hold such office has been elected to or holds or exercises such office, the Supreme Court, or a judge thereof, may upon the application of any ratepayer, grant a rule or order calling upon such person to show cause why he should not be ousted from such office:

Provided that the applicant shall before making the application pay into court the sum of twenty pounds as security for costs, to abide the event of the application.

If, upon the return of the rule or order, it appears to the court or judge that the person so elected, or holding or exercising such office, was elected unduly or contrary to this Act, or was at the time of his election or while holding or exercising such office, incapable under the provisions of this Act of holding or continuing to hold the same, the court or judge may make the rule or order absolute, or, if the matter does not so appear, may discharge the rule or order, and in either case with or without costs.

The person against whom any such rule or order is made absolute shall be deemed thereby to be ousted from such office accordingly:

Provided that no such rule or order for ousting any person as having been elected unduly or contrary to this Act shall be granted unless the application is made before the expiration of four months from the declaration of the result of the election at which such person was elected.

It was a very useful clause, and he moved that it be agreed to.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he would suggest that they should amend the clause so as to make it more useful. The clause was copied from the Divisional Boards Act, which took it from the Local Government Act of 1878, and, strange to say, it was incomplete, because, while providing for the turning out of a member who had not been duly elected, it did not provide for giving the seat to the man who had been elected. The same difficulty might arise with regard to the election of a chairman. There was a case of that sort going on at present at Charters Towers. He proposed to add a proviso to the effect that if it appeared to the judge who had ousted one man that another man had been duly elected, he should declare the latter to have been duly elected. First, he would move that after the word "member," in the 2nd line of the clause, the words "or chairman" be inserted.

Amendment agreed to.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH moved that the following new paragraph be inserted, to precede the last proviso:—

If it appears to the court or judge that some other person was duly elected to such office, the court or judge may declare such person to have been duly elected, and he shall thereupon be deemed to have been duly elected to such office at the time at which the person ousted was declared to have been elected.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that would take the election of members of the board out of the hands of the people.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that supposing in the case of a disputed election one man was declared to be elected who had not been duly elected, in such a case the man who had been duly elected ought to be declared elected when the other was ousted. It was the same as an election petition. A protest might be lodged against the return of a member, and his seat might be claimed; and if the seat were claimed, why should not that be dealt with at the same time as the protest? At present the judge could not declare a person to have been elected—he could only declare that the person declared to have been elected was not elected, and the person who had been duly elected must go to the Supreme Court, and by an expensive and tedious process, after some months, he might be declared to have been elected.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that it did not follow that because one man was declared not elected the other had been elected. In elections where disputes arose another election was held.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that the court would only take that course of action in cases where it was clear that the other man had been duly elected; but if the election were void, of course there would have to be a fresh election. Suppose that one candidate obtained 200 votes, while his opponent only obtained 195, and that the man who got 195 votes was declared to have been elected, surely the court should have the power to declare the man with 200 votes to have been duly elected.

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

On the motion of the HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH, the amendments of the Legislative Council in schedules 4 and 5 were agreed to.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to some amendments with amendments, disagreed to some amendments, and agreed to other amendments.

RE-COMMITTAL.

On the motion of the HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into committee to further consider the new clause proposed to follow clause 29.

The first amendment in the new clause was disagreed to.

The House resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with an amendment to the new clause 30.

The report was adopted, and the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council, intimating that the Legislative Assembly had agreed to some amendments, agreed to others with amendments, and disagreed to others for the reasons set forth in the accompanying schedule.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. B. D. Morehead), the House went into committee to further consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

MARINE FORCE.

The CHIEF SECRETARY moved that the sum of £14,063 be granted for 1889-90 for the Marine Force. The first alteration in the vote was the item of £76 for a clerk, instead of £100, paid last year. The reduction was accounted for by a new appointment at the reduced salary. The item, "Torpedo Artificer—£200," was omitted from that portion of the vote, but would be found on the next page of the Estimates under the title of torpedo instructor at £150. The vote for engineer and storekeeper was increased from £124 to £186, and that was accounted for by the fact that last year only eight months' services were included in the Estimates. The caretaker of stores at £60 was a new item, and it was found absolutely necessary, as the stores were very valuable, and there had been no one to look after them. The contingency vote attached to that part of the Estimates, it would be seen, was reduced in connection with the items for house allowance to the senior naval officer and the torpedo instructor. In the next subdivision, in connection with the "Gayundah," the first alteration was in connection with the vote for the navigating lieutenant. In the Estimates for 1888-9 the vote was at the rate of £30 a month for four months, and a navigating lieutenant had since been appointed at a salary of £250. There was an alteration in the vote for a gunner from £144 to £126, and that was accounted for by a new appointment at the lower rate. Then there was the item of £150 for torpedo instructor, instead of £200 paid to the torpedo artificer last year.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: What is the reason for that reduction?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he would give the reason for that presently. The next alteration was the increase of the vote of £352 for boatswain, carpenter, and mechanic to £402, and that was accounted for by the fact that the previous vote was for eight months' service only. The next increase was the vote of £270, instead of £238 for last year, and that was brought about in the same way. An additional seaman was provided for at £6 a month, and that accounted for the increase in last year's vote under that head from £792 to £864. The bugler and dingyman had only been paid for eight months on last year's estimate, and that accounted for the increase from £40 to £60 on this year's vote. The vote of £78 for a signalman and instructor was a new vote, as the

commander considered it necessary to have such a man on board the vessel, and had strongly recommended the appointment. In the contingency subdivision there was an increase in "Incidentals" from £484 to £500. Since last year a new vessel had been got and the vote included the expense of repairs to torpedo boats and the keeping of other material in order; and there was a vote of £300 for store maintenance. In the contingency subdivision in connection with the Naval Brigade there was a new vote of £750 for uniforms and accoutrements, and the vote was admittedly very necessary, as last year there was nothing down for that purpose, and hon. members knew how clothes wore out. There was also a new item of £60 for caretakers of guns mounted on the coast, at the rate of £12 per annum per gun. The vote was necessary in order that the guns might be taken care of and kept fit for use.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the hon. gentleman had said he would explain the reason of the change from a torpedo artificer at £200, to a torpedo instructor at £150.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the agreement with Mr. Morgan, who had been torpedo artificer, had ceased, and the services of a very competent officer as torpedo instructor had been obtained at the reduced rate.

MR. ISAMBERT: Why were the services of the torpedo artificer dispensed with? Was it on account of incompetence?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he thought if he stated that the services of that officer were dispensed with for good and sufficient reasons that would be enough. If the hon. member wanted more reasons he (the Chief Secretary) could furnish them, but he was perfectly satisfied that Mr. Morgan should no longer continue in the position, and he was certain that the man who had succeeded him was a very capable officer.

MR. HODGKINSON said there was an increase in that vote as compared with last year from £12,541 to £14,063, and there was exactly the same headquarters staff as last year. He did not see anything in that vote about the "Palumah." He understood that that vessel was engaged in surveying under some arrangement with the Imperial Government. Did the "Palumah" cost the Queensland Government anything at the present time; if so, under what vote was it classed, and what was the amount?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said all the repairs to the hull were paid for by the Queensland Government, and the vote appeared in the Estimates for the Treasury Department. The vessel was otherwise maintained by the Imperial Government.

MR. HODGKINSON said they were getting into the same difficulty in connection with that vote as was experienced in the Imperial Parliament. It was almost impossible to follow the accounts or trace the actual expenditure. That was the Imperial system, and it was being gradually introduced here by Imperial officers. It was very unpleasant to speak of that vote, as owing to the small extent of their force, any adverse criticism looked like an attack on some officer, but nothing was more repugnant to his feelings than anything of the kind. But he asked, was it right that a vessel which cost the colony £40,000, should be employed for survey purposes? Could any hon. member give any instance in which the Imperial Government sent a vessel of that character out surveying dangerous waters like those on the coast of Queensland? The vessel was totally unfitted for such service. The vessel sent out under Commander Heath was a little schooner which could run into any

arm of the sea or even run ashore with very little danger. Yet half the navy of this colony was employed on that service. The Government were driven into that Imperial system with the navy the same as they were with the land force. He supposed they paid those gentlemen, on the "Gayundah," and he was not going to say they should not, because they were able to give training to a large body of volunteers on that boat, but why should they send half their force away among the alligators of the North, trying how near they could get to the coral without scraping it?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said one would think from the remarks of the hon. member that he had never supported a Government which did exactly the same thing as the present Government were doing.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: And made the bargain.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he thought it was a very good bargain. If they had to maintain two ships instead of one, that vote instead of being £14,000 might be £23,000.

Mr. HODGKINSON said that was not a reply to his question. There was a certain code of honour among nations with regard to exploring or survey ships. As a rule they were denuded of all offensive weapons, except such as were necessary for protection against the attacks of savages. In the particular case he referred to they sent a vessel of the most expensive construction on a very risky work, when a vessel of far less cost would answer the purpose perfectly well. He would not refer in the remarks he was about to make to any particular boat, as he did not wish it to be supposed for one moment that an attack on any individual was intended. When they compared the items on that vote with the pay-sheet of the Imperial Government, the contrast was startling. They had officers of the Imperial Government serving on the coast of Queensland at the present time, and each of those officers had a certain allowance made to him in consonance with his duties. Many of the officers employed in the colonial service—he was not now alluding to Queensland—were retired officers of the Imperial Government, and very few of them, as far as he knew, had attained the rank of commander, with the exception of the chief naval officers in Victoria and New South Wales. In the Imperial Service the salaries of effective officers were as follows:—For a lieutenant, £183 to £209 per annum, with allowances ranging from £18 to £73, which allowances were only given under certain circumstances; for a lieutenant in command, from £201 to £227, with allowances from £46 to £141; for a navigating lieutenant, who was an officer of higher rank, from £219 to £401, with allowances ranging from £146 to £159; for a commander, an officer of higher rank still, being next to a post-captain, £365, with extras ranging from £46 to £141. Those were the highest rates paid for effective officers in the Imperial Service. A large proportion of the officers employed in the colonial forces—not the Australasian forces only, but the whole of the colonial forces—were, as a rule, retired officers, and if hon. members referred back to the date of their retirement, they would find that it dated back to a period when the weapons now being used on board modern men-of-war were unknown. They were just as much unknown to them as the "Brown Bess" was unknown to the ancient Scythians. They were incurring that expenditure with a view to having a small kernel of a defensive force, so that, in the event of necessity arising, they might be able to instruct a large body of men in the latest developments of military discipline and military science. But

they would find that most of the gentlemen appointed to the Australasian British possessions were gentlemen belonging to what was known as the "old school." They were just as antique in their ideas and in their education, and just as unacquainted with modern systems of warfare, as the troops of the Duke of Wellington were with the Minie Rifle, and he denied that anybody could disprove his assertion.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said of course the comparisons made by the hon. gentleman were perfectly true so far as the salaries were concerned. But let them take the case of their commandant, who was a colonel of artillery; he was worth all the salary he received. Then in regard to the "Gayundah," the gentleman who was in charge of her had been in command of the "Wolverine" in Sydney, and he went through a special course of training only a few years ago to get in touch with modern ideas.

Mr. HODGKINSON: Which showed that he wanted it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that might be so; but he was only stating the facts in reference to Captain Taylor, and it was only fair that the matter should be mentioned. He was not at all sure that some of those old and antique officers mentioned by the hon. member for Burke would not be as good as some of those fellows who came out with new-fangled ideas, and who, no doubt, subverted all their present system of defence, and put it all in a state of disorder. Such a person might do a lot to hamper and impair their defences, and shake their whole system to its foundation. Any Government could obtain the newest appliances for defence that were obtainable for money; and he thought all those officers, although they were at a great distance from England, and had been away from there a long time, kept themselves up to the mark in regard to new inventions; and, so far as he had seen, they seemed eager to adopt every new warlike appliance that they heard or read of.

Mr. HODGKINSON said, as far as he was concerned, he did not wish the discussion to reflect in any way upon any officer bearing Her Majesty's commission, who could not be there to defend himself. They had two vessels, which they maintained in some shape or another, and they were built for a special purpose; but they had been in existence for only a very short time before one was diverted to another purpose. To say the colony saved money by that arrangement was not a good argument, because it would be an admission that the vessel was not wanted in the first instance. The necessity for developing their naval strength was just as great at present as it was ten years ago—far greater, in fact, because as they advanced in material prosperity; there was a greater incentive to attack, and therefore the system of defence should be better. He wanted to know how much the boat that was engaged in surveying actually cost the colony. The Chief Secretary had stated, and, no doubt, with perfect truth, that if the "Palumah" were on the Estimate, the vote, instead of being £14,000, would probably be swollen to £25,000. She did cost something, and he wanted to know what the amount was.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: See page 52; £2,500.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he wanted to know if that covered every item—stores, maintenance, officers' salaries, and the wages of crew.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the only instance he could give in which the "Palumah" had cost the Government any more, was a small sum for a new whale boat. He would remind the hon. member that the arrangement entered

into with the Imperial Government was made by the late Government, and very properly carried out by the late Government. The late Minister for Lands was the gentleman who gave those two vessels their aboriginal names.

Mr. HODGKINSON: They are very appropriate, too.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said one of the names sounded very like "go-under." That was not a very nice name for a British ship. However, he mentioned that merely to show that he did not think any blame could be attached to the present Government, or, indeed, to the late Government. The ships were ordered by the present Government, last time they were in office, and one of them was diverted to her present use by the late Government, and no objection had been taken until the present.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he believed that the names meant "Thunder" and "Lightning." No doubt it was meant that the vessel which was employed in surveying was to discharge lightning at their enemies. If they struck out one letter, perhaps the name would be more appropriate still, as the vessel was engaged in lighting the coast.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Who could tell that the terms meant "Thunder" and "Lightning"? That was merely an assertion made by the late Minister for Lands.

