

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**MONDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 1889**

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# QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

### SECOND SESSION OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT.

APPOINTED TO MEET

AT BRISBANE ON THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF MAY, IN THE FIFTY-SECOND YEAR OF THE REIGN OF  
HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1889.

[VOLUME 3 OF 1889.]

#### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Monday, 30 September, 1889.

Question.—Questions Without Notice.—Church of England (Diocese of Brisbane) Property Bill—third reading.—Supply.—Adjournment.

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

#### QUESTION.

Mr. SMITH asked the Minister for Mines and Works—

1. Is it the intention of the Government to carry out the work of enlarging and strengthening the pier head of the Bowen Jetty; and, if so, when?

2. Do the Government contemplate the completion, at an early date, of the dredging of swinging basin at Port Denison?

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) replied—

1. Yes; but no date can be fixed.

2. Yes; but not at an early date.

#### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

Mr. SMYTH said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to ask whether it is the intention of the Government, this year, to proceed with the Local Government Acts Amendment Bill?

The PREMIER (Hon. B. D. Morehead): Yes.

Mr. SAYERS said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to ask the Premier what action has the Government taken with regard to the Chinese Immigration Restriction Act passed last year?

The PREMIER: I must ask the hon. member to give notice of the question.

#### CHURCH OF ENGLAND (DIOCESE OF BRISBANE) PROPERTY BILL.

##### THIRD READING.

On the motion of Mr. TOZER (at the request of Mr. Groom), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

#### SUPPLY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. W. Pattison) said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that you do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to further consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—May I ask the Colonial Treasurer when the Loan Estimates will be brought down to the House?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think this day week we shall be able to bring them down, if reasonable progress is made with the general Estimates.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not quite see the connection between the progress made with the general Estimates and the introduction of the Loan

Estimates. It is very important that the House should have a fair period to consider the Loan Estimates before we are asked to vote them. I take this opportunity of inquiring whether the House will be favoured this year with a statement of the estimated loan expenditure for the financial year? I do not mean what is commonly called the Loan Estimates, which is a proposal to the Committee of Supply to vote money to be raised by way of loan, but a statement of the expenditure on loan account during the financial year—a similar statement to that laid before the House in 1887, and the necessity for which has been acknowledged by members of the present Government. It would certainly facilitate the discussion of the Loan Estimates if such a statement were laid before us.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Speaker,—Details will be submitted to the House of all works now in progress. There will be no fresh railways undertaken without being submitted for the sanction of the House. I cannot disclose more than that, until the Loan Estimates are brought down.

Question put and passed.

#### TREASURY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1889-90, a sum not exceeding £5,813 for the Treasury. There were two small increases—one of £25 to the receiver of the revenue branch, and one of £25 to the officer in charge of the Stamp Office. Those were the only alterations upon last year's estimate.

Mr. TOZER said he had drawn the attention of the Government several times to the leakage that existed in connection with the Stamp Office. His remarks had been misconstrued to the extent that he had been made to appear as an advocate of the present system, but he had drawn attention to it because it was the law. He had not given any expression of opinion as to what should be the law, but he knew the law was often broken all over the colony. He was satisfied that if the Government enforced the law it would lead to its being amended. Many persons actuated by proper motives paid the stamp duty, whilst a great majority did not. If the Colonial Treasurer were to send an officer round to even one company he would find a great leakage. The result, he fancied, would be that next session an alteration would be made in the law, as it was considered oppressive.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said steps had already been taken to give effect to the suggestions of hon. members on that point, but he thought there was a defect in the law as to the power to send round officers to inspect companies generally. He failed to discover where the power was, but so far as he had it he had endeavoured to enforce it. In some cases he had had actual proof that the law had been complied with. He need not mention the companies now, but possibly he might give hon. members the information hereafter. With reference to the evasion of stamp duty by understating

the value of property, they did what they could to remedy that, but to a great extent they were in the hands of the legal gentlemen who sent in the transfers. It had been brought under his notice very recently that one respectable firm of solicitors had endeavoured to pass a transfer through without disclosing the proper value of the property; but the Treasury, as far as possible, would endeavour to guard against such abuses. That would be done both in connection with mining companies and property transfers generally.

Mr. SMYTH said he had drawn attention to that matter last session, and when they read in the papers during the last few months the enormous transactions in scrip, they must conclude that the revenue was gaining immensely if persons put the proper amount of stamps on the scrip. He had it on the best information that stamps which were placed on scrip were taken off and used over again. Now in London if one went to Somerset House it would be seen that an impressed stamp of an adhesive stamp was used on scrip, and he thought they could get over the difficulty if the mining registrar or clerk of petty sessions were to affix an impressed stamp. The reason why fraud was carried on in that matter was because the stamp duty was excessive. Mining scrip was not like property. Property did not change hands so often, but £500 worth of scrip might pass through a dozen hands in twelve months. The custom in Great Britain was that when scrip was sold it had to be passed through Somerset House within a certain time. If it did not pass through a fine was inflicted. If he were to sell scrip, as he often had done, the person buying might hold it without transferring, and he (Mr. Smyth) got the notice of calls. The person who bought the scrip held it with the idea that it would be eventually transferred from him (Mr. Smyth) to another buyer, and thus the stamp duty would be evaded. He did not think the miners were altogether to blame, because what was going on in reference to mining scrip applied also to other transactions, and the stamp revenue was being defrauded. The only way to rectify it was by having an impressed stamp; and all scrip upon transfer should be passed through the office of a mining registrar, or where there was no mining registrar through the office of a clerk of petty sessions, and an entry of the transfer and the date should be made in a book, so that anyone could tell when the transaction took place; and a fine might be attached if the transfer was not registered within a certain time. If that was done a person summoned for calls could find out whether he was really liable or not. There would be a great deal of litigation saved if the Colonial Treasurer would take action under the Stamp Duties Act. He did not ask the Colonial Treasurer to send spies about, as he would to bush shanties, but what was wanted was a fair and authoritative record of transactions of the kind, so that everything might be fair and above board. The administration of the Act required altering at the present time, as the revenue was being defrauded every day, right and left, not only in connection with mining business but in every case where an adhesive stamp was required to be put upon a document.

Mr. CALLAN said he could give the Committee some information in connection with that matter with respect to a company that had been referred to by the hon. member for Gympie, and also by the hon. member for Wide Bay. The hon. member for Gympie had said that during the last fortnight or so large transactions had taken place in shares.

Mr. SMYTH: During the last few months.

Mr. CALLAN said of course hon. members knew perfectly well to what company the hon. member for Gympie alluded. Some weeks

ago the hon. member had also alluded to the same matter, and so had the hon. member for Wide Bay. He himself happened to be a director of the Mount Morgan Company, and he was prepared to give the Committee any necessary information respecting it that was desired. Although he had been perfectly convinced there was no necessity for it, still he had thought it right to write to the chairman to get information as to the course pursued by the company with respect to transfers since its commencement. He had not taken up much of the time of the House up to the present time, but he would read the letter he had received in reply to his inquiries, from the secretary of the company, who wrote as follows, on the 13th September:—

"A. J. Callan, Esq., M.L.A., Brisbane.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 10th instant, and in reply beg to say that on every transfer passed through our books the proper stamp duty has been paid, and the stamps affixed to the transfers, which are kept regularly filed and can be seen by any authorised person at any time. I enclose list of stamp duty on transfers paid monthly from the registration of the company to date, and, if necessary, we could, from our records, show the amount paid on every transaction. We do not keep a stamp account, as our statement is made from the stamps which are actually on the transfers, and on each sale the directors insist on the full amount being paid."

The company was formed three years ago, in October, 1886, and he had been supplied with a list of the stamp duty paid per month from that date up to the 12th September. From that list he found that the total amount of stamp duty paid through the Mount Morgan Company's office during that period amounted to £8,485. Of course, it was actually something more than that now, but taking it at £8,500 that represented stamp duty upon £3,400,000.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH: Up to what date is that?

Mr. CALLAN said that was up to the 12th of the present month. That was the statement submitted to him by the secretary of the company, and it must be correct, as the amounts were taken from the transfers with the stamps actually attached to them, though the hon. member for Gympie had said he knew of instances in which the stamps were taken off and used a second time. In the Mount Morgan Company's office, owing to the action of persons who supported the opposite party, the company had been obliged to be more accurate and careful in all their dealings than any other company in Australia; and if the Government sent anyone to inspect the books of the company, under the Stamp Duties Act, they would find the transfers there with the stamps attached. That careful system of management was initiated when the company started, and had been kept up ever since. As a director, he had taken a very active part in the company's business in the absence of the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer from the meetings of the board, and he could say they would be only too glad if the Government would send an officer to examine the scrip there, and then the rumours referred to by the hon. members for Gympie and Wide Bay would be settled.

Mr. MELLOR said that no doubt the hon. member's statement was correct, so far as regarded the transactions recorded in the company's office; but it was quite evident that statement did not represent the amount of transactions in Mount Morgan shares during that time.

Mr. CALLAN: It is a statement of all the business done through the office.

Mr. MELLOR said he dared say more than three or four times that value of shares had been sold and resold without being transferred. That was what was more particularly referred to.

Those transactions were not recorded in the office, as persons only bought to sell again, and there were a good many shareholders in Mount Morgan who did not receive dividends because they bought the scrip without having it transferred, so as to avoid paying the duty. He had always held that the transfer duty on scrip, and especially on mining scrip, was exorbitant, and it was very unequal in its working. He believed it would pay the Government almost equally well to have the usual 1d. stamp duty upon scrip. The present unequal taxation upon the mining community was very grievous. He suggested that a dividend tax should be imposed; that would be a much better plan of dealing with the mining industry, and would equalise the taxation very much better than the present system of stamp duty. He hoped the Government would take the matter seriously into their consideration, and try to deal with it. It would be a great boon to the mining community generally if the taxation was made more equal in that respect.

Mr. SMYTH said it was a very curious thing in mining that if a man was in a claim that did not pay and they had to pay calls there had to be a stamp affixed to the receipt for those calls, so that a man who was in a non-paying claim was put in a worse position in the matter of stamp duty than a man in a paying claim. He thought a tax upon dividends was better than the present stamp duty upon transfers of scrip.

Mr. SAYERS said the matter of evading the stamp duty and the question of imposing a tax on dividends were brought under the notice of the Government last session, but nothing had been done in regard to them. There was no doubt that by the way the present tax was collected the Government were cheated out of a large sum of money annually, and one could hardly blame the people who did that, because the tax was oppressive. When an oppressive tax was imposed it was sure to be evaded. He believed that shareholders would sooner pay a tax out of their dividends than the stamp duty, because in the former case they felt that they were receiving something when paying the tax, while in the latter they were actually taxed for paying money away when there might be very small prospect of a return. In that way the stamp duty pressed more heavily on the industry than anyone not engaged in it might suppose, and did a great deal of harm. If a dividend tax was substituted for it there would be no fear of any fraud, it would be easily collected, and would in the long run produce more than the stamp duty. He hoped some alteration would be made in the law in this respect especially in regard to mining scrip. He thought it would be a good thing to make the tax on scrip nominal, and if it was not transferred within so many days after the sale was effected impose a fine on the person who was guilty of that neglect.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that matter was discussed when they were considering the Companies Act. It appeared to him a very extraordinary proposal to make that a man largely interested in mining, and connected with twenty or thirty companies, should, because he happened to get one dividend, while all his shares in the other companies were contributing shares, be required to put his hand in his pocket and pay away his dividends in order to keep up his interest in the non-paying mines. He did not think that reasonable or fair. There were few paying mines in the colony, and they wanted to encourage the people who worked the mines, not to say to them that as soon as they received a dividend they should pay so much to the State. But the question was

scarcely one for discussion on the present occasion, though it might be considered at some future time in connection with any proposal to amend the Stamp Act or revise the tariff. He believed, with hon. members, that the stamp duty was far too high, and that a reduction should be made. He questioned whether the Government had the power to enforce the Stamp Act as it stood now in the way suggested by hon. members.

Mr. SMYTH said what they wanted was to compel people who bought shares to transfer them at once. If hon. members looked at the papers they would often see notices that calls would not be received from any persons but principals or authorised attorneys. The reason of that was that a broker who bought 1,000 shares put the scrip in his pocket and paid the calls as agent; he made no transfer of the shares in order that he might save the stamp duty. If brokers in those cases were compelled to transfer it would be a blessing to those who originally held the scrip, and did not want it retained in their names, and themselves made responsible for it as long as their names were on the register.

Mr. TOZER said he brought the matter under the notice of the Government because he had seen the defects in the Stamp Duty Act. He did not see how they could possibly get at the companies which evaded the law. If he bought scrip and brought it to the secretary of the company with £50 marked upon it as the consideration, and offered the stamp duty on that, he did not see that there was any provision in the Act which would authorise the chairman and directors to refuse the money tendered. He did not see how they could remedy that by sending an officer round to inspect the books of the companies. The question was whether they could get at the persons who put the small consideration on the scrip. He did not think they could. When the Act was passed in 1872 mining was not very much in vogue in this colony, and the result had been that many men only stated £50 as the consideration for their scrip, in order to evade the stamp duty, while many others who were honest, stated the full consideration and paid the full stamp duty. That was how the Act operated unequally, and he hoped the Government would look into the matter and remedy it.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he had previously asked the Colonial Treasurer whether he would lay on the table of the House, a statement showing the estimated expenditure from the Loan Fund during the financial year, similar to that which was laid on the table in the session of 1887, with regard to the loan expenditure for the year 1887-8. That table showed the purposes for which the money was to be expended during the year, the balance at the beginning of the year, and the estimated balance at the end of the financial year. He hoped the hon. gentleman would give the Committee a similar statement, and also another, showing the operations on the Loan Fund during the last financial year. It was practically promised by the Government last year that the information would be given. Certainly, it was very necessary that it should be given. He asked the hon. gentleman the question then because it would take some time to prepare the statement. The one he referred to took two or three months to prepare, but that was the first time such a statement of account had been prepared, and it should not take so long on this occasion. If the hon. gentleman would lay a return of that kind on the table he would be quite satisfied, otherwise he intended to formally move that the return should be laid on the table of the House. The necessity of such a

return having been admitted by the Government, he trusted that no objection would be made to laying it on the table.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would be very happy to have all the information in his possession laid on the table of the House, if time permitted. It would take some considerable time to prepare the return, but he would endeavour to have it ready to lay on the table with the Loan Estimates.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he did not doubt the willingness of the hon. gentleman to give all the information in his possession, but he did not think the hon. gentleman had got that information in his possession. He (Sir S. W. Griffith) knew how long it took when he was in the Treasury.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would endeavour to get the information desired, and see that attention was given to the matter forthwith.