Mr. HODGKINSON said no doubt it was as good a translation as they possessed of a native dialect. As he had said, his chief object had been to find out the total amount of their naval vote.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he had listened with a great deal of amusement to the arguments on both sides of the Committee. He had been watching for some years, and had noticed that there seemed to be a wish that they should become a naval power; but as regarded the number of ships they had at present, if a hole were knocked in the bottom of one, half their navy would be gone. Their ships were commanded by superannuated old gentlemen who could find nothing to do at home, and so came out to the colony. He was not a lover of the name of a naval power in Queensland yet; but it was a very remarkable thing that their naval expenses were increasing every year, while their votes for branch railway lines were decreasing every year. He did not think that was a proper system. They got on better before they had a navy at all, and he was inclined to think they did not want a navy. Their starting a navy reminded him of the Irishman who ran away from the fair with his coat tail cut off wanting to know who would stand upon it. That was about their position. The statement of the Chief Secretary that their navy would cost them £25,000 a year if the "Palumah" was used as a war ship, was not a very promising one. The amount was increasing every year. What did they want a navy for? Whom were they going to fight? Would it not be far better to lay out the money on improved means of transit within the colony and settling people on the land? After the colony had grown up to have a population of 1,000,000 or 2,000,000, then would be the time to subsidise a navy. There were now the owners of New Guinea, and had to find ships for it also. In short, they were simply running before they could walk. They reminded him of Gulliver's architect, who commenced to build a house at the top of the chimney. It would be far better to knock the vote on the head. He knew it would be of little use for him to divide the Committee on the question; but if he had the power he would knock the vote off the Estimates.

Mr. ADAMS said he did not agree with the hon. member for Stanley, as he believed it was their duty to provide for the naval defence of the colony. In the vote for naval brigades he naturally expected to find something put down for Bundaberg. There were two provided for at Brisbane, one at Rockhampton, one at Maryborough, one at Townsville, and one at Cooktown and Cairns, and there ought certainly to have been one for the mouth of the Burnett.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. W. Pattison): It is very well protected now.

Mr. ADAMS said he should like to see it still better protected. There was not a better place on the coast than the mouth of the Burnett for the formation of a naval brigade. There was plenty of water there, and the mouth of the river was protected by Great Sandy Island, and ships could lie there in all weathers. Besides that, there were a lot of young men there who would be only too glad to join a naval brigade. Although there was nothing on the vote for the Burnett on that occasion, he trusted the Chief Secretary would see his way to do something in that direction next year.

Mr. ISAMBERT said he should like to hear something more about the torpedo artificer, whose services had been dispensed with. Men were got out from England, and as soon as their term of service had expired, they were turned adrift. Great disappointment had been expressed with regard to appointments in the naval defence force. Like kissing, all appointments in the force went by favour. War dogs were very expensive, and were apt to grow very rapidly and to become very ferocious. They ought to be satisfied with one war dog instead of two. Little as the war dogs were they were growing very rapidly. The colony was adopting the lines of Great Britain, who had depended chiefly on her naval power, and had considered her land force as merely an auxiliary. But they ought to act in the reverse way—to rely mainly on their land forces, and to regard the naval force as merely an auxiliary. There was a good deal of jealousy between the two departments, and in his opinion, one department for the two branches of the service would be sufficient. The force as a whole was very expensive, and it was certain the colony did not get proper value for the money spent upon it. He had always opposed the purchase of the torpedo boat, and he was still not in love with the clumsy gunboats they had. What they required were swift despatch boats, to serve chiefly as a school of instruction for naval training. Arrangements might easily be made by the Government, by which the whole of the seamen on the mercantile fleet of the coast might be trained on those ships, so that gradually the whole of the coastal steamers would be available in time of war, and the naval defence of the colony rendered far more effective than at present, at a much less cost.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he noticed that there was a messenger at £52, and a caretaker of stores at £60 a year. The salaries seemed very low. The caretaker must have very responsible duties to perform.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the messenger was a lad, and the caretaker was an old man in the service who would have had to leave under other circumstances; a man with knowledge, but not capable of doing any hard work.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said they appeared to be finding work for a lot of loafers. What were those vessels doing during the year; and what were the men supposed to be doing? The "Gayundah" appeared to be always anchored in the river.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that the caretaker was not a loafer, but had come out with the ship, and had since been invalided out of the service. He did not consider that it was merely an act of charity appointing him to the position of caretaker, as someone was required, and considering the man's service, and the fact that his health prevented him from any active work, the appointment had been given to him.

Mr. HODGKINSON said that of course it was very creditable, and they all sympathised with what the Chief Secretary had said; but that was supposed to be the nucleus of a force—a symbol of activity, and the latest developments of science, and not a refuge for deserving invalided men or officers. He noticed under the head of contingencies that there were house allowances to the senior naval officer, the officer instructor, the torpedo instructor, and the paymaster. Of course the position occupied by the senior naval officer made that a perfectly proper perquisite; but what was the meaning of those other house allowances? What sort of a house could the torpedo instructor get for £25 a year? Why should they not be put down boldly and honestly under the head of salary? The only officer who had any claim by precedents of the service to a house allowance was the senior naval officer, who was on a par with the commandant of the land forces.

Mr. BARLOW said it might be interesting to the Committee to know whether the Government had received any communication from the Admiralty with reference to that matter with which the Chief Secretary had dealt so promptly last year—he referred to the case where the promptitude and decision of the hon. gentleman had prevented the "Gayundah" from being taken out to sea by the then commander. He believed the controversy had been referred to the Admiralty. Also, were they to understand that if the "Palumah" were lost the loss would fall on the colony, or had the British Government engaged, in the event of her being lost while in their service, to replace her?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that the agreement had been made by the late Colonial Treasurer, the Hon. J. R. Dickson, and as far as his memory served him there was nothing in it about the British Government being liable in the event of her being lost. He took it that she was in the hands of a competent commanding officer.

Mr. HODGKINSON: The "Sultan" was under the command of a competent officer, and yet she was lost.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that the agreement stated that £2,500 a year was paid by the Admiralty for her use.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said the British Government did not pay £2,500 a year, but £2,500 a year was put down as a joint contribution, and of that the English Government contributed £1,250.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said the hon. gentleman's memory deceived him. He was not quite certain about all the facts, but a joint purse was contributed in equal shares, and out of that joint purse the colony got a rent of £2,500 a year.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: £2,500 a year goes to the joint purse.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said it cost a great deal more than that. They got a joint purse contributed by the colony and the Admiralty, and the colony was credited with so much on account of rent. He was not quite sure whether the £2,500 was an addition to that rent or not, but he thought it was.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that with reference to the opinion of the Admiralty in regard to Captain Wright, all the particulars had been published.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said that £2,500 a year went into the joint purse.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said his recollection differed from that of the hon. gentleman. £2,500 a year was paid out of the joint purse to the colony of Queensland by way of contribution.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: That is £1,250 each.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said the Admiralty paid £2,500 a year to the colony, and the colony contributed half the expenses, supposed to come to about £2,500 more. The joint account, which included the hire of the ship, the working expenses of the survey, the cost of provisions, wages, etc., were made up by the Admiralty, and the Admiralty and the colony bore the expense equally, provided that the contribution of the Admiralty did not exceed £4,000 in any one year. If they paid £4,000, then the colony would pay £4,000. That would be £8,000, and £2,500 of that the colony got back.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: That is not the agreement.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said it was the agreement. The joint purse paid the colonial Government £2,500 a year. He did not remember whether they took credit for £2,500 a year, and only paid the difference, or whether they first paid the Admiralty the full amount of £4,000 or £5,000 a year.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said it was useless discussing the question now, because the item would come on in the Treasurer's Estimates, and he would be able to give all particulars.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said, with respect to Captain Wright, he would like to say a word or two. He had been told so many times of what he had done in getting the white ensign hoisted on the "Gayundah," and so placing her beyond the control of the Queensland Government in some mysterious manner, that he would take the opportunity of reading a despatch from Lord Knutsford, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, about Captain Wright. The despatch was dated the 20th March, 1889, and was as follows:—

"I communicated to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty a copy of Sir A. Palmer's despatch No. 103, of the 29th October last, with its enclosures, reporting the circumstances under which retired Commander H. Townley Wright, R.N., had been dismissed from the offices of commander of the Queensland gunboat 'Gayundah,' senior naval officer, and naval superintendent.

"Their lordships on receipt of these papers consulted the Law Officers of the Crown and the Admiralty counsel in reference to the legality of the action taken in the matter by the Queensland Government, and in reply were advised that under the Queensland Defence Act (48 Victoria No. 27) power is given to the Governor to dismiss any officer; and that the Colonial Defence Act of 1865 (28 and 29 Victoria, Cap. 14), which enabled the Imperial Government to accept this ship, enacts (section 10) that nothing therein shall abridge any power vested in the Government of any colony.

"The Law Officers stated that their power is further expressed in regulation 162, and that the right, therefore, to dismiss Captain Wright at pleasure remained in the Governor, and could certainly be exercised by him while the 'Gayundah' was in Queensland waters. Whether such a power could be so exercised while the vessel is on active service with the Imperial fleet was, they considered, a question which could scarcely arise.

"The Law Officers further advised that the liability of the officers and seamen to the Naval Discipline Act, which undoubtedly exists, does not in any way affect the powers of the Governor; and that the privilege of carrying the white ensign does not alter the position of the ship or her officers."

That was what he had maintained from the first, but he had been told he was wrong. No harm had been done to the colony by the vessel wearing the white flag, which, for some reasons, was a matter of considerable importance.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he thought the hon. gentleman had been running a little in and out with regard to that matter. He thought that credit was due to the present Government for the action they had taken.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that if the leader of the Opposition had read a little further down the agreement he had referred to, he would have found that he was wrong in saying that the colony received £2,500 from the Imperial Government.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I did not say that. I said their contribution was not to exceed £4,000 a year to the joint purse.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The hon. member said the English Government paid £2,500.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I said the joint purse paid that.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: That is what I said. Why was I contradicted?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the question at issue was whether the colony in its present state could afford a navy, the cost of which was increasing yearly, while more important matters were neglected? If the Imperial Government could not send better naval men to the colony than the few he had seen here, they might as well keep them at home. He would be almost ashamed to give his opinion of some of them.

Mr. BARLOW said he would suggest that the question of the risk of the "Palumah" should be considered.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the agreement stipulated that the vessel should be insured at the sole cost of the colony.

Mr. HODGKINSON asked by whom the "Palumah" was officered and manned?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Entirely by the Admiralty.

Mr. ISAMBERT said that little as the naval defence force was, it had given no end of trouble and annoyance; and it was a question whether they would not do well to get one or two swift boats for the purpose of naval instruction. The sailors trained on those boats might find employment on the merchantmen trading along the coast; and then the colony might get some value for the money expended. The "Gayundah" was simply a costly toy. The land force had given satisfaction, but the naval force had not; and some better guarantee of usefulness ought to be given before the money was voted.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he wished to know what had been done in the way of encouraging the naval brigades along the coast. He observed that the "Gayundah" had been under way a good many times lately; but she seemed to lie a great part of the year in the Brisbane River. Her principal use in peace was as a training ship; and he knew from his experience while in office that the various naval brigades looked forward to visits from the "Gayundah" to get real active training, which they could not get on land.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he agreed with the hon. member that the "Gayundah" should be used primarily as a training ship. He thought she had done more work in that direction during the last few months than she had done before; and it was the intention of the Government that she should continue that work.

Mr. DRAKE said he did not agree with the suggestion made by the hon. member for Rosewood in regard to the defence of the coast. If he remembered rightly, the present Government, in calling for tenders for the new mail contract, had in view the employment of steamers which could be converted into armed cruisers like those of several lines under contract with the British Government. That, he assumed, would be carrying out what the hon. member for Rosewood wanted; and he was inclined to think that was really the proper way to provide for the naval defence of the colony. He did not see how it would be possible to provide anything like swift cruisers in any other way for a long time to come.

Mr. ISAMBERT said the naval defence system was too costly to be allowed to be useless. He thought the vessels ought to be used for training purposes, so that the whole of the sailors belonging to the merchantmen would be of service in time of war. Some arrangement might be made with the companies trading along the coast, so that they should go hand in hand. He knew that Messrs. Howard Smith and Co. were willing to make some arrangement with the Government in regard to the use of their vessels in time of war; and he thought the vessels of all the companies who had the privilege of trading along the coast ought to be made of service in time of war.

Mr. HYNÉ said he wished to have some information respecting the item of £140, prizes for shooting. Was it for Brisbane only, or for the whole of the colony? He would also like to hear some explanation as to £600 for travelling allowances and incidental expenses; and the items for the headquarters band and deferred pay.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the prizes for shooting applied to the whole of the naval force. The travelling and incidental expenses were the same as last year. The deferred pay was a sum which accrued at the end of each man's period of three years' service.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he wished to ask the Chief Secretary if the case of a man named Greensill, who was a member of the naval brigade, and volunteered for service on board the "Victoria" when she took back the New Guinea natives, in which service he had been so severely injured as to be disabled from the performance of his daily avocation, had been brought under his notice. He thought that when a man in either branch of the defence force was injured in the performance of his duty he was entitled to some consideration. A case had been mentioned in which a man on board the "Gayundah" was so disabled in health as to be unable to continue his ordinary duty, and he was appointed a caretaker of stores. He thought the same consideration should be shown in other cases of the same kind.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he did not remember whether the case had been brought under his notice or not, without further information than he had at present before him. He might state that he had followed the invariable practice of the Government in such cases, which was, that every consideration should be shown to individuals who were injured in the service; and if the case referred to was brought officially under the notice of the Government by the hon. gentleman or anybody else it would receive the most serious attention.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Will the hon. gentleman allow me to hand him a letter I have received on the subject?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Certainly; I will place it amongst my papers.