The PREMIER said the information was available with regard to some of the departments.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he would ask the Treasurer whether the system was still adopted in the Treasury of keeping a record of all current liabilities on contracts that were let, showing the monthly balances, and the amounts paid out of loan and revenue. That was very important information.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that whatever system had been in force previously had certainly not been altered during the time he had been in office.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it had not been the custom in the office. It was instituted during the time he was in the Treasury, but it seemed to cause considerable annoyance and some surprise when he asked for the information. He did not get all he wanted.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would endeavour to supply the information asked for.

Question put and passed.

#### COLONIAL STORES.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £22,005 be voted for the Colonial Stores, salaries and contingencies. He said that hon. members would notice there was a very considerable reduction in one item, that of contingencies, which amounted to £35,000 last year, and only £20,000 for the current year. It was quite possible that that £20,000 would be found in excess of requirements. Still, it was as well that that amount should appear on the Estimates; it would not be spent if it were not required. The reduction had been brought about mainly on the recommendation of the late Royal Commission, that each department should have its own cash credit, and its stores should be charged directly to it. The Police Department was charged with £10,000, a sum which he considered too large; but all care would be taken to see that the requisitions were not unreasonable. Then there was another £6,000 charged to the Post Office Department, which would bring the total expenditure up to something about what it was last year. The only other alteration in the vote was that one of the employés—an apprentice—had previously been paid from contingencies. The amount for salaries was £2,005, as against £2,044 last year.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he wished to know if there were any other officers whose salaries were paid from contingencies.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: None.

Mr. UNMACK said he thought they were entitled to a little more information in regard to the new arrangements that had been made concerning the Colonial Stores Department. The Colonial Treasurer had been good enough to give them some information, but the Committee were far from having a full explanation of the changes that had been made. He understood that it was the intention of the Government that each department should pay for the stores it required. There were three departments which still remained under the old system, and the items were very heavy. One was the Post and Telegraph Department, which was called upon to send telegrams amounting to something like £40,000 on behalf of the different departments, and he maintained that each department should pay for its own telegrams. If that plan were adopted he was sure that that amount would dwindle down to £25,000 or £30,000, as many times it happened that an officer in another department would send a telegram, instead of writing a letter because it cost nothing. He thought the country was overburdened with taxation in that direction. Then there was another department, that of the Government Printer. He understood the Colonial Treasurer to say the other day that the supplies furnished by the Government Printer were not to be charged to the different departments.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: They are to be.

Mr. UNMACK said he was glad to hear it, because that had been very excessive waste.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said separate accounts would be kept at the Colonial Stores for each department.

Mr. UNMACK said all he wanted to know was whether each department would have to pay for the printed matter furnished to it by the Printing Department. Whether it was paid for in actual cash or not did not matter, so long as it was charged to the different departments, so that they would know what each department cost. He gathered from the remarks made by the Colonial Treasurer that Government printing was not to be included in the £10,000 voted for stores in connection with the Police Department. There was a large amount of printing in that department, and if every item had to be paid for or charged against it, there would be a great saving. Another department which had been very unfairly treated was the Railway Department, in connection with the carriage of material and passengers with free passes. The Railway Department received no credit for that at all. He was sure that thousands of pounds could be saved to the country, if there were a system of book-keeping adopted. It did not matter at all whether the actual money were paid over, as long as there was a proper system of book-keeping. Why should not the Railway Department have credit for all the work it did? They were entitled to it, and did not receive it now. The annual returns from that department showed a miserable percentage, and he was sure they would be much better if all those free passes, and the carriage of material and stores were credited to it. They should know what each department really cost, and if each department was charged with exactly what was supplied to it, in the way he had suggested, they would be able to see what was its actual cost. He had mentioned those three departments: the Post and Telegraph Department, the Government Printer's Department, and the Railway Department; but there was another—the Lithographic Department, which had to supply matter to the different departments. Not very long ago there were 20,000 obsolete forms ordered by the Lands Department. They were printed

on the best Turkish paper, and were useless. If the office had had to pay for that useless expense and waste, very much more care would be taken. If each department were limited to a certain expenditure, and that amount were exceeded, the department doing so would soon be hauled over the coals. The Ministers themselves were very likely innocent of that waste and extravagance; they did not know what was going on. It was simply "cut and come again," or "we have not to pay for it; never mind who does pay." An instance occurred in the Meteorological Department the other day. That department sent in a return which, he was informed, would have cost £800, if it had been printed as it had been received in the first instance. But, thanks to the foresight and scrutiny of the Colonial Secretary's Department, and that of the Government Printer, the cost was considerably reduced. If the Meteorological Department had had to pay for that return, such a document would not have been furnished. If separate accounts were to be kept in all those cases, it would be all that would be required. He was satisfied, and many hon. members were also satisfied, that, if such a system were adopted, a saving of from £20,000 to £30,000 would be effected in the different departments, and he should like to know from the Colonial Treasurer whether it was the intention that each department should be charged for the supplies it received? The hon. gentleman had told them that the vote for contingencies had not been increased. Certainly there was an apparent reduction of £15,000, but that was more than made up for by the additions to other departments.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the department would certainly not spend more money than was actually necessary. It was not possible for the Treasurer to exercise any very great control over the expenditure in the Railway, Telegraph, or any of the other departments.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: He ought to. I know he never had any.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he admitted that the Treasurer ought to have. It was not possible for any Treasurer to get hold of the whole of the details, as the hon. member for Toowong seemed to think.

Mr. UNMACK said he wanted to have each department responsible for its own expenditure.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could furnish the hon. member with a full list of the materials obtained from the Stores by every department; but beyond that he could not give the information asked for, much as he would like to do so. The Telegraph Department was outside the sphere of the Stores Department as to the expenditure of its £6,000 for contingencies.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that although the Telegraph Department's contingencies was outside the sphere of the Stores Department, yet it was a branch of the same subject. The object was to show the work which one department of the service did for another department. It was possible, but highly undesirable, that money should actually pass from one department to another, because it would give rise to all sorts of confusion as to the total revenue and expenditure of the colony. If each department was a separate institution, that would be all right; but the Government was one Government, and the expenditure of the country should be shown as a whole. But it was very important that all the services rendered by one department to another should be recorded and charged, and it would be a very good thing if the Treasurer's tables showed annually the money value of the work done by one department for

another. For instance, the Government Printing Department did no work for itself with the exception, perhaps, of printing the *Gazette* and *Hansard*; for the greater part of its work was done for other departments; and it would be interesting and useful to know the value of the work it did for the different departments. It might be more than the total amount spent on the Government Printing Department. If so, it was a very economical and useful department. It was only by doing something of that kind that it would be possible to get a real grip and control over the expenditure of the country. Over small items, where economy might be practised, there was practically no control. He understood it was intended to make some changes in the administration of the Stores Department. For years the department had worked unsatisfactorily. For a long time it was under the Colonial Secretary's Department. Then it was transferred to the Treasury, where it was thought it would receive more careful supervision. Then a board was appointed to inquire into its working, and they made some very valuable suggestions. He did not know how far it was proposed to carry them out, but he understood the Colonial Treasurer proposed to materially reduce the work done by the department by transferring some of it to other departments. He did not, however, observe any diminution in the cost of managing the department. How was that, if half the work had been taken away from it?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It has not been taken away yet.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he never could see what all the hands did there, and he was sorry to find that the Treasurer did not seem to know more about the working of the department than he himself did.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I think I do know a little more.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I wish you would make the Committee acquainted with it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there was the same amount of work to do in the Stores Department as there had ever been. It might be possible to do away with one of the officials; but if so it would not be because his services were not required, but because he was not quite up to his work. The number of packages dealt with by the department last year amounted to upwards of 16,000. As to the Royal Commission, although those gentlemen had brought up their report, he was assured they never once visited the Government Stores to see the working of the office. He mentioned that on the authority of the Colonial Storekeeper. If that were true, the members of the Commission could really know nothing of the actual working of the department.

Mr. UNMACK said it was perfectly true that the Royal Commission never went near the Stores Department; and they never made a report upon it. That was an extraordinary statement for the Treasurer to make. The Stores Department was inquired into by a board consisting of three members, and their labours had ceased before the Royal Commission was appointed. The board made a most exhaustive inquiry into the department, and held sittings at the stores and in the office before they made their report. The hon. gentleman had not answered his question as to the Railway Department, the Telegraph Department, and the Printing Department—whether the work which they did would be charged separately to the departments for which it was done, so that it might be seen at a glance what the cost of each department was?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon. J. Donaldson) said, so far as the stores were concerned, he could answer, yes. There was a sum of £6,000 placed on the Estimates this year for stores for the Post Office, and they would supply their own stores. So far as the telegrams were concerned, that opened up a very big question, and one which could not be dealt with lightly. He held the opinion that, for the telegrams sent through the Telegraph Department by the other Government departments, the Telegraph Department should receive some recognition; but, at the same time, it would not be quite fair that they should be charged, because if that were done they would have a fictitious revenue for the department. A debit and credit account would be worthless. The great objection to free telegrams being sent was the abuse of the system. Thousands of telegrams were sent by the various departments which should be paid for, and he would like to see the system altered. At the same time it would be useless to attempt to remedy the abuse by charging the different departments with all the telegrams sent by them. The best way would be to say that the departments would have to pay for all in excess of a certain amount. If money were actually paid, there would be some check, he knew; but no good could come from merely checking the accounts, and until a system of paying was adopted no proper check could be kept. On the other hand whilst the Post and Telegraph Department was used pretty freely by the other departments, they must remember that their mails were carried by the Railway Department free of charge, so that they would have to be paid for, and that would lead to a fictitious return of revenue from the Railway Department; so that the question of charging the various departments with the work done for them by other departments would open up a very big question, and one which he would like to see put upon a more satisfactory footing than it was on at present. Now that the Post Office was to have £6,000 voted for the supply of their own stores, the Postmaster-General could see how that money was expended, and in future he would watch the expenditure, which up to that time had not been possible. Up to the present time, requisitions were sent in to the Colonial Stores, and the Postmaster-General had not proper control over the expenditure; but that, at all events, would be remedied in the future.

Mr. HODGKINSON said it was a very extraordinary thing that a Minister should rise and make such an excuse. What was to prevent the Ministers from giving instructions that copies of all telegrams sent should be forwarded to the head of the department concerned for inspection and approval? He had seen that done in other countries with perfect success. If once one or two officers were mulcted in the price of those telegrams they would be very careful. The system had become general of sending unnecessary telegrams, and from his own personal knowledge he knew of one department which had almost a monopoly of the telegraph lines. That sort of thing could be put a stop to by the simple *ipse dixit* of the Postmaster-General.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he had looked into that matter very carefully, and he had found it was not so easy to decide as the hon. gentleman thought. Did the hon. gentleman think he (the Postmaster-General) could read all the Government telegrams, to see whether they were really upon purely Government business? He would not be able to decide whether the telegrams were all upon public business or not, as they were mixed up so much. At the same time, he believed that if the heads of the departments knew that all telegrams not upon

purely public business would have to be paid for, they would not send so many telegrams, but would send letters instead.

Mr. UNMACK said the Postmaster-General had not understood the question asked by the hon. member for Burke. Neither the hon. member for Burke nor himself wished that money should actually pass between the various departments, because that would be impracticable, and besides it would entail an extra amount of checking of accounts, and might possibly lead to frauds. He would like to see a system of monthly vouchers sent from one department to another. Suppose, for example, the Postmaster-General sent a debit voucher to the Colonial Secretary's Department at the end of each month showing that £500 worth of telegrams had been sent by that office, he was quite sure the Colonial Secretary or the Under-Secretary would inquire into the expenditure and attempt to curtail the extravagance in sending telegrams unnecessarily. That would be the effect of initiating such a system. He knew that the Railway Department, for instance, put down every package they forwarded. He did not know whether they also kept a tally of the free passes granted, but that could be easily done. Debit vouchers should be sent to the various departments, and either the under secretary or the political head of each department could see the amount of expenditure that was going on, and prevent any extravagant waste. If, in the example he had given, the Colonial Secretary's Department had to put down the £500 to contingencies, the telegrams would be scrutinised very closely to see whether letters would not do instead. Then, with regard to postage stamps, they had a wonderful system, although it had been greatly curtailed lately. When a department wanted postage stamps they actually swindled the Post Office out of 2½ per cent. on every £1 worth purchased. The messengers, or someone else, went to some stationer in town, and when they bought £1 worth they received 5 per cent. discount. Why should a requisition not be sent to the Post Office for the stamps required, the Post Office sending a debit voucher for the amount, at the end of the month, to the department getting those stamps? In the Colonial Stores Department that very question had cropped up, and immediately after an entry was made for a few shillings' worth of stamps. All that could be avoided by having a system of debit vouchers such as he had mentioned. He had not the slightest intention of suggesting that money should pass between one department and another; but those debits should be charged in the Estimates in future against the different departments. In reference to the staff, he did not see the least necessity for having thirteen hands in the department. The Colonial Treasurer had informed them a few nights previously that the Police Department were going to call for tenders in Rockhampton and in the various Northern centres, and that the supplies would be obtained locally. If that were correct—and he had no reason to doubt it—the work in the Colonial Stores must, of necessity, decrease, and the same staff would not be required. At present, even when there was a pressure of work, they could easily dispense with some of the staff. Speaking as a business man, and after having closely inquired into the working of the Colonial Stores, he said advisedly that half of the staff could be dispensed with. It was wasteful extravagance to keep thirteen men in that office.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had already assured hon. members that in his opinion the staff was necessary. They were only now trying an experiment, and did not know what the requirements of the stores would be. So far

as police supplies were concerned, they were not very great, and tenders were now called for them in the Northern towns. Tenders were also called in various places for supplies for the Railway Department, Immigration Department, and the Gaols, so that the plan now being carried out was not a very great extension of the system. Possibly there might be a reduction in the staff, and it was more than likely there would be at an early date.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he did not altogether agree with all that had been said about the excessive use of telegrams. He thought telegrams ought to be used to a very large extent in connection with the business of the country. By using telegrams the evils of centralisation were, to a great extent, avoided. He did not at all agree that in cases where long telegrams were sent letters should be substituted. Of course it depended upon circumstances; but in many parts of the colony, when an officer was asking for instructions, or reporting a matter that required immediate attention, he ought to use the telegraph. When he was sending a telegram which would be just as useful if received in three weeks, then he should write instead, but he did not think there were many cases of that sort. He had seen a good many official telegrams complained of, but had never seen any of that sort. He thought it would be an unfortunate thing to say that telegrams should not be used in outlying parts of the colony. What other use was there for these telegraph lines? Certainly the amount of private business in some places would not have justified the construction of a telegraph line.

Question put and passed.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1889-90, a sum not exceeding £16,500 for Miscellaneous Services. The vote was £1,000 in excess of that of last year, on account of the item "commission and exchange" being increased. Some hon. members had inquired recently as to the work done by the surveying gunboat "Paluma," and he might say that a vast amount of work had been done, and at a very reasonable cost. As far as his investigations extended, he thought they had a really good bargain in getting so much work done at such a small expense.

Mr. UNMACK said he would like to know the meaning of the item "premiums on general guarantee policy, £1,500." Why did that item appear still? The Civil Service Bill had become law, and under it the superannuation fund was to be charged with all losses. Therefore, that item should be omitted.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it could do no possible harm to have the item on the Estimates. If it was not required, it would not be spent.

Mr. UNMACK said that was simply a negative answer. Why did they pass the Estimates at all? If the amount was not wanted, they should not vote it. If voted, there would be a chance of it being manipulated and transferred from one vote to another under the Audit Act. Last year the amount spent was about £1,400, and he thought that item should be omitted.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was very possible that the amount would be paid over to the Civil Service Board.

Mr. HODGKINSON said would the hon. gentleman give the Committee some information with respect to the agreement for the survey of the coast?

1889—5 z

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he took it that hon. members knew the agreement which was in existence. It was an agreement made in 1884, and renewed in 1887, by which the Government contributed £2,500 per annum towards the cost of the survey. On the 6th September, 1887, a report from the officer commanding the "Paluma" was laid on the table of the House, and if hon. members would pay attention to that they would see that a great amount of work had been done. He would read a letter from Captain Richards, showing what had been done up to the time he left:—

"I have the honour to forward you for the information of your Government a brief summary of the work which has been completed during the last four years by the vessel whilst under my command. Commencing at Cape Conway, as the southern end of Whitsunday Passage, the whole of the coast line as far as Double Island, with the off-lying islands, has been charted on a scale of three-quarter inch to the nautical mile, the soundings carried to the inner edge of the Great Barrier Reef patches, and the general trend of the inner edge of the Barrier determined. Plans of Cleveland Bay and Port Denison (Bowen) have been made on the respective scales of two and four inches to the mile; also the southern entrance of Hinchinbrook Channel and Bar, Port Newry, and Gloucester Passage have been surveyed—the former on two inches and the latter on six inches to the mile.

"The total amount of coast line, including rivers, amounts to 983 miles, and the number of square miles sounded over by the ship and boats during the four years amounts to 7,760. On the whole the vessel may, I think, be considered a suitable and economical vessel for the work.

"I have etc.,

"G. E. RICHARD,

"Lieut. Commander."

He thought that short letter disclosed the fact that very satisfactory work had been done. They knew that up to the present time the survey of their coast had not been entirely satisfactory, and reefs and rocks were being discovered now and again which rendered the navigation of their waters difficult and dangerous. He thought the employment of that vessel possibly for a few years more would have the desired effect of producing a chart by which mariners could sail their waters in comparative safety. He thought the vote of £2,500 would prove to be money well spent. The report furnished for 1889 was a short but very interesting one, and was well worthy the attention of hon. members.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he had not the slightest doubt that the work done might be regarded as very satisfactory, but employing the "Paluma" at such work was like employing an elephant to pick up sixpences. He did not speak upon such a subject from his own personal knowledge alone, as his remarks in that case might carry but small weight with the Committee, but he spoke of it from the best professional information available, and also from a perfect knowledge of the object for which the vessel was obtained. The value of the "Paluma" was something like £40,000, and it was perfectly absurd that a vessel that cost that amount should be diverted from her legitimate purpose and put to the survey of one of the most dangerous coasts in the world—because the coral reefs were perpetually in process of formation. The object they had in getting their gunboats was primarily for the purpose of defence, and for the facilities they would afford for the training of their naval defence forces. Half their navy had been taken from that primary purpose and devoted to survey purposes that could be accomplished with equal speed and efficiency by a vessel of half the value of the "Paluma," and certainly at a great deal less cost to the people. The hull of that vessel was not insured, and the Government were responsible for that,



and he would like to know what would happen in the event of her discovering one of those reefs before it was touched by the lead?

Mr. MURPHY: She would go to the bottom.

Mr. HODGKINSON: She would go to the bottom, as the hon. gentleman said, and when she lay at the bottom half the Queensland navy would lay there too. He never knew of an expenditure of money so utterly disproportionate to the object to be achieved. The proper work for the boat was to be employed in training their naval brigades in the various ports, and working up and down the coast as a training ship, and she was not intended to be a survey boat. It seemed to him that the purposes for which those boats had been secured had been forgotten, or mistaken. Their place was in the Bay, or on the coast, defending the entrances to their ports, and it was the province of their land forces to defend their rivers and towns by their arms, the employment of torpedoes and submarine batteries, should any enemy effect an entrance into their harbours. It was not the province of the gun-boats to be idle, rotting in the harbour, or be employed in the equally expensive and disproportionate service of surveys. He was saying what was evident, and what was the subject of conversation amongst all professional men capable of passing an opinion upon the point. If the Government were determined to continue the employment of the "Paluma" for survey purposes, the least they could do was to insure her against total loss.

Mr. MURPHY said the hon. gentleman forgot altogether that the bargain made with the Imperial Government in connection with the "Paluma," was made by the Government of which the hon. member was himself a member. If there was anything wrong in it, and he (Mr. Murphy) did not say there was, the previous Government were responsible for it. The hon. member argued that the vessel should be put to her legitimate purpose, but the legitimate purpose was the destruction of human life. Instead of that the Government preferred to put the vessel to another purpose, exactly the reverse of that to what the hon. gentleman desired she should be put. She was being employed in the discovery of reefs well-known to exist, but the exact position of which was not known, and, by making a proper survey of the coast, to provide efficient means for the saving of life. He thought that was a better purpose to put her to than to put her to the purpose of destroying life, by using her as a war vessel. It was quite true that the vessel had cost £40,000, but they bought her as a war vessel, and they had no practical use for her as a war vessel. The ship they had at present in commission was lying half the time idle in the river, and she was quite sufficient, if properly employed, to train all the sailors they had in the naval defence forces along the coast. The "Paluma," in being employed as she was, was more usefully employed than she would be if left rotting in the Brisbane River. They did not want to go to the expense of keeping two ships at sea for the same purpose when one ship could not occupy the whole of her time in training the naval brigade. There was no use in putting a second ship to the same purpose when it would entail much greater expense to the country, and it was better even to risk the loss of the vessel and have her employed upon the survey service.

Mr. BARLOW said there was a great deal of force in what the hon. member for Barcoo had said, but he would point out that when the matter was discussed before, in the passing of the Chief Secretary's Estimates, he drew attention to the fact that the "Paluma" was not

insured. The cost of her employment in surveying the coast was £2,500 per annum, but there was also the risk upon the vessel. The question was whether she should not be insured and the premium charged to her expenses. It might be that in running the risk they were indirectly paying the premium, but it would not be at all pleasant if the vessel was lost. Of course, if they were to have another vessel rotting in the Garden reach that would be a certain expense to the public. At the same time it would be better if the boat was insured for a reasonable sum, and he would recommend that to the attention of the Government. He would ask the Colonial Treasurer whether the sum mentioned in the Estimates was sufficient, or more than sufficient, last year, and whether there had been any transfers in connection with the vote under the 19th section of the Audit Act?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said although the amount voted for the survey was £2,500, the sum actually expended in 1885-6 was £585 19s. 4d., in 1886-7 £2,509 10s. 5d., in 1887-8 £1,570 14s. 8d., and in 1888-9 £2,062 3s. 3d., so that hon. members would notice that only in one year was the vote exceeded, and that by the small sum of £9 10s. 5d. With regard to the question of insurance, it appeared to have been the policy of past Governments to be their own insurers, and that policy had been continued by the present Government. Whether that was a wise policy or not was a question worthy of consideration. Personally he thought it was not a wise policy.

Mr. PALMER said he would like to know whether any attempt had lately been made to recover the guns thrown overboard by Captain Cook. Attempts had been made twice already at some reef outside Cooktown near Cape Tribulation, and he believed the harbour-master at Cooktown had pretty well located the spot where the Endeavour had struck. The guns had no value otherwise than as historical relics. They had, he believed, been presented to Queensland by the Imperial Government.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: When found.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was not aware whether any steps had been taken for the discovery of those relics.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Oh, yes; there have.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Certainly not during the term of office of the present Government.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said attempts had been made to find those guns, and formal reports had been made on the subject. He believed the harbour master at Cooktown was of opinion that he had found the precise spot where the "Endeavour" struck, but the coral had grown so much that he came to the conclusion that if the guns were there they were probably covered by a good many feet of coral. He (Sir S. W. Griffith) thought that officer had made two separate visits to the place, but after the conclusion he arrived at on the second one he did not receive any instructions to make any further investigation.

Mr. MURPHY said he had a constituent who had discovered some of the Leichhardt relics. Probably he might assist the hon. member for Carpentaria in discovering those relics of Captain Cook.

Question put and passed.

#### CUSTOMS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in moving that there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1889-90, a sum not

exceeding £43,817, for salaries and contingencies in connection with Customs, said there were one or two alterations in that vote as compared with last year. The landing surveyor and chief clerk at Brisbane was set down for an increase of £50. During the absence of Mr. King, on his usual visit to the various ports of the colony, the landing surveyor acted as Collector of Customs, and the increase he was now receiving scarcely placed him in as good a position as some of the sub-collectors of Customs, such as those at Maryborough and Rockhampton. The increase had long been promised, but for some reason or other, one Government and another had not seen their way clear to put it on the Estimates. It appeared to him that the claim of Mr. Irving was a strong one, and he had therefore put that increase on the Estimates. While on this subject, he might state that there were many other deserving officers who had been promised increases from year to year, but the Government found that if they started making general increases, they would be opening a wide door which it would be difficult to fill, and they had therefore declined to make general increases. The next increase in the vote was one of £25 to the acting tide surveyor in Moreton Bay. A change had also been made in the salary of the officer in charge at Broadsound. Mr. Smales, the late sub-collector of Customs and police magistrate at Burketown, having been called upon to send in his resignation, the sub-collector and police magistrate at Broadsound had been transferred there. It was found that the salary of £200 at present paid was not sufficient to get a capable man to take the position, and it had therefore been increased by £50. There were also two increases of £12 each to a coxswain and boatmen. The increase in the number of hands employed was seven, and the total increase in the vote was £1,563. The estimate had been revised with the utmost care, and it had been found that it could not be cut down to a less amount than that submitted to the Committee. The new tariff had possibly not added very much to the work of the Customs officials, but many of them had been notoriously underpaid, in some cases for a considerable period; the increase in the number employed was very small, and the increased cost, which was something under £1,600, was not a vast increase considering the amount collected by the Customs. The cost per cent. of collection was very much less than it was last year.