Mr. LITTLE said he had no objection to the case of the man who was injured on board the "Victoria" being taken into consideration, but he thought there were others who were also entitled to consideration. He could mention the case of three men in the native police force who were very severely injured in the performance of their duties up North, where they were protecting the miners; and if compensation was allowed in the case mentioned by the hon. leader of the Opposition, it would open a loophole for other cases, and he (Mr. Little) would take an opportunity of moving the adjournment of the House to bring the cases he had referred to under notice.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: With regard to the question asked by the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Hyne, how the £140 voted for shooting was divided, he could state that £40 went to Brisbane; £40 to Rockhampton; £20 to Maryborough; £20 to Townsville; and £20 to Cairns.

Question put and passed.

COLONIAL SECRETARY.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. D. Morehead) moved that there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1889-1890 a sum not exceeding £6,415 for the Colonial Secretary's department. There were some small increases, the largest of which was £50 to the accountant, Mr. Kob. That gentleman was an excellent officer, and had been a great many years in the service. His last increase was given five years ago. A very large amount of money passed through his hands in the course of the year, and it was now proposed to make his salary in accord with the salaries given to similar officers in other departments. The leader of the Opposition knew Mr. Kob's qualifications probably better than he did. There were other increases to three clerks, and he was sorry he could not recommend in two cases, at any rate, larger increases than those proposed. From his knowledge of them he was only astonished that they remained in the Government service, because he was certain that if they were to go into the service of private firms or banks they would be paid more highly than they were now.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: They have very good prospects.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he hoped they had, and he hoped the hon. gentleman when he came into office would assist them in the same way as he was doing. There was an increase of £50 to Mr. Stephens, which was voted on the Supplementary Estimates last year, and should have been on the Estimates-in-Chief. He did not think anyone would object to giving that salary to Australia's greatest poet—if he was nothing else—although he was a very able clerk as well. The only other increase was one of £20 to a lad who had been paid out of contingencies and was now put in the Estimates-in-Chief.

Mr. GLASSEY said there was considerable discussion outside the House with respect to the number of Under Colonial Secretaries who were being paid by the country. There were no less than four at present. There was one active one, he admitted, and no doubt he worked for his salary, and perhaps the others had made some provision for the money which they drew. There were three not in active service drawing salaries of £600, £324, and £267, respectively, and one in active service drawing £800 a year. He thought the matter required some consideration and that the public had some reason to grumble, and ask where the thing was going to stop. It was also

alleged that one gentleman who drew £600 a year was not living in the colony, and if that was so he thought that some means should be found to tax such persons, so that they would contribute something to the colony. He had no doubt those gentlemen had made some sort of provision for the money they drew, but he was giving vent to a wide-spread feeling outside, and wished to get information on the matter. He wished to know whether they were going to continue paying £2,000 a year for Under Colonial Secretaries, past and present. Another gentleman had just been transferred to another department at a very large increase of salary, and doubtless in a short time, if he thought fit, he would retire and a considerable sum would have to be provided for him. He thought persons who were able to work should be asked to render some service to the country in consideration of the money they drew.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman must know that he was hardly stating the facts of the case in the speech he had just made. Most members of the Committee he thought must know, that under an Act which was passed when the House was almost in a state of panic, a pension was voted to Mr. Manning. He did not think, with the exception of the members for Rockhampton (Mr. Archer) and Stanley (Mr. O'Sullivan), there were any members present that evening who were members of the House when that Act had been passed; but it was known that Mr. Manning had been severely attacked, and at the time the Act was passed it was believed that he would not survive the attack. That was shown by the fact that at that time provision was made for a pension to Mr. Manning's widow after his death. It was an obligation entered into by Parliament, and he was sure it would be carried out as honestly as any other obligation of Parliament. With regard to the next question of a pension to a late Under Colonial Secretary, he would point out that Mr. Massie was fully and fairly entitled to the pension he received under the Act under which he served, and a more faithful servant than Mr. Massie no Government ever had. With regard to the other Under Colonial Secretaries the hon. member had referred to, he might state that under the present arrangement of the offices the Under Colonial Secretary was practically the Under Chief Secretary, and the Assistant Under Colonial Secretary did the work performed by the Under Colonial Secretary before the present arrangement of the Ministerial offices. He had found both those gentlemen very capable men, and it was not fair for the hon. member to tell the country that they were actually paying four Under Colonial Secretaries. He understood the hon. member to include Mr. Rawlings in his remarks, and that gentleman was entitled under the Act under which he had served to retire upon a pension. Out of four referred to by the hon. member one received a pension in consequence of an accident, and the others through length of service had been entitled to retire upon a pension.

Mr. GLASSEY said it was always a very painful thing to bring matters before the Committee which affected the interests of private individuals; but they had certain duties to perform, and had to deal with those things, however painful it might be. He would be the last man to deprive another of that which he had earned, or which he was entitled to, and in the case of a man having met with an accident in the service of the State he was in favour of making ample provision for that man. At the same time there was not the slightest doubt there were many men in the service receiving much smaller salaries though they had arduous

duties to perform, and there were many persons outside the Government service who had great difficulty in making both ends meet, and when they saw those items a certain amount of dissension was created, and they naturally looked for some information of those votes. If, under the circumstances, a certain amount of grumbling took place there was, at all events, some reason for it.

Question put and passed.

REGISTRAR-GENERAL—PATENTS AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the sum of £9,560 be granted for the Registrar-General—Patents and Friendly Societies Departments. There was an increase in the Registrar-General's vote of £150 instead of £75, for the messenger and officer-keeper. A man instead of a lad was required, and there was a great deal of work to be done; and he thought £150 was not too much. The only other material increases were those for an extra clerk at £150, in the Patents Office, which was necessary, as the work was very heavy, and the Registrar had convinced him that another clerk in that office was necessary; and an increase of £300 in the item of fees to examiners. It had been found quite impossible to get the examiners to work with the votes passed by the House. They would not work without fees, and in that respect they did not differ greatly from many hon. members of the Committee. If they were to get competent persons for the really important work those examiners took in hand it was necessary they should be paid. He had struggled very hard against the increase himself, but on inquiry into it he found the work of the Patents Office was very important, and could not be carried out efficiently unless those men were paid fairly for their work. There was a small decrease under the Friendly Societies vote, and it was due to the fact that the rent now being paid by the department would cease when they got into their new offices, which he thought would be in two days.

Mr. HODGKINSON said there was an item of £10 for a messenger under the Friendly Societies vote which he would like to hear explained.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was a very small item, and as he saw it was on the last year's vote he had not inquired into it. If the hon. member thought it of importance he would give the information to-morrow, but he had no memorandum about it to refer to at present.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said there was not the least doubt the £10 was for somebody else, and very likely for the person whose salary had been increased from £75 to £150.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is an allowance from the Friendly Societies of £10.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the question was: by whom was it drawn? He was quite sure it was drawn by the person whose salary had been doubled and who could not have been intended to get the £10 extra. It was one of those small things which he could say from his experience were continually going on without Ministers finding them out until it was too late. He wished to call attention to the Patent Office, and he thought it was an anomalous thing, and he was sure it was not conducive to the efficiency of the office, that there should be three clerks there, all at the salary of £150 a year. It would be far more satisfactory if one officer there had some sort of superintendence over the others, which was not likely to exist as things

were. When that branch of the office was started some years ago nobody knew exactly what would be wanted, and they had appointed one clerk at £150 a year with a promise of an increase when the work increased. The work had increased to such an extent since then, that three officers were now required instead of one, and they all received the same salary—namely, £150 a year. That was a mistake; it would be far better to have somebody at a higher salary than the others to exercise supervision under the registrar. The fact that those three officers all received the same salary indicated a want of system in the admission of officers into the Government service. They had an office which had now been in existence a number of years, and a new clerk came in and received the same salary as officers already in the department. A senior officer should receive more salary than a junior one.

Mr. HODGKINSON said if that officer got £10 extra he would receive more than was paid to the messengers and office-keepers in the Colonial Secretary's department and the Registrar of Titles' department, and the consequence would be that pressure would be brought to bear by those officers to be put on the same level. He would like to know whether the work of the Patents Office was sufficient to justify that special vote of £200 for a photo-lithographer.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, as far as he could understand, the office-keeper in the Registrar-General's Department had suffered a deprivation of quarters. He did not know whether the same man got that extra £10 a year, but had no doubt that he did. With regard to the photo-lithographer, that officer was an absolute necessity; the Patents Office could not do without him.

Mr. HODGKINSON said the hon. member for Enoggera had pointed out to him that the messenger and office-keeper in the Registrar-General's Department received altogether £210 per annum. He got £75 as messenger for the Registrar-General, £75 as messenger for the Registrar of Titles, £25 in lieu of quarters, £25 allowance as office cleaner, and £10 allowance from the office of Registrar of Friendly Societies, total, £210; and if his salary was increased by another £75, as shown by that vote, he would get £285. There were men of education, discharging most important duties in the Government service, who did not receive anything like that salary. There was a gentleman in the Mines Department who was one of the most valuable officers in that department, and he did not get anything like that salary. He should like to know whether there was a commercial firm in the city which gave a messenger £210 per annum.

Mr. SAYERS said it appeared as if that messenger, who filled no less than five positions, had a friend at court. There were clerks in the Patents Office who, no doubt, held quite as responsible a position as that of the messenger, and who had to keep up a certain appearance, and they were only receiving £150 a year, while the messenger in the same office received £210, without the proposed increase of £75. That was not right. In many of the offices a stranger unaccustomed to the ways of the office, might look for a long time before he could find the messenger. Probably the reason was that the messenger filled several offices as in that case. If messengers were required for the different offices, several persons should be appointed and paid fair salaries; the same man should not hold so many positions. Perhaps the Colonial Secretary could tell the Committee the name of the favoured individual who filled all those offices and received £210 a year.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had not the slightest idea what his name was. He (the Colonial Secretary) gave the information to the Committee just as he had it in a memorandum on the margin of his copy of the Estimates, and that was that a man was now employed instead of a boy; but on looking at the schedule to the Estimates, he found that the messenger was receiving £210 per annum. He certainly had no intention of increasing that man's salary.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he could inform the Committee that in his experience a great many officers in the Civil Service had got their salaries increased without the knowledge of either Ministers or Parliament. Recommendations came in from departments—some were worse than others—and, unless they were carefully scrutinised by Ministers, they were passed, and the net result was that a man got his salary increased £20, £30, or £40, nobody knowing anything about it except the man himself, and the immediate head of his department. That kind of thing was always going on, and he thought it was a very improper thing to happen. It might chance once in three or four years that a private member referred to the matter, and asked for information. The Minister could not give it, and the next year the reply given to inquiries on the subject was, "Oh! that salary has been drawn for some time." Perhaps the Civil Service Board would stop that. It would be a serious thing if that messenger by mere accident, without the knowledge of the Minister, and certainly without the concurrence of the Committee, found himself in the fourth class under the Civil Service Bill, while other messengers were placed in the fifth class; in that case he would be in a better position than a great many clerks in the service.

Mr. DRAKE said at page 5 in the schedule to the Estimates that distinguished individual was set down as receiving £75 as "Messenger, Registrar of Titles," while in the Estimates, page 23, the salary for the same office was stated to be £150. That increased the salary by another £75.

Mr. PHILP said he noticed that the Registrar-General and Registrar of Titles received some £1,500 a year between them, and he thought it might be possible that one of those officers could do the whole of the work. It was a well known fact that the Registrar-General was simply the registrar of births, deaths, and marriages, and that the bulk of the other work was done by the Registrar of Titles. When the Civil Service Bill came into operation there might be some change; and he thought the Government might well consider the advisability of the work being done with one officer instead of two.

Mr. TOZER said he noticed that the Registrar-General also received £100 a year as Registrar of Patents, and the Government might rest assured so long as he was a member of the Committee, if he could economise in regard to the Estimates, he would do so. He was very much surprised to find that expense in connection with the Patents Office. Last year he had referred to the subject, and if he could find four or five members to assist him he would try and stop the vote. The Government promised last year that the office would be remodelled, and the following was what the Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith, then Colonial Treasurer, said on the subject:—

"So far from taking the duty off the articles mentioned, if he could do it and had time, he would repeal the Patent Act, by which certain men had such a monopoly of all those things. If it had not been for the Patent Act they would have had the articles mentioned by the hon. member made in the colony long ago. A man took out a patent, and immediately created a monopoly. He took a patent out in the colony, not for the purpose of manufacturing the article he had invented, but to prevent others manufacturing it. He

wanted to prevent those things coming into the colony. He did not believe one out of ninety-nine of the patents granted were valid, and he would like to see that state of things put a stop to."

And later on—

"Formerly twenty guineas used to be charged for passing a patent, but no Government could possibly for the sum of twenty guineas get good and reliable information upon an application for a patent. It cost a great deal more than that to get good and sound advice. The reduction made in the price from twenty to five guineas made the whole thing a farce. If the hon. gentleman tomorrow wrote out a specification of his coat or his waistcoat and sent it into the Patents Office, he (the Colonial Treasurer) would give him a patent within a week, charging him five guineas for it, by which he would have the exclusive right of making that coat or waistcoat in the colony. The only effect of granting patents was to create monopolies for people at home; but in the next session he hoped to be able to enact a considerable improvement upon the patent laws. He would make the granting of patents so dear that they should be very few and very good."

That was the best opinion that the Government could possibly have given. But instead of carrying out such a policy, the Government had actually come down and asked for £350 more to increase the rottenness of the office. Hence necessarily acquired a good deal of knowledge in the exercise of his profession, in respect to that department, but he would not trouble the Committee with information obtained in that manner. Judging by the way that office was carried on at present, everything in the colony would, by-and-by, be subject to a patent. Men would come and apply for patents for appliances used in every industry in the colony. Only a few days ago a man found out something about lowering a cage down a mine one side of the shaft instead of the other, and he obtained a patent for it, whether the idea was new or old. Another man came down and asked for a patent for a new idea for ventilating mines, although that system had been in use from time immemorial, and he obtained the patent and worried the industry. Everything would be patented before long, and he believed Sir T. McIlwraith was quite right in the remarks he (Mr. Tozer) had quoted. He heard a curious thing a little while ago, where a man wanted a patent in reference to water. That water was to be used in ventilating a mine, and the applicant for the patent was sent to Mr. Henderson. Mr. Henderson was no doubt a very good hydraulic engineer, but he knew about as much of using water for the ventilation of mines as probably the Shah of Persia did. He (Mr. Tozer) did not know that that gentleman had ever been down a mine in his life, but the man had been granted a patent, and it had cost the people of the colony about £500. He knew that they granted patents in England, and left them to be fought out; but things were managed in a very different way in Queensland, where they professed to protect the public by granting useless patents, and the Government were perpetuating that system of useless patents by allowing a lot of useless clerks to give every man a patent who asked for it. If they did away with all those clerks they would find that there would not be so many patents granted to persons who came forward under the impression that they had discovered an improvement or developed a new idea. If every man engaged in the mining industry applied for a patent for each little improvement that was made every day, the result would be that the Patents Office would be kept going, and the miners would never be able to carry on their industry. There was no doubt that it was desirable to give some protection to a real discoverer; but it was disgraceful that they should keep an office open for the purpose of granting monopolies to people, and worry others engaged in any industry. He hoped the Government would follow the advice given by Sir Thomas McIlwraith last year, and see that the Registrar-General took

more care, and made proper inquiries when applications for patents were sent in, to see that the public were not worried by all men who came with their new ideas. As the law existed, if a man brought an axe out from England he might go to the office, represent it was something new, obtain a patent for it, and worry everybody else who used an axe of that kind. He knew from his experience that everybody who went to that office got what he wanted. He found, in reference to the Ravenswood Gold Fields, that the Registrar-General had granted a patent to a company called the Newberry-Vautin Company, and that a patent for the same thing had been granted to someone else, and persons who had invested largely in the mines there really did not know whom they had to pay. He trusted that the Government would see that the Registrar-General took more pains, and did not grant patents for useless inventions.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said all he could say in regard to the matter was that the Registrar-General took a great deal of trouble in regard to patents. It was a most thankless office, and he did not think any member of that Committee would accept it for ten times the salary. He certainly gave the Registrar-General credit for conscientiously going into those matters. Probably the best solution of the difficulty was the one suggested by Sir Thomas McIlwraith, to abolish the Patents Office altogether. There was no serious fault to be found in the working of the Patents Act by the present Registrar-General. With regard to the messenger in question his salary was just the same as before. The man held the office of messenger to the Registrar-General, and also to the Registrar of Titles, the two offices being close together, for which he got £150. When the Registrar-General moved into the new building, the messenger would go with him, and his pay would be the same as before. It would also be necessary for the Registrar of Titles to have a messenger for his own department, as the offices were too far apart for the work of both offices to be done by one messenger.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH asked if it was proposed to give the messenger £150 or £75.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the messenger had been getting £210 a year for several years.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he took leave to doubt whether the man ever got anything like it. Those increases were arrived at in a mysterious manner. According to the schedule, one person was mentioned as receiving as messenger to the Registrar-General £75, as messenger to the Registrar of Titles £75, besides other allowances. On the Estimates, in the column for last year, the messenger of the Registrar of Titles was put down as having received £150. Did he get £150, or did he get £75?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This is a new estimate altogether.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he was talking about last year's vote. It only proved that they could not rely on either the schedules or the Estimates. He would take the opportunity to ask the Colonial Secretary what was the state of progress with the new Government buildings? How was it proposed to dispose of the rooms?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the Treasury would go into occupation almost immediately on the first floor. Within two or three weeks the Mines and Works Department would occupy the floor of the building above the Colonial Secretary. Above that would be the Auditor-General's Department. The police would occupy the basement, and the Chief Inspector of

Stock would also have his offices there. The Registrar-General would have the floor over the Treasury as well as a portion of the ground floor, where strongrooms had been provided for the safe custody of documents. The Auditor-General would have the top story at the Queen street corner. The Treasury would be on the same flat as the Colonial Secretary. There was also a room for the Clerk of the Executive Council. There were four rooms on the original plan devoted to the Chief Secretary, but the present Chief Secretary intended to take only one room, giving up the other three for other purposes.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: That is a mistake.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said if it was a mistake the next Chief Secretary could remedy it.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the arrangement originally made was that the Colonial Secretary should have the corner of Queen street, above him the Mines and Works, and above that the Auditor-General's department. At the Elizabeth street corner, the Registrar-General's department was to be on the ground floor; and the Education office above that. To have only one room for the Chief Secretary was, as he had said, a mistake. The offices of Chief Secretary and Colonial Secretary, although held together now, would not always be held together. There was more work in those two offices than any man could properly do, as he knew from his own experience. The head of the Government should have a room for himself and one for his private secretary, quite independent of his position as head of a Government department, because he had duties to perform irrespective of any department. It would be an unfortunate thing if, in a building like that, on account of the temporary requirements of the present Government, the arrangements originally made should be disturbed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the present Government could not take the rooms away; and the arrangements could be altered, if it were thought necessary, by their successors. Some of the rooms were very badly planned; for instance, there was no door between the Under Secretary's room and that of the Chief Secretary.

Mr. McMASTER said they had not yet heard the messenger's name. Why was it omitted from the schedule?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the name had been omitted from the schedule since 1887.

Mr. McMASTER: Does he exist at all?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: It is very doubtful.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he would see if he could find him. He had made the inquiry, and he could get no information, but he noticed that in other cases the names of the messengers were omitted from the schedule.

Mr. HYNÉ said he did not want to fall foul of the poor messenger, but he should like the Committee to take a stand with regard to the highly-paid officials receiving £600 and £800 a year. After some of those individuals had decided half-a-dozen matters they went out and played polo matches, or pranced about upon their fiery steeds, and went to dine at their clubs. It was a crying shame that those highly-paid officers should go on as they did. He wished to refer to those ornamental heads of departments. He could tell the Committee that the other day he had had to go to one Government department upon some business connected with his constituency. He inquired of the messenger if Mr. So-and-So

were in, and he went to the door of the gentleman's office to find out. Following close upon the messenger's heels, when he got to the door he heard the officer make use of a word, beginning with a big D. No doubt he (Mr. Hyne) was a terrible nuisance, and that was the way those highly-salaried officials treated people. It was too much trouble for those men to do anything but sign their names, and read the morning paper. He had wondered whether if an Under Secretary would snap at a man like that, if the Minister would bite him. He moved that the vote be reduced by the amount of £150—salary paid to the messenger and office cleaner.

Mr. GLASSEY said it would be better if the Colonial Secretary would get the name of the man, as hardship might be done to some poor man. He should be sorry to vote for the motion of the hon. member for Maryborough, but some hon. members thought, if no information could be given, that the vote was fictitious, and they would vote against it on that account.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the Auditor-General took good care that no fictitious votes were brought before the Committee.

Mr. HODGKINSON said it was very evident that someone was to blame, because he was sure the Colonial Secretary was not asking them to pass a fictitious salary. As the hon. member for Bundamba had said, they might do an injustice to some poor man. In the Registrar-General's estimates there were one messenger and office-keeper and two assistant office-keepers drawing altogether £225. Then under the head of contingencies there was £25 for allowance to messenger in lieu of quarters, and under the head of friendly societies there was an allowance to a messenger of £10. They could understand that; but in the schedules there were no names given, and they did not know who received that money. The total amount paid to messengers and office-keepers was put down at £210. He should not have liked, when he was a warden of a goldfield, to have sent in to the Minister for Mines and Works such strange arithmetical calculations as that. He should have expected to hear from him shortly afterwards had he done so. It was an insult to the Committee to lay such a statement before them. He was quite sure that some one got the money, but they did not know who it was.

Mr. PHILP said he was astonished that so much had been said about the matter. They had one messenger and two boys. The messenger received £150, one boy £30, the other £25, and the probability was that the £10 was paid to one of the boys. Altogether the three servants got £215, and that was not a great sum for three men to get. He thought it would be better if they could get a promise from the Colonial Secretary that he would combine the two offices, as he felt certain one man could do the work very well.

Mr. TOZER said the hon. gentleman had not grasped their arguments. They did not object to those messengers getting a fair salary, but there was evidently a misunderstanding in the mind of the Colonial Secretary himself about the matter. They were not protesting, but were only trying to put it right. They alleged that, in salaries and contingencies under the head of Colonial Secretary, there was first £150 for a messenger, then there was £25 allowance in lieu of quarters, then another £10 for a messenger, and on the next page £150 was set down as salary for messenger and office-cleaner.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that actually there were two persons, but he was not satisfied with the schedule. With regard to the £150—messenger and office-cleaner in the office

of the Registrar of Titles—that was quite correct, but it was wrong in the schedule. That was a new appointment. He had pointed out to the Committee that the two offices were now divided, as far as geographical position was concerned, and no one messenger could do the work of the two departments. In the first place the messenger in the office of the Registrar of Titles had a great deal to do in shifting books—taking them down for reference, and then putting them back again—and it wanted a man of some strength to do that work. He had received a memorandum from Mr. Mylne, stating that the man who was in the office now should be retained at a salary of £125, the other £25 of the vote going to an office-cleaner. He had no doubt about that at all. What puzzled him was the £210 for the Registrar-General's Department, and he must say that he had been himself misled by the statement which had been given him—in fact, he had made a marginal note stating that the vote could not be in accordance with fact.

Mr. SAYERS said the items were misleading the way they were put down. There was an office-keeper for the Registrar-General, one for the Registrar of Friendly Societies, and one for the Registrar of Titles; and hon. members naturally thought those were three persons. He did not object to the messenger's salary; but he thought that instead of one man filling so many positions, employment should be given to two men. A small amount extra would make reasonable provision for two men. It looked like favouritism to give so much to one man.

Mr. UNMACK said he drew attention last session to the enormous amount paid for messengers throughout the service, and he thought now that so many departments were going to occupy one building some economy might be exercised with regard to the services of messengers. He understood that the Department of Mines and Works would shortly occupy offices in the new buildings. The messenger in that department received a salary of £305, including allowances. Surely a messenger drawing that salary would not be required in the new building. Unless some economy was exercised in that direction the whole building would be lined with messengers by the time all the departments were located there. He wished now to direct attention to the state of the Registrar-General's office, in which some alteration was required. The Civil Service Commission came to the conclusion that there was no proper organisation, and that there was a superfluity of clerks, but he saw no provision for any reduction in the number. They found that the work was all over the place, that no officer had any definite work allotted to him, and that each one helped in whatever way it happened to suit him; and they came to the conclusion that with proper organisation a smaller staff would be sufficient. It was stated at the time that when the department went into the new buildings there would be better accommodation, and the work would be properly allotted. He hoped that would be done; but he was afraid there was very little chance with the present management. The item of £3,300, fees to district registrars, required serious consideration. A most extraordinary state of affairs was disclosed in the second progress report of the Civil Service Commission, which was well worthy of attention. The 7th paragraph contained the following statement:—

"We recommend that the boundaries of the different registration districts should be recast. The evidence shows marked room for improvement in this respect. For instance, Paddington and Red Hill belong to the Oxley district, whilst the Albion (near Breakfast Creek) is partly in the Oxley and partly in the Caboolture districts."

The registrars were paid by fees—3s. for each entry—and it was evident that where there was a large amount of work it could be equally well done by a permanent clerk receiving from £120 to £150 per annum, whereas the registrars in some districts received more than double that amount in fees. Then in the next paragraph of the report it was stated that—

"During the year 1888 the following fees have been paid to District Registrars by this department:—Oxley, £284 3s.; Ipswich, £258 15s.; Drayton and Toowoomba, £165 6s.; Bundaberg, £131 17s.; Gympie, £135; Kennedy, £190 19s.; Maryborough, £171 3s.; Rockhampton, £195 6s."

Those were payments made by fees in places where a considerable saving to the country might be effected by the employment of ordinary clerks with clear heads and ready pens, at from £120 to £150 a year; and he should like to know whether there was any intention of allotting permanent clerks to those districts where heavy amounts were paid in fees.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the alteration of the boundaries of certain districts—especially the one pointed out by the hon. member—was now receiving the attention of the Colonial Secretary's Department; and when that matter was settled there would be no necessity for the employment of permanent clerks in the way suggested. The report of the Civil Service Commission had received, and would receive, the attention of the Government; but they had no intention at the present time of making the change indicated by the hon. member for Toowoong.