Mr. UNMACK said he would like to draw attention to the position and duties of the inspector of invoices. There were several very important Northern ports, such as Rockhampton, Townsville, and Cooktown, where there was no inspector of invoices available. The system prevailing there was, so far as he could ascertain, very prejudicial to the Treasury, and more especially to the Customs Department. The valuing of the most intricate invoices which were passed in those ports was left in the hands of the sub-collector of Customs, who, to be competent for that duty, would require to have a thorough knowledge of all kinds of merchandise. He would like to know why the inspector of invoices should be permanently stationed in Brisbane. Why, if he were the competent and able man he believed he was, should that officer not make periodical visits to the Northern ports, take people by surprise and scrutinise their invoices? If that were done, he was sure some considerable discoveries would be made, and which would be of great value to the Treasury. As there was an inspector of invoices stationed in Brisbane, there should be permanent inspectors appointed to the Northern ports, or else the Brisbane inspector should be made to travel. He should call unexpectedly at a certain port, and stay there

for a couple of months to scrutinise the invoices, more especially those which came from the Southern colonies. That would have a very good effect, because Queensland traders were considerably handicapped by that want of supervision. Were the Government willing to make some different arrangements in regard to the inspection of invoices?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said a valuer was stationed in Brisbane at a salary, and there was a similar officer at Townsville. The collector of Customs at Rockhampton acted as valuer, except in cases of doubt, when an expert was called in. That expert was paid by fees, which were paid by the importer if the invoice was incorrect, and if not, by the department. The fee was £22s., and the amount received by the expert last year was £46 4s. As the hon. member for Toowoong had said, it would be better to have paid valuers at each port. In that case, he knew they would have to obtain the services of some person in trade, and he thought it would be far better, where there were thoroughly competent officers in the department, such as the sub-collector or the second officer, they might be left to ascertain whether their invoices were fair or not. He certainly believed those officers were competent in Rockhampton. In Townsville they had a valuer at a fixed salary, and in regard to the ports further North, most of the goods received at them were duty paid, and came from Brisbane, which gained the advantage in that respect. He was sure the sub-collectors in those ports took every precaution. The hon. member for Toowoong should point out how they could take more effective precautions than were taken at present, and in the meantime they were doing all they possibly could to see that fair values were given.

Mr. UNMACK said the remark made by the Colonial Treasurer that only £46 had been paid in fees at a place like Rockhampton, clearly proved to his mind, that there was very little actual supervision. He knew that the Customs officer in Rockhampton was a competent man; but he defied him to have that intricate knowledge of certain classes of merchandise which were imported, and which a person could only possess who had had a life training, and which it would be necessary for him to have. Take drapery, for instance. How could he have an intimate knowledge of silks, kid gloves, and such things? The Colonial Treasurer had asked him to point out a remedy. He had already pointed one out, and it was this: There had been a permanent valuer in Brisbane for many years, and the Brisbane people were so fully aware of the scrutiny of their invoices, that the Government could very well afford to allow that inspector to depart from Brisbane for a few months, and take up a position elsewhere. That was the most sensible suggestion that could be made, and it would cost nothing except a small amount for travelling expenses. If he arranged to arrive at Townsville or Cooktown at the same time as a steamer was expected to arrive, he need waste very little time; he would only require to be there at the time entries were passed. If that were done, he was sure that officer would find out some very serious discrepancies. He knew it; it had been frequently spoken of; but it was a very difficult matter to prove. It was no one's business to attend to the matter except that of the authorities, and he had spoken to the Treasurer on the subject upon one occasion, but no notice had been taken, otherwise he should not have risen that afternoon. The valuer stationed in Brisbane should be sent away periodically, and he believed he was correct in saying that there was an assistant surveyor employed in Brisbane for the purpose. He was sure it would not be money lost to the country.

Mr. COWLEY said there was an old proverb that when the cat was away the mice would play, and it seemed to him that it was the desire of the hon. member for Toowong to get the cat out of the road, and let the Brisbane mice play.

Mr. UNMACK : There is no cat at the other end at all.

Mr. COWLEY said there was a competent officer to look after the interests of the public at Townsville, at any rate. He considered the hon. member was perpetrating a slander upon the Northern merchants ; but if he had not slandered them, and there was truth in his statements, it simply meant that the North was far more important than it appeared, and was more entitled to separation than Southern people made out. The statement made by the Treasurer showed conclusively that the interests of the country were well looked after in the North, and the only object the hon. member had, so far as he could see, was to take the invoice inspector away from Brisbane, to give the Brisbane people an opportunity to defraud the revenue.

Mr. UNMACK said it seemed that Northern members were determined to find fault, or be offended with the suggestion he had made. So far as his suggestion was concerned, in regard to moving the inspector of invoices from Brisbane occasionally, he might say that he had not the interest of a threepenny-piece in the matter. For all it mattered to him, a dozen more inspectors might be appointed in Brisbane ; he had nothing to do with the Custom-house. As the hon. member has said, when the cat was away the mice would play. The mice had played long enough in the Northern ports, and it was time they sent two or three cats there to catch some of them, and he was quite sure they could do so. When they saw there was a necessity for an inspector of invoices in Brisbane occasionally ; when they actually saw the Customs defrauded in Brisbane, in spite of all their precautions, how much more could they reasonably conclude that similar transactions took place elsewhere ? Had they not had as clear a case as possible the other day in a barefaced attempt to pass pollard as seconds flour ? When such things were carried on at Brisbane, with all its supervision, it was reasonable to conclude that similar malpractices were carried on in the North, where there was no supervision. He did not want the inspector of invoices to remove from Brisbane, but the Brisbane importers were so well accustomed to be looked after now, that for a month or two the inspector might be spared to see whether malpractices were carried on in other places.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that no doubt the suggestion of the hon. member was a very good one. With reference to the evasion of Customs duties, there were always plenty of rival traders and others about Brisbane, quite ready to report to the department any attempt at evasion. It was so in the case of the pollard, with some little assistance received from a rat. To show that the department had not been altogether asleep, he might mention that the value of goods forfeited to the department last year, for under-value and other causes, amounted to £2,610 9s.

Mr. ISAMBERT said he had been given to understand that there was a good deal of smuggling going on in jewellery. There were many ways of smuggling jewellery, and it had been suggested to him that the only way to stop it was to allow no one to deal in jewellery except by license, and to suppress the hawking of jewellery by a very heavy penalty. He believed that on such terms the jewellers would be willing

to pay as much as £50 for a license. Would the Colonial Treasurer take the matter into his consideration ?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would take anything into his consideration that would have the effect of protecting the revenue, but he scarcely saw how the suggestion of the hon. member would have that effect. Jewellery was brought out in very small parcels, and could be stowed in a variety of ways. If the hon. member's suggestion were adopted it would be necessary to search every passenger who came into the colony by steamer or railway. The best security they had was the jealousy of rival traders, who, as he had said before, were always ready to give information to the department of any attempt at evasion. If the hon. member could show him how the adoption of his suggestion would have the effect of stopping the smuggling of jewellery, he would be very glad to take it into his consideration.

Mr. UNMACK said it would be interesting to know how many gems duty had been paid upon since the passing of the tariff. He believed the answer would be, none whatever.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would endeavour to get the information for the hon. member. At present he could not lay his hands upon it.

Mr. HUNTER said it was a great pity that a duty was ever put on precious stones. It was entirely unproductive as a source of revenue, while at the same time it offered no encouragement to manufacturing jewellers to come to the colony. Those things should be free, as they were in most countries where they were not manufactured.

Mr. TOZER said that in some houses on the Continent the practice of giving invoices in triplicate was very prevalent. When at Vienna, he went over one of the largest establishments in that city ; in fact, he was surprised at its magnitude. Some time afterwards, in Queensland, he happened to go into a retail warehouse, and, to his astonishment, from that very house he saw three invoices. He asked for an explanation, and found that, even from that large establishment, one invoice was to enable the importer to cheat the Custom-house, another was for the importer himself, showing him exactly what the goods had cost, and the third was to enable the importer to cheat the public. It was pretty well time to guard the public and the Customs revenue against things of that kind.

Mr. UNMACK said he wished to draw attention to the question of allowing officers of the department overtime. He was aware that payment for overtime did not come out of the pockets of the Government, but he was of opinion that the tax imposed on owners of goods and ships for overtime was a very extravagant one, and one that was calculated to seriously damage the trade of the various ports. For instance, there was the second officer at Rockhampton, whose salary was put down at £375, whereas the amount he actually drew was between £650 and £700, and a number of others were receiving comparatively large sums, in addition to their salaries, from the same source. Some of those officers were paid by the State for their duties during the day, and they were paid by shippers for watching their goods during the night. It was utterly impossible for men to attend to both duties properly. They did it simply because the latter was an addition to their pay. He knew the money did not come out of the Treasury, but he considered they should do all they could to foster and encourage trade, instead of putting on grievous taxes of that sort. He

had always contended that every officer's salary and allowances should be stated on the Estimates, as they were led astray even by the schedule to the Estimates. As he had pointed out, an officer who, according to the schedule, was in receipt of £375, actually drew about £650, and there were many other officers who drew very large amounts for overtime. Such a state of things should be put a stop to. Each man's labour should be properly valued, and paid for accordingly. It was in those matters that favouritism was shown, and which caused so much grumbling. A man might be appointed to a position where the salary nominally was £300, but no one really knew what he did receive. He might draw £400 or £500. He hoped the Colonial Treasurer would inquire into that matter, and put a stop to it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said, as the hon. member for Toowong had stated, overtime did not come out of the revenue of the colony. It was payment made for the convenience of vessels to enable them to get a speedy discharge and leave quickly, and so long as the shipping community did not complain he could not see there was any necessity for the Committee taking any action. No complaint had ever been made, so far as he was aware. With regard to what had been said about the overtime paid at Rockhampton, he had been actively engaged in business in Rockhampton for the last twenty-four or twenty-five years, but that was the first time he had ever heard of any complaint having been made. If those men worked overtime they were justly entitled to be paid for it under the regulations; and as long as those who had to pay the overtime did not grumble, it was not the duty of the head of the department to deprive those men of the right to add a little to their incomes.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that question had come under the consideration of successive Governments on many occasions. At one time scarcely any business was done in some ports except by overtime; ships never came in without the officers having to be paid for overtime, so that in reality they drew their salaries for doing nothing. He was surprised that any officer should receive overtime to the extent of hundreds of pounds a year. There was something wrong when an officer for whom they voted a salary of £375 per annum got nearly £300 more. He would like to know what the Civil Service Board would do with such cases as that. The Colonial Treasurer must see himself that there was something wrong when a man who was nominally receiving £350 got over £600 a year. Supposing such a man were promoted and got £400 a year, he would actually lose over £200 a year by his promotion. There was something absurdly wrong in the administration of the department when such things as that could happen.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The officer referred to has already been promoted to Thursday Island.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said a man could not work both day and night; he must have some time to rest. The Colonial Treasurer said he did not see that any harm was done so long as the public did not complain; but there were many reasons why the public did not complain. There was something wrong in the regulations under which a man could so largely increase his income by working beyond his office hours. The regulations required altering, and the fees should be distributed amongst more persons. It was no use saying the system had existed for years, although he knew that scandalous abuses had existed in the past, where men had actually not done a stroke of work unless out of office hours.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that as the matter had been brought so prominently under his notice, he would inquire into it and see if any abuses existed in the system. If so, they should be remedied. That was the first time it had come to his knowledge that the second officer at Rockhampton had been receiving such large emoluments, and he would inquire into it. He might state that the officer referred to had been promoted to Thursday Island.

Mr. SAYERS said that the Colonial Treasurer in mentioning the officer in charge at St. Lawrence had stated that he had found it necessary to increase that officer's salary by £50, saying that he could not get a good man for £200 a year, and he had quite agreed with the hon. gentleman; but in looking at the schedule he found that the officer in question received £333—including a salary of £25 for acting as land commissioner, £25 for forage allowance, and quarters valued at £75, and £8 for acting as district registrar. If the salary were raised from £200 to £250 he would receive a total salary of £383.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said hon. members might notice that the quarters were valued at £75 a year, but he very much doubted whether the whole property occupied as quarters was worth £75. It made that officer's income appear larger than it really was. From his own knowledge of the quarters provided at St. Lawrence, they were not worth more than the amount put down as the annual rental. It would be noticed that the officer in question received no salary for acting as police magistrate. He acted as police magistrate and as pretty nearly everything else; and there was a great amount of work done in the Lands Office there. The Customs work did not amount to much, and his principal duties were those of police magistrate and land commissioner, and he had an immense district to travel over. He considered that he was poorly enough paid, and as for the £75, the value placed upon the quarters, it was a perfect absurdity.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Will the hon. gentleman tell us what was the amount of Customs duty collected at St. Lawrence during last year?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was very small, but nevertheless as it was a port of entry and vessels arrived there every two or three months with supplies for the place, the Customs officer required to be always on the spot. Then, as hon. members were aware, in small towns the people were always divided into two parties, and as that was a rather troublesome district the late police magistrate had been removed and another sent. It was a difficult matter to get a really good man to go there, one who would not take sides with either one party or the other. He believed that in the man who had been sent to St. Lawrence they had got a good man. He really thought that a place like St. Lawrence was entitled to a man who should receive some little consideration in the way of salary.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the reason why he asked about the number of ships entering the port of St. Lawrence was because the officer's salary was charged to the Customs Department. He thought it ought to be charged to the departments for which he did most work.

Mr. HUNTER said he noticed from the Customs statistics that the amount of Customs proper collected at St. Lawrence during the year ending on the 30th June, 1888, was £772 14s. 6d., and that the cost of collecting the Customs receipts there was £24 18s. 4d. per £100.

Mr. SAYERS said he noticed that the landing surveyor and chief clerk at Brisbane was allowed £50 a year for forage. He thought that officer had more to do with boats and ships than horses, and he wished to know whether he kept a horse.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the officer in question had to visit all the wharves from Brisbane to Bulimba, and it was necessary that he should keep a horse. If it was a matter of cab hire the amount would be considerably more than the amount set down for forage. With regard to the revenue collected at St. Lawrence, he might inform the Committee that last year the amount of Customs proper collected was £607 12s. 11d.; excise, £87 5s. 10d.; harbour, pilotage, and tonnage dues, £16 13s. 2d.; warehouse duty and rent, £10 17s. 8d.; license and other receipts, £1 10s.; making a total of £723 19s. 7d. The salaries amounted to £220 16s. 8d.; and contingencies, £35 11s. 7d., making a total of £256 8s. 3d. The cost of collection per £100 was £35 7s. 2d. That was for last year.