Mr. TOZER said that in many places the emoluments of the clerks of petty sessions were looked upon as higher than those of the police magistrates. In Toowoomba the police magistrate received £550, and the clerk of petty sessions received £518, of which £168 consisted of fees. At Rockhampton the police magistrate, who also acted as gold warden, received £650 a year, exclusive of forage allowance, while the clerk of petty sessions there received £684. Taking Gympie, the clerk of petty sessions there got £471; and in Maryborough the same officer got £582. In fact, in some of the large towns the clerk of petty sessions got as much as £1,000 a year. There were many things they got fees for. They were commissioners for affidavits; they were paid for furnishing copies of depositions and other documents; they were registrars in insolvency; agents for the Curator of Intestate Estates, so that in large towns their emoluments amounted to very large sums. He was always to be found on the side of economy, and contended that gentlemen appointed to the responsible position of police magistrates, where they had to exercise a great deal of independence in their action, should be placed above all suspicion of bribery or anything of that sort. He had known cases in this colony where gentlemen holding the position of gold wardens and police magistrates had actually written and asked to be restored to the post of clerk of petty sessions on account of the increased remuneration; and he thought that if the Government, when recasting the Estimates next year, required all fees to district registrars to be paid into the consolidated revenue, they would act very wisely.

Mr. FOXTON said he would like to know whether the district registrars were also Civil servants in other capacities. He knew that some time ago the registrar of births, marriages, and deaths at Oxley, was the railway stationmaster, who received between £200 and £300 a year from that source in addition to his salary as stationmaster. The officer who had held that position had been removed elsewhere, and he did not know whether the present

stationmaster continued to occupy the position of registrar or not. But it seemed to him that if one Civil servant was allowed to receive a large amount of extra emolument in that way, probably other officers were in the same position. Another item to which he wished to call attention was £200 for printing indices of births, marriages, and deaths. No information had been given as to why that increase was necessary, or why it was included in that estimate instead of under the Government Printing Office vote. In addition to the remarks that had already been made about patents, he might state that a friend of his laid a case before him some time ago, in which he was desirous of applying for a patent. He was advised that it would be impossible to get a patent that would be of any good to him, because the process which he wished to patent was already in use in the colony, and was well-known. It was to be found in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" and other works of reference, and was a process in which water was required. All the specifications which were in print and on record in the library, said it was a matter of complete indifference how much water was used; but on the report of the examiner of patents a patent was granted to another applicant, simply because he said that more water was required—notwithstanding the fact that all the specifications stated it was immaterial how much was used. That was another instance of the way in which patents were granted in this colony. He would like to know whether the fees to district registrars were paid in addition to the salaries voted for them in other parts of the Estimates?

Mr. HYNÉ said he did not quite catch the explanation of the Colonial Secretary with regard to the messengers in question. If the whole of the salary was for one man he should oppose it as long as he could stand in that Chamber; if it was for two messengers he would withdraw his opposition. He was sure the Hon. the Colonial Secretary could ascertain and give the name of the messenger if he liked. Members on the Opposition side were anxious to know it, and he could not see the object of keeping it back. If the £210 was for one man it was out of all proportion to the responsibilities of the position. If the man was such a worthy and deserving officer, give him a better billet, but if the £210 was for him he was drawing salary sufficient for two young fellows, or other men who could do the work quite as well.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not know the name of the messenger referred to, and so far he had not been able to ascertain it, although he was trying to find it out. What he was most concerned about was where the increase came in. He did not care two straws about the man's name. The hon. member talked about reducing that item if the salary was for one messenger, and if so, he had better carry his economical ideas all through the Estimates, because he would find many other cases in which, when allowance for quarters was included, messengers were apparently highly paid, and had been so for many years past. If the hon. gentleman was going to cut down that vote in a fit of economy, he had better do so in all other cases, although those were the people in whom he affected to take so much interest.

Mr. HYNÉ said he was not acting in a fit of economy at all, but when he saw the increases put down for officers in Brisbane he felt that it was unjust to the rest of the colony. The hon. gentleman might not hear the grumbling that was going on in all directions, but country members did. The Civil servants were drawing the life-blood out of the colony. They were

growing to an enormous extent in Brisbane. It was nothing but Brisbane, Brisbane; nothing but centralisation. No wonder Northern members grumbled when they saw the enormous expenditure going on in Brisbane year after year—when they saw nearly a million of public money granted without a dissentient voice. In the town he represented there was a young man who had filled a Government office for nearly seven years, at £75 a year, and it was not until he (Mr. Hyne) appealed to the Minister on his behalf that he was granted £25 more. That officer was a thoroughly competent clerk, highly recommended by the head of his department year after year for an increase, and now he was getting only £100 a year, while down in Brisbane a messenger, who required no skill or talent whatever, was apparently to get £210. That was not right or just. He (Mr. Hyne) was not opposing the class on whose behalf he was appealing. On the contrary, he was speaking in support of them, because if the officer referred to was a worthy man, let them give him a better billet, and put two men to do the work he was supposed to be doing.

Mr. SALKELD said if hon. members were not able to follow the figures, it was the fault of the schedule attached to the Estimates. That schedule was intended to enable members to see whatever officer holding more than one office was receiving, but the intention was not carried out, because in several cases the names were omitted. There were a number of cases where the names were left out, and it was impossible to find them. If they took the Estimates, they found that the messenger and office-keeper in the Registrar-General's Department was getting £75, with £25 allowance, and there was £150 for the messenger in the Registrar of Titles' Office, who appeared to be the same man. There was evidently some mistake, which the Colonial Secretary had not explained. Looking through the votes he found that messengers' salaries averaged £150, and it had struck him that they could not have enough to do. In the Lands Department there were half a dozen, and in the Post-office a large number. Of course, if a man was appointed as messenger he should be given enough to live on, even although all his time was not occupied; but he did not think that able-bodied men should be appointed to those offices. He maintained that £210 a year was too large a salary for a messenger, and was out of all proportion to the salaries paid to other persons in the service.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said perhaps it would relieve hon. members to know that the messenger's name was Savage. He received the same salary now that he had received for years past. He received £75 from each department, £25 house allowance. His wife acted as office-cleaner and drew £45 a year, and one of his boys acted as messenger for the office of Registrar of Titles, and received £10 a year for cleaning out the office.

Mr. TOZER said he supported the hon. member for Maryborough at that juncture when he called attention to the vast amount of expenditure in and around Brisbane. Hon. members had only pointed to that small case, because it was an item they did not understand; but their object had been to object to the higher salaries. The Colonial Secretary might think hon. members a nuisance, but he (Mr. Tozer) could safely assure him that in the new public offices more would be paid to four messengers than was given to the whole of the Civil servants in his electorate. His electorate went under the large name of Wide Bay, and the whole Government expenditure in that district was upon one policeman, two telegraph officers,

and a few provisional school teachers. The district contributed largely to the revenue of the colony, and the people felt that there was a tendency to centralise the expenditure in and around Brisbane. Hon. members had taken a stand upon that one item to show the Government that they were watching the largely increasing expenditure in connection with Brisbane.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said there was no largely increasing expenditure, but what annoyed him was that he had, through a mistake, been given a wrong marginal note. He had given hon. members an explanation as to the way in which the money was voted, and had assured them there was no increase upon last year's vote.

Mr. HYNE said notwithstanding the Colonial Secretary's explanation, he thought the messenger was overpaid, and he would rather see two men in his place, and promote that particular man if he was such a worthy officer. That would be a more economical arrangement. He had before referred to a most deserving young man in his district who for years had been without any promotion whatever. The name of the officer was Feiselbach. He was in the Harbours and Rivers Department, and if his salary were doubled it would not be more than he was worth. For years he had been receiving £75 a year. What a salary was that for an efficient clerk; and yet messengers in Brisbane were allowed £210 a year. He could not allow such a state of affairs to pass without protest, and he would stand up fifty times more to oppose the vote if it was insisted upon.

Mr. DRAKE said the Colonial Secretary had not explained one point. If £150 was voted last year for Savage, as messenger for the Registrar of Titles' Office, how did it appear in the schedule as only £75?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There are two £75.

Mr. DRAKE said, according to the Estimates of last year, there was voted £75 for messenger to the Registrar-General, and £150 messenger to the Registrar of Titles. That £150 in the schedule was £75.

Mr. HODGKINSON said that surely to goodness £210 was good enough for any messenger, when men working at the dangerous occupation of mining, in a climate that prematurely aged a man, could only get occasional employment at £3 10s. a week! Here they paid a man at the lowest estimate £210 as a messenger, while his wife, his sisters, his cousins, and his aunts sucked the State milch cow to a greater or less extent. That money would support two families in comfort if the sum was divided, and it would tend to allay a good deal of the discontent existing in such cases as that alluded to by the hon. member for Maryborough, and it would also tend to alleviate the discontent of a whole section of up-country officers, for whom there was not a penny increase to be voted, although some of them had been to his knowledge fifteen years in the service, in trying districts of the North. Some of them were receiving salaries which were insufficient to support their position, though they were charged with onerous duties, and had to find heavy pecuniary securities, and were charged with matters of great moment to the country. Yet, in Brisbane there was a happy messenger—who must be a universal favourite, and who was no doubt a very good man—who had salaries heaped upon him in every direction, and to such an extent that the Colonial Secretary could not tell the Committee what he actually did get.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, with regard to what had fallen from the hon. member for Enoggera with respect to the £150 voted last year, he could say that only £75 of that was actually paid. There were two items of £75 put down, the idea being at the time to separate the two offices when the Treasury Buildings were completed. As a matter of fact, only £75 had been paid to the messenger who did the work for both offices.

Mr. GLASSEY said the explanation given by the Colonial Secretary altered the case materially. As the name could not be given, he had some doubts himself whether there was such an officer as that messenger at all. He did not agree with the hon. member for Burke that the £210 would support two families; though he quite agreed with the contention that whilst there were many officers in the service who were underpaid, it was rather anomalous that that man should be receiving so much as a messenger. But when they took into account the fact that he only received £150 and £25 in lieu of quarters, and that his wife received £25 for cleaning the offices, and his boy £10 for which he had no doubt to work also, the position was changed. He agreed with hon. members in raising the question in order to elicit the explanation just given, and he considered that what they should look for was the increased payment of those who were underpaid, and that could be effected if a considerable sum was taken off those who were too highly paid. Take the Governor, for instance; he thought that gentleman was very highly paid. He thought £5,000 a year was too much for any man, and he would willingly go in for taking £1,000 off that vote. There were other items of expenditure that might be dealt with in the same way; and they might, for instance, dispose of the "Lucinda," and with the money received from the sale of that vessel increase the salaries of those who were underpaid. That was what they should go in for, and not waste time over a matter like that before them after the explanation given by the Colonial Secretary. £210 a year was not very much for a man having a large family to keep. He could speak as to that, as he had a family of nine children, and he knew what it was to have to work for them for many years before they were able to earn anything for themselves, and he knew the difficulty of finding employment for them. It was a pity to waste their energies upon that matter, when there were other persons in the service of the colony who could well afford a substantial reduction, and if they tackled those of the higher grade he would be with them heartily, and he would advise the hon. member for Maryborough to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. HYNE said he was always open to reason, and in deference to the wishes of his supporters in the matter he would have much pleasure in withdrawing the amendment he had made.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. SALKELD said he still wished to press upon the Government, and, through that Committee, upon the country, the fact that messengers in all the Government departments were overpaid in proportion to men in other offices under the departments. Take the Railway Department, for instance; the men in that department had far longer hours, and harder work, while they were not nearly so well paid as those messengers. When a man got into the position of messenger in one of the Government departments he got into gold-bearing country at once. It was a well-known fact that he had "struck oil," and public servants or others in the country all tried to get down to Brisbane because of the better pay. That system undoubtedly led to centralisation. He did not

wish to take up the time of the Committee too long, but he thought it was time the Government took action in that matter, or the opinions of country members on the subject would be very forcibly expressed.

Mr. TOZER said with reference to the item of £1,000 for fees to examiners, he would like to know who had the apportionment of the vote? Was there any system by which any particular examiner might get so much, while another did not get the same amount? He had protested against the Patents Office, and he was sure the facts he had stated would have due weight with the Government. He knew as a fact that the vote for fees to examiners went at times to increase the salaries of already highly-paid Government officials.

Mr. AGNEW: Many of them do not get any fees at all for examining patents.

Mr. TOZER said that was an anomaly he did not understand. Any man who was not in the Government service, and who had special knowledge of a subject, should get full value for the professional assistance he gave the Registrar. In the remarks he had made previously he did not intend to assert that the Registrar-General was improperly paid in getting that additional £100 as Registrar of Patents. But, in adding together the sums paid as salaries to the Registrar and Deputy Registrars in that department he found that they amounted to £2,500. That was a very large sum to pay the officers of what was practically one department, which probably could be worked under one head at a reasonable salary, and so allow the balance to be paid to the clerks who did the work. What he particularly wished to know was whether £1,000 for fees to examiners of patents was to be paid to persons outside the Civil Service. If the Government had a man in the service who was an expert, they had a perfect right to expect him to give his professional advice or assistance in the examination of patents, when required; and no fees should be paid for that work to highly-paid officers of the service.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, as a matter of fact, up to the present time no fees had been paid to officers in the service. But it was a question whether, when they had got in the service the best possible talent to examine a patent, and the work had to be done in the officer's own time, and they could not get it done elsewhere, it would not be a mistake not to take advantage of the special knowledge of that gentleman, and pay him for his services. It was a matter that required some consideration.