Mr. PALMER said there was a want of uniformity in the salaries of officers who occupied the same grade in the service. The second officer at Normanton received £200 a year; the second officer at Thursday Island £225; at Cooktown £300; at Cleveland Bay £300; and at Port Denison £225. He knew it was not the place of a private member to interfere between the head of a department and the officers of that department, but he called attention to the matter because the salary of the second officer at Normanton had been the same for many years, though the port was now the fourth or fifth in the colony.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that very few alterations were contained in the Estimates for the present year as compared with those for last year. As he had said before the revision of the salaries would require the serious consideration of the Civil Service Board. No doubt some salaries would have to be reduced and others increased; and he would like to see the numbers decreased and the salaries increased in many instances.

Mr. HUNTER said he had intended to bring under the notice of the Committee the salary of the second officer at Normanton, which was completely out of proportion to the amount received by other second officers. The total amount of Customs receipts at Cooktown for 1888 was £36,289, and the cost of collection was £5 6s. 3d. in the £100. The receipts at Normanton were £54,864, and the cost of collection £3 5s. 8d. in the £100. There was a great deal more work at Normanton than at Cooktown, yet the second officer at Normanton received £100 a year less than the second officer at Cooktown.

Mr. GLASSEY said he noticed that in the office of the inspector of invoices there was one clerk at £100, and there were five at £75. Were they men or boys? £100 a year seemed a very small salary for a man; £75 was a very much smaller salary, and he thought some measure of equity ought to be established in connection with the salaries paid to the various officers. He would point out some discrepancies in connection with the amounts set down. The sub-collector of Customs at Ipswich received £100 a year as allowance in lieu of quarters, but the quarters of the boatman at Lytton were only valued at £20. Was the boatman's family less than that of the sub-collector, or was he an inferior person, or made of different material? He noticed in the schedule that a messenger received £130 a year salary, and £10 a year as allowance for long service. He did not question those amounts; but that officer also received £50 a year as allowance in lieu of quarters. He would like to know

whether the Colonial Treasurer could give any tangible reason for those alarming discrepancies? The discrepancies he had pointed out were to be found on every page of the Estimates, and he would like even some plausible reason given for their existence. He protested against a man receiving £100 a year in lieu of quarters, whilst local men whose hours of labour were long, arduous, and heavy, only received £20.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the five clerks at £75 referred to by the hon. member were lads of about eighteen. That was a fair beginning for them, and no doubt, as they became equal to their duties, their salaries would be increased. In reference to the amount allowed for quarters and the differences between the amounts, the hon. member might as well ask him why the Queen should live in a mansion and a coachman in a cottage. It had ever been so, and would continue to be so until a very altered state of affairs existed.

Mr. GLASSEY said the allowance in lieu of quarters for the messenger was paid in cash, but the boatmen received quarters valued at £20. Along the railway line he had seen quarters allowed to men which were not worth £6 a year, yet they were put down at £20. In fact, in some instances they were mere tumble-down hovels, and not fit for families to live in. It was no reply to his question to say that the Queen lived in a mansion and her coachman in a cottage. He trusted the time was not far distant when there would be neither kings nor queens, when the head of the nation would be elected by the people. He protested against such discrepancies, and if they were continued next session, he should take every means available of putting a stop to them, by moving the omission of the items from the Estimates.

Mr. FOXTON said as the quarters at Ipswich had been referred to, he would like to ask the Colonial Treasurer why the sub-collector received £100 a year, instead of living in the quarters which were built for him, or did he live in the quarters and get the £100 as well? There was a nice brick house at Ipswich built for the sub-collector, and a former sub-collector had lived there.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had been informed by the Colonial Architect the quarters referred to were not safe for anyone to live in. Reports had also been made that the warehouse was not in a very good state of repair. As long as the Government had skilled officers who made such reports, it was the duty of the head of the department to pay attention to them.

Mr. ANNEAR said in reference to the remarks that had been made in regard to the overtime, he would like to say a word. It was the custom amongst persons who were desirous of obtaining their goods as quickly as possible to pay overtime to the Customs officers, and it would be considered a hardship if merchants were not allowed to do that. The overtime cost the country nothing, and it surely never could be supposed that a new set of men should take up the duties at 4 o'clock. He hoped the Collector of Customs would continue to extend the same courtesy to importers as had been extended to them in the past. It was a great advantage to importers to be able to get their goods without delay.

Mr. HUNTER said he thought the principle of paying overtime was bad. They paid officers for looking after the revenue of the country, and allowed them, as it were, to leave the Government employment and enter private employment. It was like a man employing a policeman to see that he did not steal. The

merchant employed a Custom-house officer to see that he did not take away his goods without paying duty on them.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Suppose, for argument sake, there were only two Customs officers at Maryborough. If they were wanted to work overtime, the merchant applied to the sub-collector, and those men received their instructions from him. How was it possible to get two other reliable men to work for a few hours now and again? No harm had arisen by allowing the present system to exist, and as the country did not pay for it, he saw no harm in it.

Mr. SMYTH said most of the overtime work was caused by the steamers arriving on Sunday. It was not to be expected that officers would work on Sundays unless they were paid for it. It would be very easy to smuggle goods in from the South if there were no Custom-house officers employed on those days.

Mr. LUYA said it would be almost impossible to get a new set of men after 4 o'clock, when the Custom-house officers knocked off. Ninety-nine ships out of a hundred worked overtime, and arrangements were made by importers with the Customs authorities for the officers to work overtime. Any interference with the system would be a serious infringement on the freedom of trade.

Mr. GLASSEY said that, speaking again of the question of allowances to the sub-collector of Customs at Ipswich, he would like to ask the Colonial Treasurer if he could ascertain what it would cost to put the quarters provided at Ipswich in a tenantable condition? He had some special knowledge of the rents of houses in that particular neighbourhood, and he was bound to say he thought £100 a year too large a sum to fix for the rent of a house there. In Brisbane the rents were much higher, but it was exorbitant to allow any man £100 a year in lieu of quarters in Ipswich, more especially when they considered the distinctions that were made between the different officers in the service, and to which he had before referred. It would, he thought, be more economical on the part of the department to spend a sum of money in the renovation of the present quarters to render them habitable, or to build new quarters if the present buildings were in so dilapidated a condition that they could not be renovated. To make an allowance of £100 a year was simply adding £50 a year to that officer's salary. It might be said that we would always have those very wide social distinctions, and what he did object to was those wide distinctions. As long as humanity existed distinctions would exist between man and man; but where a Government of a country, dealing with persons working under their control, was concerned, so far as equity could be administered it should be administered. At all events, there should be some approach to equity. But at present one person received £100 a year as allowance for quarters, a messenger receiving £50, as was here shown, and a man in a more humble position only £20, when the probability was that the man who occupied quarters valued at £20 had a larger family to house than the man who received an allowance of £100. What he desired was that the heads of departments should use the pruning knife with more decision in the distribution of allowances for quarters. It did not follow because a man received a small salary that he was incapable of taking a higher position, and therefore should put up with smaller quarters. So long as he was a member of the Committee he would point out and criticise those tremendous differences very vigorously, more vigorously than he proposed to do on the present occasion. It appeared to him that those allow-

ances were made because it had been the custom to grant them in the past, but that was no reason why they should be perpetuated. Because a wrong had been done before, it did not follow that the wrong should be continued. It must be understood that he did not make those remarks with the view of finding fault with the party at present in power; the same thing had been done by previous Governments. He hoped that arrangements of a more equitable character would be made in future, and that those marked distinctions between the allowances granted to officers in different positions in the service would not be continued. How was it that some officers could get £100 a year for allowance in lieu of quarters when men receiving £90 or £100 a year, and possibly rendering more real service to the country than they were paid for, experienced the greatest possible difficulty in getting an increase of £10 or £20 a year when such requests were made? He would now repeat his question as to whether the quarters for the sub-collector of Customs at Ipswich could not be repaired and made tenantable, or whether it would not be better to erect new quarters, if quarters were essentially necessary?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the report made to him was that the walls of the building were split from top to bottom, that the place was thoroughly unsafe for a residence, and that it would be a very costly matter to repair it. With regard to whether it was desirable to erect new quarters there, he should consult the Minister for Mines and Works, and be guided by his opinion on the subject. With reference to the other matter—the difference in the allowances for quarters to different officers—he scarcely thought the hon. member expected him (the Colonial Treasurer) to follow him. Why there should be difference between the allowance to a sub-collector of Customs and the allowance to a boatman must be apparent to the good sense of the hon. member. A boatman received £20 a year, which was about 8s. a week, and that was a fair rent for a cottage. The class of building occupied by a boatman could perhaps be obtained for less than that in Rockhampton and other Northern towns. As to whether a boatman should exchange positions with a sub-collector, he rather thought the sub-collectors would object to that view of the case. He did not think £100 was too much for a residence for a collector of Customs at Ipswich. It might be, if it was, no doubt the hon. member for Ipswich and the hon. member for Stanley could inform the Committee of the fact, but he knew that in other large towns it would not be thought too much for a gentleman occupying the position of sub-collector of Customs.

Mr. McMASTER said he wished to draw attention to the case of a class of men who suffered great hardship by the Custom-house closing at 4 o'clock. He referred to the men who carted goods from the wharves and ships, who complained that they were only able to obtain five hours' work. The Custom-house opened at 10 o'clock and closed at 4 o'clock, and taking away one hour for dinner there was only five hours' work. He wished to know if the Colonial Treasurer could not make some arrangement whereby those men would be able to work longer hours? Some years ago the Australasian Steam Navigation Company used to keep a man at the wharf up to 6 o'clock and paid for the overtime.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that in lengthening the hours of labour for carters they might perhaps be doing an injustice to another set of men. The custom was that the carters could commence work directly the gates of the shipping yard were opened, say 6 o'clock in the morning. Perhaps the hon. member referred to

goods for bond. The bond closed at 4 o'clock and surely there must be some hour fixed. He did not see why the Customs officers should work longer hours than anyone else. The regulations said that the bonds should open at 10 o'clock and close at 4 o'clock, and goods could only be received and delivered during those hours. Carters were not prevented from doing other work outside.

Mr. McMASTER said the Custom-house officer was not present when the gates were first opened. As he had said the Australasian Steam Navigation Company used to pay overtime for an officer from 6 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock at night. Messrs. Howard Smith's Company would not pay the overtime, and the Custom-house officer left at 4 o'clock. The carting was not done altogether from the bond, but from the ship's side as well. He was aware that there was the difficulty that some officer would have to work longer hours, but it was very hard that men who had to earn their living by carting should only be able to work for five hours a day.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that proved the necessity of Custom-house officers being paid overtime. They could not expect officers to work overtime without payment, and if it would meet the convenience of importers and merchants, and of the shipping companies, he saw no injustice in paying overtime. By the payment of overtime, goods could be delivered at all hours when the gates were open.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he knew something about rents in Ipswich. A good cottage of six or eight rooms could be obtained there for 10s. a week, and possibly less. In regard to the cottage adjoining the Custom-house, it was built of brick, and the fact of its being cracked did not make it uninhabitable. The previous collector of Customs, Mr. Hutchinson, lived in that cottage always. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) had not examined it lately; but, so far as he could judge, some £30 or £40 would repair it, and make it fit for anyone to live in. The Customs receipts in Ipswich at the present time were not very large, because the merchants there were taking their goods out of bond in Brisbane. He did not know that two Custom-house officers were necessary at Ipswich. One of them has been there for twenty-five years, and received a salary of £250. That officer and a boy could do all the business admirably, and give satisfaction to everybody. The business in Ipswich could be done for £300 a year, whereas it now cost £550. Of course he had not a word to say against any of the officers there; but the merchants had told him that the presence of two officers was not necessary.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the very fact that the duties collected at Ipswich amounted to £24,267 last year proved that a sub-collector was required at Ipswich. In reference to the cottage, that would be re-examined, and if it could be repaired it should be. The allowance for rent would only be paid in the meantime.

Mr. SALKELD said he was sure the Customs officer at Ipswich could find a better house than the one that was to be repaired for a great deal less than £100 a year. He could get a very suitable place for £50 or £60 per year. Putting it at the very highest figure, a house quite equal to that could be obtained for £50 or £60 a year. With regard to the tide-waiter alluded to by the hon. member for Stanley, that officer had been a long time in the service, and was well and favourably known all over Ipswich. He had no objection to Mr. Rich, personally, but he had often wondered why, when vacancies had occurred, that deserving officer was not

promoted to a better position. Indeed, he was informed that at present the tide-waiter did all the work, and gave every satisfaction. The Customs receipts at Ipswich had diminished considerably of late years, and if any other opening could be found for Mr. Rich, it would be well to promote that officer to that position. He had been long in the service, and was entitled to promotion.

Mr. McMASTER said he had no desire to press hardly upon one class of men at the expense of another, but with regard to the draymen and the Customs officers, the minority ought to give way to the majority. If fifty draymen were put to a disadvantage through one, two, or three Customs officers, some arrangement ought to be made to prevent it, and he hoped the hon. gentleman would cause an inquiry to be made into the matter. Five hours a day were too little for the draymen to earn their livelihood in, as the horses had to be fed whether they were at work or not.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would inquire into the matter, but he hardly saw how it could be altered, especially with regard to the bonded warehouses, where there was a lot of work to be done in packing and getting out and arranging stock, long before the doors were opened and long after they were closed.

Mr. McMASTER said he was not alluding so much to the bonds as to the wharves—getting goods away from the ship's side. The Customs officer left the wharves at 4 o'clock, and nothing more could be got away by the draymen after that hour.

Mr. LUYA said it was really a matter of arrangement between the ship-owner or agent and the Custom-house. If the ship-owner signified his wish to that effect, it was only a question of paying overtime, and the wharves could be open for the delivery of cargo from 6 in the morning till 6 at night. It was quite a common thing for ships to discharge from 6 to 6, and for the drays to be at work all the time. Every facility was given by the Customs; all the ship-owners had to do was to send in a notice to the effect that he agreed to pay the overtime. It was very seldom a ship only discharged within the prescribed hours of 10 to 4. Ship-owners were so anxious to get away that they were only too glad to pay the overtime, and get the discharging done as quickly as possible.

Mr. McMASTER said he was speaking from practical experience, and he knew that nothing could be taken away from Howard Smith and Co.'s wharf after 4 o'clock.

Mr. LUYA: That is because they will not pay the overtime.

Mr. ANNEAR said he had often had occasion to go down to the wharves, and he found that they were always opened punctually at 9 in the morning and remained open till 4 in the afternoon. If they were to be opened earlier or kept open later, it became a question merely of paying overtime. He did not believe there was much grumbling among the draymen: they always had plenty of time to take the goods away from the wharves.

Mr. McMASTER said he could show the hon. member to-morrow a score of draymen who complained that they could not get away the goods. Draymen were paid by the load, not by the day, and if they could only earn 7s. 6d. or 8s. during five hours, when they were quite willing to work eight or nine hours, it was very hard upon them. However, he was quite satisfied with the Colonial Treasurer's promise that he would cause an inquiry to be made into the matter.



Mr. UNMACK said it was gratifying to find that the average cost of collecting Customs revenue in Queensland bore a most favourable comparison with that of other colonies. He found from the return furnished that the average cost of collection, including all the ports, was £3 13s. 4d. per cent., and that was certainly lower than the cost in the other colonies. He gave the department great credit for the economical manner in which the work was performed; but he wished to direct attention to a portion of the report where a considerable amount of money might be saved—he referred to the keeping of separate boats' crews in the smaller ports. The Customs kept one boat's crew, while the Harbour and Lights Department kept another. It was proverbial that those crews had little or nothing to do for weeks together, as had been pointed out by the hon. member for Townsville, except to keep their boats in good order. That was another of those cases where different departments did not work harmoniously. He thought some of those boats' crews might be dispensed with, and the one crew might do the work for both departments.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: They act as storemen as well.

Mr. UNMACK said there was very little storeman's work to do, and it was well known that those men went fishing and enjoying themselves and had nothing to do for weeks together. In such places as Dungeness, Port Douglas, and Normanton, one boat's crew would be able to do all the work in connection both with the Customs and Harbours and Lighting Departments. He did not see why the various departments should look upon one another as rivals. They should work together harmoniously—as part and parcel of the one establishment. In large ports like Rockhampton it was quite necessary to have separate crews; but in places like Port Denison one would do, and a considerable sum might be saved.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the experiment had been tried to a limited extent, but at Thursday Island the result had been disastrous. In fact, it had led to the removal of the sub-collector of Customs. When the sub-collector wanted to have the use of the boat's crew, the Government Resident would also want it, and friction was caused. The boatmen at Thursday Island were generally useful, and had other work to perform besides merely acting as boatmen. There was more dissatisfaction caused at Thursday Island than at all the other ports in the colony.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: That was all put right when I was in office.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could assure the hon. gentleman that it had led to the removal of the sub-collector—Mr. Bradford—although he was a highly competent man. The friction between him and the Government Resident had led to an inquiry, and the Government Resident had pointed out the evil of having the boat's crew under the control of two individuals. The only way out of the difficulty was to remove either the Government Resident or Mr. Bradford, or else to change the system. They had not changed the system, and they were still trying to make the one set of men do the work of the two departments. With reference to the cost of collecting the Customs revenue, it was only £3 2s. per cent., which compared very favourably with that in the other colonies. In the case of Cooktown, additional boatmen had been appointed, and in reply to his inquiries he had been told that they were necessary. The extra number of men were now in the boat, but they had also to act as storemen in the bonded warehouse.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he would like to ask the Colonial Treasurer if there were two boats' crews now at Thursday Island?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No, there is only one. We have had to send a fresh sub-collector there, but there is only the one boat's crew.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he had understood the hon. gentleman to say that there were separate establishments. He must apologise for his interjection, as he understood the hon. gentleman to say that the Government had given way to the feud which had existed between the Government Resident and the sub-collector of Customs.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We have sent another sub-collector of Customs, and I think he will be able to work better with the Government Resident than the late sub-collector.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he noticed that the landing surveyor and chief clerk at Brisbane was to have his salary increased from £550 to £600. He had no objection to that, but one of the reasons given for it by the Colonial Treasurer was to place him upon an equality with the sub-collectors at the Northern ports, as his salary had been practically inferior to theirs. In the Treasurer's Department the sub-collectors and many other officers had residences provided. When the Civil Service Bill was under discussion, it was pointed out that in order to equate the different officers in the departments for the purpose of classifying them, they would take into account everything that formed part of the emoluments of those officers. Now the officer he had referred to would have a salary of £600, and he would be classified according to that salary, while other officers who received the same emoluments would be put into a lower class, because they were allowed residences. He had understood, when the Civil Service Bill was going through, that the Government intended putting on the Supplementary Estimates an increase in salary equivalent to the rent of the residences allowed, and that the officers having those residences should then be charged with the amount of the rent. That would put them all on the same footing. If that were not done, many of the officers in the Customs Department who had residences provided would be classified under the Civil Service Act at from £50 to £100 below their actual emoluments. If the Government did not put on the Supplementary Estimates increases in salary equivalent to the value of the residences of such officers, the classification by the Civil Service Board would result in a serious injustice being done, because the retiring allowances of those officers would be calculated upon the amount of cash they received, and the rest of their emoluments would not be taken into account.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he regretted that the Premier, who was rather indisposed, was not present just then. He (the Colonial Treasurer) knew little or nothing about any arrangement that might have been made, as mentioned by the leader of the Opposition, but he would bring the matter before the Cabinet to-morrow. If such an understanding had been arrived at, he would endeavour to give effect to it, but he could make no promise in the absence of the Premier.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it was important that attention should be called to the matter now, because the Civil Service Bill had become law, and the board would classify all Civil servants in accordance with their fixed emolument. The residence allowance provided for the principal officers in the department of the Colonial Treasurer formed a very important part of their



emoluments, and if they were to be put on an equal footing with other officers the residence allowance ought to be taken into consideration, not only for the purpose of classification, but also for the purpose of calculating their retiring allowances. Attention was called to the matter two or three times when the Bill was going through, and he was under the impression—he would not say any promise had been made—that on one occasion hon. members were informed that the Government proposed to deal with the matter on the Supplementary Estimates, by increasing the nominal salaries of the officers, and charging them rent. The result would be that they would not receive any more money, but their emoluments would be nominally what they really were. His attention was particularly directed to the matter by the Colonial Treasurer giving as a reason for the proposed increase in the salary of the landing surveyor at Brisbane from £550 to £600, that otherwise his emoluments, amounting to £550, were less than those of many of the officers of the department, who nominally received £500. He hoped the Government would bring down Supplementary Estimates to deal with the matter, because that was the only way to do justice to those officers. It was the only way in which a correct list of the Civil servants could be made up according to their classification, and showing their relative positions in the service.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said there was no doubt that many officers did not receive any allowance in lieu of house rent, while others did receive such an allowance, and he thought there should be some mode of classifying them, by which the allowance for rent would be reckoned as a portion of the salary. At the present time a good deal of money was being spent on buildings for officers in certain places, and he did not think the State should be called upon to spend such a large amount without receiving rent for those buildings. That was to say, the rent allowances should form part of the salary of an officer, and all officers should be put on the same footing.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the difficulty should be remedied by Supplementary Estimates, because the Civil Service Board would have to classify the officers according to the Estimates; otherwise great injustice would be done. He did not know how it could be corrected afterwards unless there was a re-classification, which would give rise to a lot of heart-burning. The scheme of the Civil Service Act was that the classification should be made at once; and the Estimates ought to be framed accordingly. He mentioned the matter now, because it appeared to be the last occasion on which there would be an opportunity of calling the attention of the Government to it, in time to have any practical effect.

MR. UNMACK said he agreed with all that the leader of the Opposition had said. If the rents formed part of the salaries every officer would know what to expect, and the board would know how to make their classification. He had several times endeavoured to impress on the Committee that there should be no extras, but that the maximum emoluments should appear on the Estimates as salary; because unless such a course were adopted the back-door would always be open to favouritism. When he stated a little while ago that the cost of collecting the Customs receipts in Queensland was £3 13s. 4d. per cent. he was referring to the year ending June, 1888; and he was pleased to hear that the cost last year was so much less. He was glad also to have the opportunity of bearing testimony to the general good management of the Customs Department.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said the question of extras was a very difficult one to deal with. He had in his mind an officer in the Mines Department whose salary was £500 a year; but, through the addition of extras, he was drawing over £700 a year. In addition to his salary, he received forage allowance, ration allowance, an allowance as mineral lands commissioner, and, he believed, an allowance for rent.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Forage and ration allowance should not count as part of his salary.

THE HON. P. PERKINS said it was rather late in the day to talk about the classification of Civil servants now that the Civil Service Act had been passed. He laboured under the delusion that they were going to hear no more of the Civil servants, but half of the session had been taken up in talking about them. The best thing would be to hand over the country to the Civil servants, and the revenue too. He did not see why seventy-five men should be kept listening to some drivel about some Civil servant who did not think he received enough salary. Those matters ought to be left to the gentleman whose allowance they were discussing the other evening—he ought to be capable of putting the service in a proper condition.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said a number of sub-collectors received £350 a year. With their residences their emoluments were really more than £400 a year, but they would be put in a lower class than they were entitled to be in, as £400 was the minimum of one class. He wished to have some information with reference to tidewaiters. There were twenty-five put down instead of twenty-six, an apparent reduction of one from last year. Could the hon. gentleman tell him how many were employed in Brisbane? Was the number forty or fifty, and could he say how much of the item of £5,000 for contingencies was spent on tidewaiters last year.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said the number of tidewaiters was twenty-five.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: How many extra are there?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Twenty-five.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Twenty-five extra?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes. Last year £3,618 19s. 2d. was expended out of the £5,000 on tidewaiters, messengers, labourers, and incidental expenses.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said, then he understood the correct number was fifty.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said there were twenty-five tidewaiters permanently employed, and twenty-five paid out of contingencies. He believed twenty-five and twenty-five made fifty.

MR. FOXTON said there was an increase of £25 to the acting tide surveyor. What were the duties of that gentleman, and who was he?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said the officer was Mr. Wassell, who was stationed at Lytton. He did Customs work on the vessels in the Bay, and saved the expense of having a permanent officer stationed there.

MR. FOXTON said there was no reference to Mr. Wassell in the schedule. There ought to be some reference to him in the schedule, he being in receipt of salary for a dual office.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said that officer would be mentioned in the Colonial Secretary's Department.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he noticed that the second officer at Rockhampton had been made sub-collector at Thursday Island. He knew him to be a most efficient officer, and would like to know if he was given the same allowances as Mr. Bradford had at Thursday Island? Mr. Bradford's salary had been £350, with extra emoluments as shipping master, and savings bank officer, and house allowance.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said Mr. Hennessy, who had succeeded Mr. Bradford at Thursday Island, would receive the same allowances.

Mr. UNMACK said he would like to know more about the twenty-five extra tidewaiters upon whom £3,000 had been spent last year. Some of them should surely be on the permanent staff. He did not believe in spending contingencies in that manner. Why should such a number of extra hands be required, and for how long were they required? He understood that at times there were as many as forty extra tidewaiters employed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said no doubt contingencies were objectionable at all times, but he thought it preferable to have a movable number of twenty-five tidewaiters than a fixed number. When required, twenty-five extra men were employed, and when not required they were not employed. If they were put on the permanent staff they would have to be paid whether there was work for them or not.

Mr. UNMACK said the hon. gentleman's explanation was similar to one he had given before—that the money was on the Estimates, and even if it was not required it could not do any harm there.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Quite so.

Mr. UNMACK said he was astonished at such an answer. What was the use of putting the Estimates before them at all? Why not vote £50,000 straight away for the Customs Department, and have done with it? Of course it might be very nice to do business in that way, but he did not believe in that method of voting money. If those extra tidewaiters were required, and they seemed to be almost permanent, why were they not put on the Estimates?

Mr. ANNEAR said he thought he was right in stating that there were only three increases on those Estimates altogether, and the Treasurer was to be congratulated upon having remedied a great injustice which had for some time been suffered by an important officer of that department. The landing surveyor and chief clerk at Brisbane did as much work as any three sub-collectors in the colony, and for many years past he had received a lesser salary, as some of the sub-collectors received as much as £550 a year with residence. As hon. members knew, the chief clerk in Brisbane had often to act as chief collector or deputy collector of Customs when the collector was visiting the different ports of the colony. No officer in the Government service did better work or earned his salary better than the gentleman to whom he referred. That gentleman's name was Mr. Irving; he had served for many years under Mr. Sheridan, in Maryborough, and anyone who knew how Mr. Sheridan carried out his duties in the Customs Department of the colony would know that that was a sufficient guarantee of Mr. Irving's competence to carry out his duties.

Mr. FOXTON said he would again refer to the point he had raised with respect to Mr. Wassell. He did not speak of that gentleman's excellent qualities as a public servant, which were unquestionable, but he pointed out that he did not appear on the schedule in respect of the

item of £75 which he received as acting tide-surveyor. He appeared in the schedule as inspector at £285; coast waiter, £50; quarters, £60; allowance in lieu of rations and travelling expenses, £15; quarters and light, £60; and an allowance to Mrs. Wassell, as matron of the reformatory, of £40; in all £510. He did not know whether Mr. Wassell received the £50 as coast waiter in addition to the £75 as acting tide surveyor.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No; the schedule refers to last year.