Mr. TOZER said he was glad to find that he was wrong with reference to officers in the service being paid for examining patents, and that only one person got two guineas for the matter reported on. If that was the amount paid for examinations, £1,000 would provide fees for the examination of 500 patents. He trusted they were not going to have that number of patents registered in the year. That small fee, no doubt, accounted for the ridiculous patents that were now registered. The patent law in England was very different from the law in this colony. In England a man got his patent as a matter of right, and had to fight it out in the law courts; that was a disgrace to English legislation. But here they pretended by paying a man of skill and knowledge for examining and reporting on a patent that it would be properly reported on to the Government. Probably the men who received two guineas did something for the money, but a great many useless patents had been granted, and no doubt many of them had been granted on the recommendation of men who had received no fees for their services, and their carelessness was likely to lead to a lot of litigation.

Mr. FOXTON said he would like to know how many examiners there were?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not know that there are any fixed examiners.

Mr. FOXTON: Can the hon. gentleman give the names of the gentlemen employed?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Henderson, Mr. Horniblow, and Mr. Gregory. If the hon. member likes to move for a return stating the names of the examiners employed and the fees received, I will give it without debate.

Mr. FOXTON said the hon. gentleman had probably forgotten the question he asked with reference to the increase of £200 for printing the indices of births, marriages, and deaths. Was that work to be done outside the Government Printing Office, and if so, what was the reason for departing from the ordinary custom of the service in that respect?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the balance to the credit of that fund had been carried forward for several years, but now the fund was exhausted, and that sum was required to have the work done at the Government Printing Office.

Mr. FOXTON: Then the vote is just the same as if it were in the Government Printing Office Estimate?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that was a special entry. Of course, it would be possible to divide the cost of printing among the several departments in the same way as the cost of stores was divided, but it had not been done in the Estimates hitherto.

Mr. PHILP said the hon. gentleman had not answered his question as to whether it was not possible that the two offices of Registrar-General and Deputy Registrar could be combined.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not think it was. Very few officers in the Civil Service had more work to do than the Registrar-General.

Mr. PHILP: What is the nature of the work?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said hon. members could see what was the nature of the work from the report of the Registrar-General, who also occupied the position of Registrar of Patents, and Registrar of Friendly Societies. Anyone who knew anything about the department would know that there was an immense deal of detail work which could not possibly be done by one man.

Mr. FOXTON said he noticed that Mr. A. Pope, late clerk in charge of the Patents branch, was examined before the Civil Service Commission, and at question 12614 he gave this evidence:—

"There have been many complaints on the part of the public about delays in connection with the work in this office; can you account for that in any way? Yes; the delay is caused by the fact that the examiners are not paid, and they should be paid. Then many of them have to be away. For instance, Mr. Henderson was for some six or eight months away. Any patent connected with hydraulics goes to him for report, and if he is not in town at the time, of course there is delay. Mr. Nesbit also is referred to, and he is often away. The Colonial Architect is also an examiner, and he, too, is frequently away. All those things keep the work back."

From that it would appear that those gentlemen received nothing extra for their services. Mr. Pope was further asked:—

"What system would you recommend in lieu of the present to do away with unnecessary delay? I think the examiners should be paid according to the value of the invention to be reported upon. At present only one examiner, the Hon. A. C. Gregory, is paid—at the rate of two guineas for each matter reported upon."

He should like to know if the Hon. Mr. Gregory was in receipt of £700 a year for doing that work? He appeared to be the only one who had been paid.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he would be only too happy to furnish a return on the subject. Mr. Gregory received something like £300, if he recollected aright; and, from what he saw of the work, he came to the conclusion that it must be very hard.

Mr. TOZER: The other £400 was not spent.

Mr. FOXTON said Mr. Gregory was the only one who was paid, according to the evidence of Mr. Pope.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he found that £400 was paid to Mr. Gregory, and the rest went for clerical assistance in the department. He could assure the hon. gentleman, if he had seen the correspondence, as he (the Colonial Secretary) had, in regard to one matter, he would see that extra clerical assistance was necessary. Of all the terrible people to deal with in the matter of correspondence, he thought the patent agents were the worst.

Mr. FOXTON said it seemed that the item was altogether wrong.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the Registrar of Patents had informed him that the patents patented up to the present in the current year had cost £400, and it was probable that another £100 would be required.

Mr. SAYERS said they could decrease the Estimates, but they could not increase them, and he wished to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that there were some officers in the service who had been a long time there, and who were only receiving salaries from £150 to £200 a year. There were other men in the service who received far greater salaries than they were supposed to receive, or than they would seem to receive by a rough look at the Estimates; and he hoped that in framing the Estimates next year, the Government would see that worthy men, who were fulfilling important duties, received increases of salary.

Mr. TOZER said he hoped the Government would draw the attention of the officers in the Patents Office to the excellent advice which the Vice-President of the Executive Council had given in reference to that department. He trusted that if such a great number of patents were going to be issued during the present year, a great deal more care would be exercised in that office in seeing that the inventions that were sought to be patented were genuine.

Mr. SMYTH said that when he spoke last year upon the patent laws he pointed out that they allowed many monopolies to exist. He explained then that a piece of machinery, costing about £70 to make, cost £100 more for patent rights, and after all it was nothing more than an improvement upon a previous patent. He was alluding to the grinding pan, which was an improvement upon the Wheeler pan. The officers in the Patents Office belonged to other Government departments, and had not sufficient time to inquire into those patents which were applied for, and did not know what existed in the colony at present. So that when a man sent in an application they thought it was something new. The owners of the patent he had referred to would not allow that pan to be made in the colony, unless they received a royalty of about 100 per cent., and he thought it was quite time the law was altered; so that a man could not charge more than 10 per cent. or 15 per cent. The proprietors of the patent for Wheeler's pan had a right to prosecute the people who claimed the heavy royalty he had

referred to, in the Supreme Court for an infringement of their patent, as had been done in other cases lately. It was time Parliament came to some decision and improved the patent laws so that people who infringed the patent rights of other people and borrowed their brains should not be allowed to monopolise what he called an improved patent. If people charged as high as 120 per cent. more for the use of an article than it could be manufactured for, they restricted the use of it in the colony, and he therefore hoped that next session whatever Ministry was in power they would make some alteration in the law.

Question put and passed.

REGISTRAR OF TITLES.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that £10,242 be granted for the Registrar of Titles. There was only a very slight alteration in the amount from that voted last year, and that was mainly to the establishment of district offices at Rockhampton and Townsville. At the head office an accountant had been appointed at a salary of £250, and that also was necessary in consequence of the establishment of the district offices. There were three additional clerks at £125, who had been taken from the supernumerary list and put on the staff, following the suggestion of the Commission. In contingencies there was a decrease of £500. In the Central branch there was no change. In the Northern branch there were two additional clerks at £150, necessitated by the great increase of work there. It would be noticed, also, that the vote for the district officers last year only provided for seven months' working of the department. The difference of expenditure was, therefore, very trifling indeed. The hon. member for Toowong would agree with him that that was one of the best working departments in the service. In Mr. Mylne they had a very valuable officer, whose recommendations had received the fullest weight at his hands.

Mr. HODGKINSON said the Estimate displayed the same old spirit of centralisation, to which he had often before called attention. The salaries for the Southern portion of the colony, where the conditions of life were much more favourable, and where everything was more adapted for the pleasant discharge of duties, were the highest in the department. The Deputy Registrar at Rockhampton—the head of the branch office—received £400 per annum, which was less than the first deputy registrar in the head office received. In the Northern district, where the weather was still warmer, only £400 was given to the chief officer, and the clerk and draftsman got only £220, while a draftsman alone in the head office in the South got £300 a year. There were three clerks at £150 a year in the Northern office; in the Southern office there were six clerks receiving more than £150. There was no doubt that the work in the Central and Northern divisions would be quite as onerous as that in the head office in the South. Although he admitted that the Registrar of Titles, and perhaps the Master of Titles and the first Deputy Registrar—whatever those little distinctions might mean—were not overpaid, it was certain that if they were not, those gentlemen in the North were very much underpaid. But it was the same old game. The Civil servants in Brisbane had friends in positions of influence; they had the first knowledge of any alteration in the service when there were chances of promotion, and they were paid larger salaries than officers in the outside districts who worked under far more onerous conditions. All those things were unanswerable arguments in favour of the very early separation of the colony.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. member must be driven to an extremity if he could find no better argument for separation than that particular vote afforded. As the Minister in charge of the department, he happened to know how all the promotions and appointments were made. They were made solely on the representation of Mr. Mylne. In every case where an officer was sent North he got a substantial increase of salary. Mr. Mylne gave full reasons for every recommendation, and with all those recommendations he (the Colonial Secretary) agreed. There had been no pressure brought to bear by anybody, and in not one single instance did he know the person so promoted. With reference to the salary of the first deputy registrar, that officer was an excellent officer, and had been twenty-seven years in the Government service. He did not think it was such a very high salary to achieve after so long a service. The officers sent North were perfectly satisfied with the terms they had obtained.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he noticed in the Rockhampton office a cadet with £32 a year. How was that young officer to live on so small a salary?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the cadets, as a rule, lived with their parents, and there were plenty of young fellows only too glad to get such an appointment.

Mr. UNMACK said that while he was glad to be able to speak in the highest terms of the officer in charge of that department, and of the way in which he performed his work, still he could not help saying that the only fault to be found in him was that he displayed too much zeal in attending to many minor details. If the work was rearranged a little, it would enable him to perform his duties in a much more satisfactory manner. He was surprised that there was not a decrease in the vote. By the establishment of the two district offices he should have thought a great deal of work would have been taken off the hands of the Brisbane office, with the effect of a material reduction of the staff. He wished now to direct the attention of the Colonial Treasurer to a special matter which cropped up during the inquiry into that department by the Civil Service Commission—a matter of vital importance to the financial state of the country. He referred to the gross frauds perpetrated on the country through the evasion of the stamp duties in that department. He did not know whether the Colonial Treasurer had read the report or the evidence, but he would read one particular answer to a question which, he thought, would open the eyes of the hon. gentleman to that matter, and perhaps induce him to take immediate steps to alter that state of affairs. The question he intended quoting was question 13060, and was from the evidence of Mr. Bourne. It was as follows:—

"Do you think that by the non-appointment of an appraiser the consolidated revenue has sustained any loss? Yes; I do, in stamp duty. One case occurred within my own knowledge where a man put in an application for a transfer of land which he valued at £100, and before I let him pass it, he got the amount up to £3,000."

Similar cases occurred, and it was only through the vigilance of one or two officers in the department, who happened to have a personal knowledge of any particular land which might be passing through, that a portion of the stamp duty was recovered. There were several other cases mentioned, but he would merely mention the one. It was quite time the Colonial Treasurer looked after the interests of the country in that respect. The same thing had been referred to when they were passing the Companies Act Amendment Bill. Loud complaints were made

then that the stamp duty was being evaded in the transfer of mining scrip, and hon. members knew that was a fact. The revenue was defrauded to a great extent through the evasion of the stamp duties. He really did not know what the stamp commissioners were doing. He never heard of them doing anything but sending informers about the country to pounce down upon some unfortunate shopkeeper who had neglected to put a stamp upon some receipt. The prosecutions in those cases most likely cost more than the Treasury obtained from them. If the stamp commissioners would set zealously to work to prevent the evasion of the stamp duty the revenue would greatly benefit. He hoped that the Colonial Treasurer would take steps to have the matter attended to: Mr. Bourne made a recommendation that a sworn declaration should be made on each transfer, signed by both vendor and purchaser, to the effect that the stamp duty was paid on the proper amount. It would put the country to no extra expense to have such a declaration printed on each transfer form, and have it sworn to before a justice of the peace or a commissioner; and the very fact of two persons having to swear to the correctness of the return would in itself prevent a very large amount of revenue from being lost to the country.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that there was no doubt frauds were committed in the payment of the stamp duty as well as in the Customs. He thought the hon. member for Toowong had pointed out that those frauds were detected through the vigilance of the officers. He knew of no better method of stopping the evasion of the stamp duty than that suggested by the hon. member for Toowong—that there should be sworn affidavits furnished as to the correctness of the transfers. The matter had not been lost sight of. He did not think that the Treasury had suffered much of late in that respect. Many applications had been made during the time he had held office for the remission of the stamp duty in connection with collateral mortgages, but without success. He thought the stamp commissioners had carried out their duties faithfully and well. There always would be evasions of the stamp duties; but the report of the Civil Service Commission had not escaped his attention or that of the stamp commissioners, and as far as they could surround the collection of stamp duties with safeguards they would do so.

Mr. DRAKE said he wished to know what was done with the amount of unexpended votes? For instance, during the discussion upon the last vote, they had been told that of £150 voted for messenger and office-keeper only £75 had been expended; he wished to know what had been done with the other £75?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It lapses at the end of the year, and remains in the Treasury.

Mr. DRAKE said that in the blue book he found that under the head of Registrar of Titles for the year 1888 there was an item for book porter of £75, as well as the messenger, so probably the £150 had been spent between the two.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The information I gave the Committee was supplied to me by the head of the department, and I am bound to accept it.

Mr. DRAKE said the explanation given by the hon. gentleman was that £75 only had been spent out of the £150, but in the blue book it stated that £75 had been voted as salary to a book porter, so he presumed that must have been paid out of contingencies.

Mr. TOZER said in reference to the question quoted by the hon. member for Toowong with regard to the stamp duties, he would read some more evidence bearing upon the same point:—

“Do you remember any other instance of a similar kind? There was one yesterday, where a man who I know refused £100 an acre for thirteen acres of land, represented that he sold it for £20 the whole lot, and made a declaration that that was the amount paid.