Mr. FOXTON said if that was so he was improperly mentioned in the schedule. Why was his designation changed, and what was the difference between a "coast waiter" and an "acting tide surveyor"? What were Mr. Wassell's duties as "acting tide surveyor"?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that as acting tide surveyor Mr. Wassell boarded all vessels coming into the Bay, and he had been instrumental in stopping a lot of smuggling. The additional £25 set down for him was a recognition by the Customs Department of the efficient manner in which he carried out his duties. The difference between a "coast waiter" and an "acting tide surveyor" was about the same as that between a captain and a lieutenant of a volunteer company, or, as the Postmaster-General suggested, it was about the same as the difference between an attorney and a solicitor.

Mr. FOXTON said that might be regarded as witty on the hon. gentleman's part had it only been original. He had shown, at all events, that the schedule was unreliable in that matter, as Mr. Wassell was there described as a "coast waiter" at £50 a year, when he ought to have been described as an "acting tide surveyor" at £75 a year.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that the office of chief inspector of breweries had been abolished, but there was an amount of £100 set down for it, while the salary of that office before was £600. He presumed that some other officer was to get the salary of £100?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the office the hon. gentleman mentioned had been abolished.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: There is an amount of £100 set down for it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it would be seen from the schedule that that amount was received by the Collector of Customs as "chief inspector of distilleries." Mr. Chancellor held the office before, but he had retired and was pensioned.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he would like to know in connection with that, how the Government had managed to arrange for a retiring allowance to Mr. Chancellor? The matter had come before himself on one occasion, but Mr. Chancellor had not the age to entitle him to retire under the Civil Service Act, and he could not see his way to arrange for it. He would like to know how it had been done?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it must have been done in the hon. gentleman's tenure of office, or immediately afterwards. He was not a member of the Cabinet when it was arranged, and could give the hon. gentleman no information about it.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Can no member of the Government give any information on the subject of Mr. Chancellor?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at all events, could not, as he knew nothing about it.

Mr. UNMACK said he would like to say a word or two more about those twenty-five extra tidewaiters who were paid out of contingencies. A very serious injustice was done through their salaries not appearing on the Estimates, as by that system the Civil Service Superannuation Fund was defrauded of subscriptions to the extent of £3,700. The same thing occurred in other departments, where supernumeraries were employed and paid out of contingencies. He had no faith in the superannuation scheme; he believed it would turn out insolvent in a very few years; but at the same time, as a matter of justice, he did not wish it to become insolvent. He therefore pointed out that a serious loss was sustained by the superannuation fund, through not placing the salaries of those men on the Estimates. So long as they were paid out of contingencies, they could not be called upon to contribute to the fund. It would be a good thing if only half of those extra tidewaiters were placed in the position that they would have to contribute to the fund, and would assist in preventing injustice being done to other Civil servants who were contributors. He did not know whether there was any provision in the Civil Service Act which gave power to the new Civil Service Commissioners to do away with that system of employing supernumeraries, and paying them out of contingencies, if the head of a department wished to continue it, but the system ought certainly to be abolished.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the salaries of those men who were really required would no doubt appear on the Estimates, but they could scarcely include the salaries of those men who were only employed occasionally. It was a difficult matter to deal with, and the duty of dealing with it would devolve upon the Civil Service Board. The system was a bad one, but the present Government had only continued the system carried on by their predecessors. No doubt the Civil Service Board would put it right. The new tariff had very likely required the employment of a few extra hands, and they would help to swell the number previously employed. He was not ashamed to confess that he was astonished when he found there were twenty-five supernumeraries employed, though he was quite certain it was not a matter of surprise to the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. UNMACK said his complaint was that there was an evident desire to deceive the Committee. Last year there were twenty-six tidewaiters on the Estimates, and this year there appeared to be only twenty-five, and the Government came down and told the Committee how economical they had been in the working of that department. Then it came out in cross-examination that there were twenty-five more behind the scenes. He would like to know how long those twenty-five men had been employed as supernumeraries. Some, he believed, were new hands, but, on the other hand, he was of opinion that some had been so employed and paid for years out of contingencies. He would not so much object to their employment if they were men dismissed from other branches of the service, but the department seemed to be a sort of refuge for the destitute.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it was brought under his notice during the time he was Treasurer that there was a large number of extra tidewaiters employed and paid out of contingencies. It seemed to him a very absurd arrangement, and he took steps for reducing the number by ten or fifteen. There were not twenty-five employed at that time. It was an anomalous thing to ask Parliament to vote salaries for twenty-five officers when they were actually employing about fifty.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he should certainly inquire into the matter, and if there were any unnecessary hands employed, whether they had been long in the service or not, they should not remain. With regard to the number of new hands employed, he could say that he had only appointed one since he had been in office, and that was a very deserving man who had seen better days, and who was appointed to a very humble position.

Mr. McMASTER said the hon. gentleman had told them that no doubt the new tariff had been the means of increasing the number of officers in the Customs. He failed to see any necessity for an increase, as the extra work was simply a question of figures—a calculation of 15 instead of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent—and no additional clerical assistance was required for that.

Mr. FOXTON said he understood that the justification for having twenty-five regular waiters, and twenty-five supernumeraries was that the latter were not constantly employed, and that that was the reason why their salaries were not placed on the Estimates. The objection of the hon. member for Toowong with respect to their not contributing to the superannuation fund was a very serious one, and if only a percentage of the supernumeraries were constantly employed their salaries should be placed on the Estimates, so that they should be put on the same footing as other tidewaiters who contributed to the fund. How many of those twenty-five tidewaiters were there who had not been employed during the whole of the last financial year, and who had not received full salary?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was not possible for him to answer the hon. member fully. Out of the twenty-five there were eight who were employed as follows:—Two as messengers, receiving £45 a year, one £36, four £25, and one, the wharf offices cleaner, £36. He could furnish the dates of the appointments of the whole twenty-five if desired.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: What is the date of the oldest appointment?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: 1884.

Mr. SAYERS said there were a certain number of tidewaiters at Rockhampton and Townsville on the Estimates; were there any more behind the scenes? They could not take the Estimates as they saw them. He had supposed that all the tidewaiters were upon the same footing; but he saw that the tidewaiters at Rockhampton received £10 per annum more than the officers at any other port, and that should not be the case.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that had been the case for many years, and he did not feel called upon to make any change. In reference to the former matter, the Estimates represented the number of officers employed.

Mr. GLASSEY said there was another matter to which he would direct the attention of the Committee. On referring to the schedule he saw that the sub-collector of Customs at Thursday Island was evidently a man with a very large stomach, as he had to be paid £73 per annum to keep it supplied. That officer received a sustenance allowance of £73, while the second officer in the same locality seemed to have a stomach of just half the size, as he received only £36 as a sustenance allowance. He presumed the price of food in the locality would be alike to both persons. The officer who received the larger allowance drew a very substantial salary, all told—£573; while the other received only £261, all told. Could any member of the Committee show logically why there should

be such a difference between these two allowances? The same sort of thing existed at Normanton. They were often asked why should those social distinctions not be made? One of the officers he had referred to must swallow a great deal more than the others, or else what he swallowed must be a great deal more costly. He was determined that that state of things should not exist without his exposing it, whether it was a palatable dose for some people to swallow or not. It was a monstrous wrong that such distinctions should exist, and the Colonial Treasurer would have to swallow a lot of protests from him against such inequalities. He trusted the time was not far distant when they would have a class of men in that Committee who would see that all Government servants were treated alike in those matters.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the sub-collectors of Customs at Thursday Island and Normanton were in such a position that they had to display a considerable amount of hospitality to visitors from one place and another, and the allowance was made with that view. Those places were very isolated, and he did not suppose Government officials were to be expected to entertain at their own expense. The case was different in respect to the storekeeper, who had to entertain also, but not to nearly the same extent.

Mr. FOXTON said he was rather surprised to hear what the Colonial Treasurer had said. He had no idea that the Committee was in the habit of providing Government servants with means to entertain their friends. It was quite new to him; he had always thought the allowance was to meet the greater cost of living at those places, and not to entertain persons who were generally receiving considerable travelling allowances, and were well able to entertain themselves.

Mr. SAYERS said the officer in charge at Burketown, who was police magistrate and everything else, received only £386 per annum, and the same remarks applied to other places.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the officer in charge at Burketown, had been in the habit of entertaining himself to such an extent that the Government had to request him to send in his resignation—for habitual intoxication.

Mr. HAMILTON said it had been stated by the leader of the Opposition that the judges should be in a position to spend some money in entertaining, and he did not see why they should be the only persons in that position. In addition to entertaining, the officers referred to had to do a lot of outside work, and had to make long journeys in boats and undergo great privations. If those officers had only to stand still and talk nonsense perhaps they would not require very good stomachs, although, possibly, what they might say would turn the stomachs of those who listened to them. He did not think the allowance was at all out of the way.

Mr. GLASSEY said the hon. member need not for one moment imagine that his jibes and sneers would have the slightest effect, so far as he was concerned. They had heard of the sea dashing against the rocks before. Perhaps the hon. member was one of those who had been entertained by the officer at Thursday Island, and that was the reason why he took exception to those remarks. In respect to entertainments, when the question arose concerning the amount of money received by Mr. Justice Cooper, it was alleged by certain members of the Committee that that gentleman had entertained certain parties. That was repudiated just as strongly by other hon. members. It was not to be thought of that the Government would provide funds for anything of the kind. And now they found the Govern-

ment arguing in favour of the very same thing. All he desired to do, was to protest against the inequality that existed between the allowance to two officers in the same locality.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the Colonial Treasurer must have been misinformed, when he told the Committee that an extra allowance was given to the Customs officer at Thursday Island for the purpose of entertaining. The only officer to whom an allowance was given for that purpose was the Government Resident, who had a special allowance of £200 a year. Certainly it was never given to the sub-collector of Customs there. He could not understand why one man should be allowed 4s. a day for sustenance allowance, and another man only 2s.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he believed the allowance was fixed by the leader of the Opposition himself, when he was in power, and the Government were only following out the system introduced by the hon. gentleman.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said the memory of the leader of the Opposition seemed to fail him in that particular matter. He would remind the hon. gentleman of the fact that he himself allowed 2s. 8d. a day at Normanton, to the same class of men who had only 1s. 3d. a day at Townsville.

Question put and passed.

#### BORDER CUSTOMS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £4,688 be granted for Border Customs. The amount was somewhat smaller than the sum voted last year, although there had been an addition of three troopers at £36 each. Some of the salaries had been reconsidered, and a small saving had been effected on them. There had been numerous applications for increases to salaries, and many of the officers were entitled to substantial increases; but, as with others, the consideration of the applications had been deferred. During the long drought some of the officers had had to cart water ten or twelve miles.

The HON. A. RUTLEDGE said it seemed strange, after what the hon. gentleman had said about the officers being entitled to substantial increases, to find that the salary of the officer at Wooroorooka had been reduced from £375 to £235.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is not the same officer. A younger man has been appointed.

The HON. A. RUTLEDGE said it seemed really cruel to give an officer in that position £140 a year less than his predecessor in the office received, which itself was not so very great.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was a substantial increase on what the officer had been previously receiving. Mr. Dorsey, the previous officer at Wooroorooka, who died, was a somewhat highly paid officer, and there were lots of young officers willing to get the promotion at a considerably less salary than had been paid to Mr. Dorsey. At the same time he thought they were nearly all entitled to extra consideration.

Mr. FOXTON said he noticed that the officer in charge of border Customs at Stanthorpe received a salary of £150 a year, travelling expenses £75, and allowance in lieu of quarters £25. That gentleman had been for some years in the department, and, as far as he was aware, was a very painstaking officer. The salary of the officer at Hungerford was £235. Were the duties more arduous at Hungerford and other places to justify such a great discrepancy as £85 between the salaries? He

would also point out that at Stanthorpe there was a storeman receiving within £30 a year of his superior officer, and with the same allowance for quarters. It was true he had no travelling allowance, but he had no travelling to do. The only difference between the salaries of the officer in charge of a comparatively important station and his own storeman was £30. It appeared to him that if the station was not of sufficient importance to warrant the employment of a man who was not worth more than £150 a year, it did not warrant the employment of a storeman at £120 a year. He might add that the storeman was a man new to the position. He had been a political agitator, and had taken a very prominent part in the last two elections—in fact, on one occasion he had been secretary to the committee which was formed to ensure the return of the candidate representing the views of the gentlemen sitting on the Government side. He had only been appointed within the last month or two. The man had been a tin-miner, and he should like to know what his qualifications were? The appointment was an extraordinary one, and had been freely commented upon in the district.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. member for Carnarvon must admit that Stanthorpe was within the bounds of civilisation, where the duties were comparatively light, while Hungerford, with which the hon. member had compared it, was about 700 miles to the West, in the wilds, where a man was isolated. The cost of living there was very heavy, and that was sufficient to account for the difference in salary. With reference to the appointment of a storeman at Stanthorpe, he had made no appointment since he had been in charge of the department. He did not know the person referred to, and if he had made the appointment politics would have had nothing to do with it. Hon. members would give him and all other members of the Ministry credit for the fact that they had never allowed politics to enter into their minds in making any fresh appointments for one moment. On a recent occasion the Collector of Customs had sent him in a list of names from which to select an officer, but he had returned the names to the Collector, telling him that as so many members wanted their own favourite candidate to be appointed, he was to select the man best suited. He had only made one appointment since he had been in charge of the Treasury, and he could only state that he knew nothing about the storeman at Stanthorpe, who he was, or what his politics were.