“An appraiser would not get over that? We call attention to such matters; but are not responsible for that kind of work; when I put the memorandum on the transfer I might have passed it and never noticed the discrepancy in value.

“If you had an appraiser would you put every document of that kind before him or select only those which were suspicious? I look at all those documents, and, except in country towns, I have a good idea as to the value of the land.

“Would the purpose be answered by the Registrar of Titles or the Deputy Registrar being appointed appraiser so as to give him an official status in that respect? Yes; I think it would.

“Do you as deputy consider that with your local knowledge you could satisfactorily perform that duty if you had the authority? With regard to Brisbane, I am sure I could. I mention another case in which an estate of twenty acres was valued at £100 when it was worth about £4,000.

“Was it put through at £100? No; it had to go up.”

The individuals ought also to have gone up to those who had authority to decide such matters, and who could put them where they ought to be. From his own experience in the colony, he could state that the full consideration received was very seldom put in the transfer, and it would be wise if the Colonial Treasurer would take some steps in reference to the stamp duty payable in respect of transfers of land. Then if some of the stamp commissioners would only just once send an officer to examine the records of transfers of scrip in mining companies, report how many of them had any consideration whatever billed or stamped, and prosecute the secretaries or directors, they would soon find the revenue greatly increased. In a case lately before the court, when the documents were produced in court they were unstamped. In fact, they had no consideration mentioned in them at all. Probably that was one reason why the parties had been so successful in their business transactions. The hon. member for Gympie had in one case paid an enormous amount in stamp duty, as he knew what the duty should be, and paid it. He (Mr. Tozer) had paid £20 in one case when he could have escaped by merely paying 2s. 6d. as stamp duty, by putting in a nominal consideration, but he preferred to put the proper consideration in. His object in calling attention to the matter was simply to assist the Colonial Treasurer by giving information as to the real facts of what occurred in connection with many mining companies. They all systematically avoided paying the proper stamp duty in the districts with which he was acquainted; and if the stamp commissioners would do as he had suggested, it would act as a warning to the rest of the colony.

Mr. MELLOR said there were no doubt a great many evasions of the stamp duty in the transfer of mining scrip; but if the duty were reduced to a penny, and if it were made compulsory that every sale should be recorded, the revenue from that source would largely increase. He noticed that there was very little information in the schedule in reference to the names of the various officers. In connection with the department of the Registrar of Titles there was only one officer mentioned—namely, Mr. Gore Jones; but he thought the names of all the officers should be given.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. member would find the names of all the other officers in the blue book. Those who appeared in the schedule were officers who received more than one salary or allowance.

Mr. SMYTH said he thought it was a mistake to discuss the question of stamp duties at present.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Hear, hear!

Mr. SMYTH said he noticed in the papers that there had been some big sales of mining scrip in the colony—sales amounting to something like a quarter of a million of money—and he wanted to know whether the Treasury had received any benefit from those sales. On that day he got a dividend of £25 on which the duty was a penny, but if it had been scrip he would have had to pay 2s. 6d. The proper time to discuss the question of stamp duty would be when they got to page 52 of the Estimates, and he intended to discuss it then.

Question put and passed.

POLICE.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that £165,240 be granted for Police for the service of the year 1889-90. That was a considerable increase on last year's vote; but for the last two years there was no increase shown on the Estimates-in-Chief. He would call attention to the difference between the estimated amounts and those voted last year; and he thought hon. members would agree that they were not on account of the highly paid officials. There was a diminution in the amount required for 2nd class inspectors from £1,980 to £1,650, the number of officers being one less than last year. There was also a diminution from £2,160 to £1,620 in the amount required for 2nd class sub-inspectors. The number of sergeants was increased from fifty to fifty-five, the number of senior-constables from 110 to 130, and the number of constables from 500 to 550. Then there was a diminution in the number of native trackers, which the Government were decreasing as fast as they could. The increase in the number of sergeants, senior-constables, and constables was an absolute necessity to meet the growing requirements of the colony from North to South. The other amounts remained the same as before, except that for travelling allowances to constables attending courts as witnesses. Heretofore constables had been paid from another vote—that for the Supreme Court—but the Minister of Justice had resisted the inclusion of those expenses in that vote; and it was perhaps better to include them in the vote for police. The money had to come out of the pockets of the people in any case. The next increase was for night allowance to constables, from £1,500 to £2,000. The amount previously voted had been found inadequate; and he did not know that £2,000 would be sufficient.

Mr. HODGKINSON asked whether there was any distinction between ordinary sub-inspectors and sub-inspectors of native police? He noticed that there was a difference in the rate of travelling allowances.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said there was. The forces were distinct from one another. The next increase was from £8,000 to £9,000 for forage. Last year the amount was lamentably short of the amount voted, on account of the bad season, and the high prices that had been paid; but he thought that, in consequence of the present good season, the estimate for the present year would be sufficient. The amount of allowance in lieu of rations in the

outside districts had been increased from £4,500 to £5,000, in consequence of the increase in the number of police and the amount voted before not having been sufficient. The gold escort expenses were reduced owing to the extension of the railways, especially that towards Croydon. The decrease in the amount for rations to native trackers was consequent on the decrease in the number of trackers. The amount required for fees for examining lunatics had been reduced; but there was an increase of £1,000 for rent and allowance in lieu of rent. The main increase, making up more than half the proposed increase, was due to the Government carrying out the recommendation of the Colonial Stores Board that each department should show on the Estimates the amount of stores likely to be used in that department. The sum of £10,000 for stores had been arrived at from the report of the Colonial Storekeeper, as being the amount likely to be required for the year, so that the actual increase arising from the increased number of men was only about £9,000. He could assure hon. members that the present police force of the colony was not sufficiently numerous. Every day he had applications for police protection in places where there was none at present, and in other places for an increase of the force, and in almost every instance a good case was made out. The whole increase now provided for was fifty men, with a proportionate number of sergeants and senior-constables. The number of senior-sergeants remained the same; and there was a small diminution in the number of the higher class officers. He believed the amount asked for would be sufficient to do the work, but he was satisfied that with one shilling less they would not be able to provide police protection for so great a colony as Queensland.

Mr. SAYERS said he would call the hon. gentleman's attention to the fact that the salary paid to third class detectives—men whose duty it was to search out crime, and who ought to be placed in a position to be above taking "tips" from criminals or anybody else—was £140 a year. First class detectives got only £200, and second class detectives only £160. Those men were selected for special service; they were supposed to possess a large amount of ability and intelligence; yet they were paid those salaries, while, as had been pointed out a short time ago, messengers in Brisbane were receiving over £200 a year. How could those men be expected to do the work required of them for the money? They had to spend money when travelling about searching out crime, and all they got was a little over £2 a week to do it on. The thing was absurd. Again, they found that an officer on attaining the rank of second sub-inspector of police, after, perhaps, fifteen or sixteen years' service, having been promoted from a constable at £122, got only £180 a year. Hon. members could not help noticing discrepancies like those, and he was sure that if the Government wished to prevent crime they must pay their detectives and other officers better than they did.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had not heard any complaints from the detectives. They seemed to be very well satisfied with the pay they got. Of course, if the Committee wished to swell those Estimates, which were always very expansive, they could express their opinion to that effect; but it was the duty of the Government to keep the amount required within reasonable limits. He believed the detectives in the colony were very good men, and if the Government could get good men for the money set down, why should they pay more?

Mr. SAYERS said it was all very well for the hon. gentleman to say the Government could get men for the money, but he did not use that

argument when he was explaining about the messengers employed in Brisbane. He then said those men had been paid the same last year and the year before, and, therefore, it must be done again, whether right or wrong. What he (Mr. Sayers) wished particularly to direct attention to was that the detective force was underpaid. If a detective was sent to Townsville, Charters Towers, or anywhere else up North, where ordinary labourers' wages were £3 a week, how could he be expected to do his duty on less than labourers' wages? Those officers occupied a very responsible position, being appointed to detect and search out crime, and it was the duty of the Government to pay them sufficient salary to prevent them from taking "tips" from the criminal classes. The sum put down for them was not sufficient in any shape and form, and he was sure that the country would not object to those men receiving fair remuneration for their work.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said perhaps the hon. member and other hon. members of the Committee were not aware that detectives when travelling were allowed 5s. a day. He would also point out that the salaries of those officers were increased in 1885-6. First class detectives then received £180, second class £140, and third class £132. They had, therefore, received substantial increases, while no increases were made to other members of the force.

Mr. SMYTH said there were altogether about twenty-seven inspectors of different classes in the colony, and yet the district he and his colleague had the honour to represent, which was one of the largest and most important in the colony, with a large population, had never had an inspector in charge of it yet. They had had to put up with a senior-sergeant ever since the Gympie Gold Field had been opened. They had a visit now and again from a Maryborough inspector, but if the man who had been in charge of the field for the last twelve years—Sergeant Walsh—was fit to look after the goldfield, prosecute in court, and carry out all the work of the district, he should be promoted. A goldfield like Gympie was entitled to an inspector of some kind or another. It had an area of forty or fifty miles all round, and in the face of that there had been no promotion for the sergeant. He considered that the area of country that Sergeant Walsh looked after embraced a population of not less than 30,000 people, and yet, through some mistake, that officer had not been promoted, nor had any person been put over him. Why was Gympie neglected? Was it because the place was quiet and the people law-abiding? It seemed to him that after twelve or fifteen years' service some allowance should be made to a man. He should be promoted, or sent elsewhere, and since Sergeant Walsh had been in the police force there had been no black mark against his name in the department. The hon. member for Charters Towers had mentioned the detectives, and he quite agreed with him that men whose business it was to detect crime should be better paid. The police in the other colonies were better paid than they were in Queensland. He noticed that there was a reduction in the item of native trackers. Perhaps they had done their duty, and shot down as many myalls as they could, so that their services were no longer required. He also noticed that gold escort expenses were reduced by £300, which was, no doubt, due to railway extension. He was glad to see that the hon. gentleman in charge of the department was able to keep down the expenses; for although there was an increase of £19,000, yet it was a wonder it was not greater, considering the large increase of the population.

He hoped his district would receive some consideration at the hands of the gentleman in charge of the department.

Mr. HYNE said the Colonial Secretary, in reply to a question, said that certain salaries could not be increased because there were plenty of men ready to take the positions at the same salary. He should like to know whether that rule was to be applied to other branches of the service, because if so, a great saving could be effected. Indeed, officers could be obtained for much less than the salaries now paid. He was not referring to the working bees of the service, but to the ornamental heads, who were well paid for what they did. He wanted to ask the hon. gentleman a question. He had been informed that two sub-inspectors were appointed about six months ago. If that was a fact, from what rank were they appointed?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What are their names?

Mr. HYNE said he did not know. He might as well let the cat out of the bag, and say that he had been informed that two rank outsiders were taken into the force and promoted over the heads of old officers.

Mr. SMYTH: I know of one case.

Mr. HYNE said that was done about six months ago.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the sub-inspectors who had been appointed were Senior-sergeant Mathers, Senior-sergeant Driscoll, and Senior-sergeant Melvin. All those men were promoted from the force.

Mr. HYNE said that was evading his question. Had there been two outsiders promoted, or brought into the force as inspectors, or sub-inspectors—two rank outsiders?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had given a direct answer to the hon. gentleman's question. The only three sub-inspectors promoted were those he had mentioned, and they were all within the last twelve months.

Mr. HYNE said, then he had been misinformed, and he accepted the explanation. He was informed that there was a kind of terror reigning among the police, and that if he, or any hon. member advocated the cause of a policeman, he endangered the man's position; he wished to know whether that was so. Would it endanger a man's position? if not, he had something to say. He saw the Commissioner of Police sitting in the gallery, and he wanted to know whether it would endanger a man's position, to mention his name?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said if the hon. member would take his advice, he would mention no names; it was most unusual to do so. His experience was that the police had plenty of friends among the members of the Committee who could mention their names to the head of the department. As to the hon. member's allusion to the Commissioner of Police, that gentleman was present for the purpose of giving information, and facilitating the passing of the Estimates.

Mr. HYNE said he had another question to ask. There were inspectors and sub-inspectors almost in every district. There were two in Brisbane, one in Ipswich, one in Rockhampton, one in Mackay, and one in Townsville. Why was Wide Bay not included?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: You are such a highly moral people.

Mr. HYNE said it was favouritism. He knew for certain that a sub-inspector had been applied for for Maryborough over and over again. They had an inspector but they could not get a sub-inspector. He wanted to know why it was so.

He had asked a question last session about the purchase of horses for the country districts, and he was assured that the country inspectors bought their own horses. Since then he had had that statement flatly contradicted, and he now asked the question again. Was it a fact that horses were purchased and sent to the country districts, instead of allowing the country inspectors to purchase their own horses?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the explanation he had received in reference to that matter was quite satisfactory. Where it was found advantageous for country inspectors to buy their own horses they bought them, and if it was found more advantageous to buy them elsewhere they were bought elsewhere.

Mr. HYNE said it seemed it was very seldom found advantageous to let the country inspectors buy their own horses, and the result was that a lot of old screws were sent to the country districts. If they looked at the newspapers to account for the non-capture of a criminal, they would find that it was because the police had no horses fit to turn out. He had another question to ask, and perhaps the Minister for Mines and Works could answer it. He saw an item there for fencing police paddocks, and he would like to know whether that would include the fencing in of the police quarters at Maryborough? He would draw the attention of the Colonial Secretary to what he considered a great grievance, and that was that the sergeant in his district had to travel about twenty-eight miles in inspecting public-houses, and he only got an allowance of 2s. per day for that. He appealed to the Committee to say whether that was enough, considering that he had to stop at some hotel for one night. He would like to know if that was a fact.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he assumed that the man got the allowance existing by regulation at present.

Mr. HYNE: That is 2s. a day.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had thought that the hon. gentleman was pointing out that the officer in question was exceptionally treated, and did not receive the same payment which any other police officer would receive under the same circumstances.

Mr. HYNE: I say he is not getting enough.

Mr. LITTLE said he had listened to the pitiful appeals of the hon. member for Maryborough to have a sub-inspector of police appointed there. But what about South Brisbane? There was a whole city, with a population of 30,000, returning two members to that Chamber, and he was going to reside over there, and they had no inspector of police stationed there. What the hon. member had said, in his opinion, spoke volumes for the residents of Maryborough, and showed that police were not required there. He had heard the remark of the hon. member for Gympie about Sergeant Walsh, and he agreed with the hon. member that that officer was entitled to promotion, having been in that district so many years. But in Maryborough you could fire a cannon down the streets, and kill nothing but the grass. You would see two or three public-houses there and eight or nine churches, and they did not want police there.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he presumed the Colonial Secretary had had his attention called to the recommendations of the Civil Service Commission. All their recommendations were eminently deserving of attention, and while some would commend themselves to everyone, others would not commend themselves perhaps so greatly to hon. gentlemen, who perhaps had a larger knowledge of the subjects with which they

treated. One point referred to was in connection with an allowance to married constables. He was speaking of the ordinary constables, and they could not get married without the consent of the Commissioner of Police. If they did get married, to a certain extent their action was endorsed by their superior officers. Quarters were found for the ordinary unmarried constable, and he knew that some of the married men got an allowance, but others he understood did not. It might be said that the vote was not sufficient to give every married constable an allowance, but when they had been asked to pass an additional sum of £10,000 under one heading, they might extend their good nature so far as to place every married constable on the same footing.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said an allowance had been made to married constables in many cases, but not in every case. The proper way, he thought, would be to limit the number of married men to what the allowance would meet; and then if any others wished to get married they could go out of the force. At present the sum of £3,230 was paid as rent for married police officers' quarters, and he did not think there was really any serious cause for a grievance.

Mr. UNMACK: Those are men in charge of stations, and other men have to find their own quarters.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that some of them were in charge of stations, but an allowance was also paid to others as far as the vote would go. It would be very much better, in his opinion, to limit the number of constables who should be allowed to marry to the money that was voted by that Committee.

Mr. HODGKINSON: How about those who have married under existing regulations?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said there would be no breach of contract between the Government and the men who had married under the existing regulations.

Mr. SMYTH said he noticed an item in the vote of £10,000 for "stores (including native police)." There was a similar vote of £700 on the Water Police Estimates. Neither of those items appeared on the Estimates for 1888-9, and he would like to know, if they were not required then, why they were required for 1889-90?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had explained earlier in the evening that those items appeared there in consequence of a recommendation of the Colonial Stores Board. It was really only putting the vote in another place, and making each department pay for their own stores instead of the whole being included in one general vote.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Smyth, had drawn attention to the fact that the number of native trackers was to be reduced, and seemed to be pleased about it. What was to become of those trackers when they were discharged? He (Mr. Stevenson) would like to know what provision, if any, was to be made for them? Many of them had been years in the service, and had done good work for the country. He did not suppose they had many members of Parliament to advocate their case, but as an old pioneer, who knew what good service they had rendered the colony, and that they had saved the lives of many white men, he would like to see something done for them, because if they went back to their old haunts now they would find them very different from what they were when they left them.

Mr. SMYTH said he would like to know whether it was intended that the goods produced at St. Helena, such as saddlery, boots, clothing, etc., should be credited to the department in connection with the vote of £10,000 for stores.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the police did not produce anything at St. Helena, but they received certain stores for St. Helena, for which they would be charged in future. With regard to the question asked by the hon. member for Clermont respecting the disbandment of the native trackers, he would point out that as civilisation proceeded the necessity for the existence of those trackers would cease. Those fifty men would no doubt be absorbed by the Western cattle stations in the vicinity of the places where the native police stations were being broken up, as they always proved valuable stockmen.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he would like to know what chance trackers at Cairns or Cooktown would have of finding their way to the Western country. He presumed there was a certain amount of recruiting going on every year, and he thought it would be in accordance with the interests of fairness and justice if they stopped recruiting for a few years, and, instead of discharging those fifty men, absorbed them in the force. He was very pleased that the question had been broached, and was rather ashamed of himself that he had not referred to it. Those poor wretches had very few friends in that Committee. If they had votes their cause would no doubt be taken up. The white people owed a very great duty to the aborigines of the colony, and it was about time they recognised it.

Mr. STEVENSON said he thought it was misdirected economy to reduce the number of the native trackers as proposed. As to the probability of their getting employment out West, they had very little chance indeed. In his opinion, a recommendation should come from the Commissioner of Police as to what should be done with those trackers, seeing that they had rendered good service in almost every district in the colony. He believed that the trackers would even now come in very useful within ten miles of Brisbane. If they wanted to track a man, they would do it better with black trackers, than with white police. Again and again, the question of doing something for the aborigines of the colony had been brought before the Committee, and, very likely, it would be again, and some proposal made to set apart reserves for them, or something of the kind; yet, they were going in for that paltry economy of reducing the vote for the trackers by £400. They should not be discharged at all, but some work should be found for them in another way. It was almost disgraceful to economise in that fashion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was all very well to intimate that something should be done for those native trackers, but the hon. member had not hinted what was to be done for them, and he did not know that the Government were any better able to suggest anything than the hon. member for Clermont. The number of trackers was being gradually reduced. There were a certain number of deaths amongst them, and there was no recruiting going on. Those who were disbanded were not left to settle down among the tribes in the districts where they were located, but were returned to the tribes from which they came originally. He did not know that it would be advisable to bring them within ten miles of Brisbane, and he was not aware what use trackers would be down there. There had been a party in that Committee, ever since he had been a member of the House, who had always inveighed, year after year, against the existence of those trackers, and, he

believed that to a certain extent, that party still existed. As a matter of necessity, the native trackers would be reduced year by year. They were not wanted. There was, of course, the natural decrease to be considered, and some had been sent back to their tribes; so that the Government hoped that, except in a few cases, the native police would soon be taken off the Estimates altogether. He would read the list of stations which had been closed:—Corella, 4 trackers, closed 29th June, 1888; Cluney, 7 trackers, closed 7th December, 1888; McIvor, 6 trackers, closed 1st March, 1889; Carl Creek, 8 trackers, closed 31st March, 1889; Norman River, 7 trackers, closed 30th June, 1889; Palmer, 6 trackers, closed 6th July, 1889; and the Barron River, 8 men, had been also closed. The only station opened had been on the Paterson River, where there were 11 trackers. So far as the Government were concerned, they had a very high appreciation of the rights of the aborigines in the colony, who deserved some little consideration at their hands. If hon. members would look at the Estimates they would find £3,000 down for the relief of aborigines, instead of £1,000.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he wished to know if those thirty-five men were sent back to their own tribes?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he could not say for certain; but, so far as the remarks of the hon. member for Clermont went, instead of £400 being down for native police, he would see that there was nearly £2,000.

Mr. STEVENSON said he hoped they would not be sent back to their own tribes, because they all knew very well that the black who had been on a station, or in the native police, and knew the habits and customs of the people he had been amongst, would become the leader of the tribe, and commit depredations against the white people. He hoped the black trackers would not be sent back to their tribes. If a black tracker wanted to go back to his tribe he would go back without being sent, and it would be the greatest mistake to send them back. He would not care about the 13s. 6d. per month that they received; he would be disposed to let them have it, even if they did no work at all; but something ought to be done for them without discharging them and sending them back to their tribes.

Mr. WIMBLE said he would like to say a few words about the blacks, as he had had a good deal of experience of them in the North, and could speak with some authority. There was a great deal of force in what the hon. member for Clermont had said, that if the trackers were disbanded and sent back to their tribes they would be very troublesome, and lead the other myalls to commit greater depredations than ever. It was well known that the civilised black was far worse to contend against than the native myall, and their depredations in the North had been very severe. He could not speak for the West; but he could for the Woodthakata and Cairns districts. He had had many communications from the people there regarding the harm that the blacks had done in the way of cattle spearing. They not only speared one beast, but they would hunt and kill a whole mob, and were a terrible nuisance to the settlers, some of whom had lost as much as £100, while in two instances they had had to abandon their holdings, because they could not make them pay on that account. They would raise corn, and one morning they would find it all cleared off the ground. The Hon. Colonial Secretary had given a great deal of assistance with regard to ameliorating the condition of the blacks, and he thanked him for it; that was in regard to supplying them with rations

in many cases. One gentleman he knew had been very successful in bringing the blacks in and giving them rations, instead of dispersing them in the usual manner, under a system which brought the native police into bad repute. Any temporary assistance would be insufficient to relieve the blacks; some permanent, general scheme would have to be adopted. There was an idea that a reserve should be set apart for them, but then there would be the trouble to contend against, that generally one tribe was at war with another, and there would have to be several separate reserves. He had interviewed the Colonial Secretary several times on the subject, and had taken a great interest in it, and he hoped that reserves would be set apart with good men to look after them. Under the old system, if a man reported that the blacks had committed any depredations, the native police would be sent out to disperse them, and that system of dispersing had done a great deal of harm, and had brought the native police into very bad odour and contempt. If the scheme he suggested were adopted, he thought the reserves could very soon be made self-supporting. The blacks could be taught to hoe, and fell trees, and plant sufficient seed to enable them to grow crops.

Mr. TOZER: Reserves are dealt with later on.

Mr. WIMBLE said he was following up previous speakers. It would only be necessary for the blacks to have a little experience and assistance before they would be able to support themselves. If the blacks were brought in in that manner the reserves could soon be made self-supporting. Another matter of importance was that the superintendent should allow the blacks, as they were brought in, to be hired out by selectors and others, because when they became attached to a homestead they acted as a sort of watchmen against their brethren. A man who had one or two myalls on his selection was certain to be free from depredations.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he would remind the hon. member that he was speaking on the wrong vote. The vote for native reserves came on at page 41 of the Estimates.

Mr. WIMBLE said he would defer any further remarks on the question until they came to that vote.

Mr. UNMACK said he trusted the Committee would now adjourn. Half-past 10 was quite late enough when they sat five days a week, and it would be quite impossible to pass the vote that night.

Mr. PHILP said he noticed an increase of seventy-five sergeants and constables. Where were they stationed?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he could not answer the question further than by saying that they were stationed where they were most wanted.

Mr. PHILP said he got the same answer to the same question last year. There were places in the North which had been without any increase of police protection for the last five or six years.

Mr. HODGKINSON said the question of the hon. member was a very pertinent one, and the Committee had a right to know why the increased number of constables was wanted, and where they were to be stationed. Referring to the subject of remounts, it was a well-known fact that all the screws in the service were sent up North. He had seen horses sent up North that were not worth their passage by steamer, while the horses in what he might call the show troop in the metropolis were the very best that could be bought; and he had every reason to believe that that was done at the expense of the remounts sent to the North. And it was the same

in regard to the men. If a constable got into disgrace in the South he was at once sent up North. If there were any bad men in the force they were there, having been sent up from the metropolis. And that was a thing that the North did not intend to submit to.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that applications had been sent in from twenty-four different police stations asking for additional police, and it would be extremely difficult to say how many constables had been sent to each place, beyond saying that they had been sent to the places where they were most required.

Mr. LITTLE said that, with regard to the remounts for the North, he believed he was better qualified to form an opinion than any other hon. member of the Committee, and he could assure hon. members that he had seen horses sent there for the police that were fit to carry the Governor. The hon. member for Cairns had boasted about his great experience in the North. He believed the hon. member was the proprietor of a rag called the *Cairns Post*. He had heard the hon. member for Cairns instructed by an hon. gentleman sitting on the Treasury benches. The hon. gentleman was a corner allotment man, who had told him that he had no right to speak of the Cairns Railway; but he had far more experience of the North than the hon. member for Cairns. The hon. member had spoken of his experience of the blacks in the North, but his experience had been confined to Cairns. He agreed with the hon. member for Clermont, that it would be better if those men went back to their tribes. Every depredation, he might state, was instigated and headed by discharged or runaway troopers. That was the result of his twenty-four years' experience in the North.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he knew the hon. member for Toowong was desirous of speaking at some length, and, therefore, he would not ask the Committee to sit any longer. He hoped that the debate upon that vote would not occupy more than an hour or two when it was resumed. He did not believe that there was any intention on the part of hon. members opposite to obstruct the passing of that vote, as he knew that evils did exist, and that hon. members were thoroughly consistent in desiring to remedy those evils. He would move that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Mr. UNMACK said that he wished to refer to a great many items, but he had no desire whatever to interfere with the Estimates; but it was well that any matters which required to be redressed should be discussed upon that occasion. He could assure the hon. gentleman that he had no desire to obstruct, but he had a duty to perform in directing attention to matters which had come within his own knowledge.

Mr. HYNÉ said that he wished to explain he was not obstructing the vote, but he had some grievances to ventilate in that department, and he would ventilate them when the discussion was resumed.

Question put and passed.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that this House do now adjourn, and in doing so I may state that the first Government business to-morrow will be the Land Bill in committee.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at fourteen minutes to 11 o'clock.