The Hon. P. PERKINS said he was sorry the hon. member for Carnarvon had alluded to the matter. He had just discovered the name of the political agitator who had been appointed; but he would ask the hon. gentleman if there were no other political agitators up there? He (Hon. P. Perkins) knew who the schoolmaster was.

Mr. FOXTON: I do not know who the schoolmaster is.

The Hon. P. PERKINS said that if the Government had any regard to the good of the country they would abolish the Customs-house at Stanthorpe, as it was not required, especially as there was now a Customs official stationed at the border. The Customs officer had been stationed at Stanthorpe when it was the railway terminus, but he did not believe that the revenue now derived from the place paid the salaries of the officials. He would advise the Colonial Treasurer to do away with the Custom-house there, and send the officers to some place where they could earn their salaries. It was shameful for the hon. member for Carnarvon to allude to anyone having got a

Government appointment, considering the part he had taken in political agitations, and the means by which he had got into Parliament. The hon. gentleman should be the last to open his mouth about the business. He should let it alone, as he knew what agencies he had put in motion at Stanthorpe, and he knew how he had obtained his seat, and by what a slender cord he held it at the present time. He considered that the Custom-house at Stanthorpe should be abolished, as there was no longer any need for it.

Mr. FOXTON said he did not know what the hon. gentleman had alluded to when he said he (Mr. Foxton) should be the last person to refer to anything of that sort, considering the slender cord by which he held his seat. It was not for want of the hon. member's trying to get him out of that seat that he at present occupied it. There was a little anecdote connected with the hon. member's attempt. The hon. gentleman had seconded the candidature of the hon. member for Stanley when he had opposed him for Carnarvon.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I beg your pardon.

Mr. FOXTON said that the hon. member for Cambooya had attended on the hon. member for Stanley in most of his campaign.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I never saw the hon. member for Cambooya.

Mr. FOXTON said that an organised raid was made by a number of men working on the Brisbane Valley Railway, who were well known to the people of that neighbourhood by the name of "Gargett's lambs;" and he had every reason to believe they had travelled on free passes over all the lines up to the electorate of Carnarvon.

The Hon. P. PERKINS: That is not true.

Mr. FOXTON said then someone must have paid their fares. There were about 100 of those men, and they were strangers in the district, as they did not know where they were when they got into the district. They first put in an appearance at the different polling places at 9 o'clock in the morning—more especially at Inglewood, which was about 25 miles distant from Glenelg. After about thirty of them had polled at Inglewood, they then started in buggies under the wing of a guide for Glenelg in order to poll there. That guide was overtaken by two friends of his, who accompanied him for some distance, after which they pulled the bridle over the head of the guide's horse and cantered off with him in the opposite direction; and the result was that the party got lost.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN rose to a point of order. What had an election that took place six or seven years ago to do with the question before the Committee?

The CHAIRMAN said the hon. member was out of order in discussing a matter that had nothing to do with the question before the Committee.

Mr. FOXTON said he would bow to the Chairman's ruling, and he should not have referred to the matter but for the challenge made by the hon. member for Cambooya. Possibly the hon. member for Stanley knew nothing about the story before, but he would not say as much for the hon. member for Cambooya. With regard to the question before the Committee, he understood that the storeman to whom he had referred had not been appointed by the Colonial Treasurer but on the responsibility of the Collector of Customs.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the appointment was made by the Collector of Customs, and if the hon. gentleman would turn

to the Blue Book he would find that many such appointments were made. The officer was appointed about three months ago, and his name was Mr. Sheldon.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said he thought the outcome of the discussion would lead to something useful after all. He had been making some inquiries from the Collector of Customs, and he had received some information from that officer which he would give to his hon. colleague to-morrow. It might lead to the removal of the Custom-house and bond from Stanthorpe, because they were not wanted there at all.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he thought the Chairman would grant him the liberty extended to the hon. member for Carnarvon by patiently hearing the interesting story of an election that took place six or seven years ago. The hon. member stated that he (Mr. O'Sullivan) was in company with the hon. member for Cambooya all the time.

Mr. FOXTON rose to a point of order. He asked the Chairman's ruling as to whether the hon. member was in order in referring to a matter in connection with which he (Mr. Foxton) had been called to order.

The CHAIRMAN said the hon. member for Stanley was out of order. He must confine himself to the subject under discussion.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that during that election he never saw the Hon. Mr. Perkins till he came to vote. Two rival special trains were run, and ten of his electors were left ten miles away from the polling place.

Mr. FOXTON said he must again rise to a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN said he had already ruled that the hon. member for Stanley was out of order in not confining himself to the question before the Committee.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he thought the hon. member for Carnarvon would remember that election, and not bring himself in contact with him (Mr. O'Sullivan) again. The hon. member did not forget that Mr. Sheldon opposed him with some effect, but the hon. member could not stand up and say there was a more respectable man in Stanthorpe than Mr. Sheldon. He was an educated man, a well-conducted man, and the father of a family. There was some dirt in connection with that election, and if he had thought proper he could have put the hon. member for Carnarvon out after he was elected. He could have proved bribery against him.

Mr. FOXTON: Rubbish!

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he had half a mind to do it at the time.

Mr. FOXTON said he hoped the Committee would have soon heard the last of that election. The statement made by the Minister for Mines and Works was business like, if it was unpalatable. He would like to know what was the information which would lead him to recommend his colleague to abolish the border Customs office at Stanthorpe. In the return which he had in his possession, the whole of the border Customs collections were lumped together, unlike the Customs duties collected at the various ports, which were given in detail. The total amount collected on the border stations was £30,913 9s. 9d. He would like to know what the various amounts collected at the various stations were. He could only imagine that the recommendation of the Minister for Mines and Works would be on the ground that not sufficient revenue was derived from the Stanthorpe station; he could scarcely believe that the hon. gentleman could base his recommendation on any other ground.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said, for the information of the hon. member for Carnarvon, he could say that there was another place where that officer could be located, and where he could be of more use. He did not know what suggestion his hon. colleague was going to make, but he could tell the Committee that it was thought that Killarney should be the station, and from there Stanthorpe could be worked as well. Some time ago the officer at Stanthorpe reported that he could go to Killarney two or three days a week, showing that he had not very much to do. Killarney was a progressive place, and a considerable amount of duty was collected there on timber alone. Therefore he thought it possible that a change might be made, although it would not deprive Stanthorpe of a Customs official. The amount of duty collected at Stanthorpe was £2,692 6s. 5d.; at Wallangarra, £766; at Wooroorooka, £6,895; at Hungerford, £6,778; and at Hebel, £1,000 14s. 1d.

Mr. FOXTON said the reason given by the hon. gentleman appeared to be a good one for doing away with the Customs office at Killarney, if there was one.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We propose to shift from Stanthorpe to Killarney.

Mr. FOXTON asked how often was it necessary for the Customs officer to go from Stanthorpe to Killarney to collect duties?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said according to the officer's own statement, he thought he could spare two or three days a week to go there. It was a growing place, whilst Stanthorpe appeared to be going down hill. Killarney was far ahead of Stanthorpe, and it was now under consideration whether the Customs office should be moved. He did not say that the suggestion would be given effect to, but it was more than likely it would.

Mr. FOXTON said the Colonial Treasurer could scarcely expect him to be satisfied. He should like to know what duties were collected at Killarney. If it was seriously proposed by the Government to remove the Customs station from Stanthorpe, where it had been established for the last seventeen years, to Killarney, the Committee were entitled to know the reasons for the change, and whether the work done at Killarney was sufficient to justify the removal.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said Killarney would be the headquarters instead of Stanthorpe; but the department at Stanthorpe would not be abolished. He could not give the hon. gentleman the figures in reference to the duties collected at Killarney.

Mr. FOXTON said then he assumed there were no duties collected at Killarney, or else they must be very small indeed. He could only imagine that the discovery of the Minister for Mines and Works, that it was necessary to remove the Custom-house from Stanthorpe to Killarney, was the outcome of his (Mr. Foxton's) reference to the appointment which had been made at Stanthorpe.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

Mr. FOXTON said apparently it was only just discovered. The announcement that a removal would be made was only made that night. Stanthorpe was to be punished because it was in his electorate, and because he happened to have made some reference to a certain appointment. Was that what they were to understand from the hon. gentleman's remarks? Was that the way the country was to be governed in future?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. gentleman's mock indignation was all very well, but the Minister for Mines and Works had

never said a word to him (the Colonial Treasurer). The matter had been brought under his notice three or four months ago, and it was still under consideration. He thought, however, it was very possible the change would be made, but not with the view of doing any injury to Stanthorpe. Of course, he took the hon. gentleman's remarks as a joke; certainly he could not be in earnest.

The HON. A. RUTLEDGE said the Minister for Mines and Works had only himself to blame for the deduction which the hon. member for Carnarvon had drawn. He understood the hon. gentleman to use the expression, "the outcome of this discussion." He did not know whether the hon. gentleman intended it or not, but he certainly expressed himself in such a way as to lead the hon. member for Carnarvon to draw the inference that something would be brought under the notice of the Treasurer, for the first time, which would lead to an alteration in the location of the office. He thought it undesirable that any suggestion of that kind should be made, though the matter had been under the consideration of the Cabinet.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No; not under the consideration of the Cabinet, under the consideration of the Treasurer.

The HON. A. RUTLEDGE said the hon. gentleman should have informed the Committee of that before.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that would be an extraordinary thing for the Treasurer to do—to inform the Committee of matters that were under consideration. If the matter had been decided, he could quite understand the information being given to the Committee. There were fifty matters now under his consideration that he did not think it necessary to trouble the Committee with.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said he certainly did say that "the outcome of the discussion" would be likely to lead to an economy in the Public Service, by doing away with the office at Stanthorpe, according to the information he had received from the Collector of Customs. He did not say that he had got any information from the Treasurer, but he said he would give it to the Treasurer tomorrow. He was not aware at the time that the Treasurer had any information upon the subject, but he would give him the information now. It was this: The amount of border duties collected at Stanthorpe was £268.

Mr. FOXTON: No; £2,000 odd.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said that was for duty paid upon goods brought to Stanthorpe in bond from Brisbane. It might have been necessary to appoint a Customs officer at Stanthorpe some ten or fifteen years ago, and unfortunately in the Government service, once an office was created there it remained, though the officer who had filled it might be removed. It remained until some hon. member in Committee of Supply called attention to the matter, and then the office might be abolished or an inferior officer appointed to it. That was the case at Stanthorpe. There was not the necessity for a Customs officer at Stanthorpe now that there was ten or fifteen years ago, because there was a border town now at Wallangarra, and another at Killarney. The total amount of duties collected at Stanthorpe was only £268, and that would not pay for the expenses of the office there. He had other information to the same effect on the subject.

Mr. FOXTON said that what the hon. gentleman had said might be perfectly true, but the information the hon. gentleman had given the Committee had not been vouchsafed to them

before. He would remind the Committee that the goods taken from Brisbane to Stanthorpe in bond represented a considerable amount of traffic upon their railways, which they would not receive were it not for the facilities which people across the border were thus provided with in bringing their goods that way. If it were not for the existence of the Customs station at Stanthorpe a large quantity of goods that now went across the border to the districts adjoining Stanthorpe would not be brought that way, but would be sent up from Grafton.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: That is not so.

Mr. FOXTON said the hon. gentleman must pardon him; it was so, and he might be said to have some special knowledge on the subject, as he had known the place for some seventeen years, and he knew what traffic there was across the border. The carriage of the goods *via* Stanthorpe represented a considerable amount of railway earnings, and though it might be a matter of little or no consequence to the Customs Department, it was a matter of considerable importance to the Government and to the colony at large, taking the whole of the departments together.

Question put and passed.

#### DISTILLERIES AND BREWERIES.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the sum of £6,015 be granted, for the service of the year 1889-90, for Distilleries and Breweries. There was a reduction of £550 in the item for the chief inspector, and there were ten acting inspectors last year, while only two were provided for this year. There was a reduction on the total vote of about £1,800.

The HON. A. RUTLEDGE said he thought the Committee should get some further information as to the retirement of Mr. Chancellor from the office of chief inspector upon a pension. If his information was correct, Mr. Chancellor had not attained the age of sixty, nor had he been so broken-down in health, as to justify his retirement on a pension. Mr. Chancellor had been a long time in the service of the colony, and was a man of undoubted integrity; but he thought some reasons should be given for the alteration in the office, and the retirement of Mr. Chancellor upon a pension.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the office was about to be abolished, and therefore Mr. Chancellor could not be retained in it.

The HON. A. RUTLEDGE: There is an officer there still at £100.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had explained that that amount was now paid to the Collector of Customs as inspector of distilleries. He was informed that, to some extent, Mr. Chancellor's retirement was at his own request.

The HON. A. RUTLEDGE: He was not sixty years of age.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he knew nothing about that; he was giving the information furnished to him. He supposed the matter had come up during the time Sir Thomas McIlwraith had occupied the position of Colonial Treasurer, and it had been arranged between that gentleman and Mr. Chancellor. The office occupied by Mr. Chancellor was now abolished, and the Collector of Customs received £100 as inspector of distilleries.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he thought that, on the whole, the Government had made a wise arrangement in putting that department under the charge of the Collector of



Customs. What he wanted to know, however, was how Mr. Chancellor came to draw a pension of £325 a year. The Civil Service Act, under which he supposed Mr. Chancellor got the pension, and the only law in force under which he could get it, provided that if an officer had attained the full age of sixty years, or was incapacitated through illness, and retired from active service, he got a pension. When he was in office he had made inquiries into Mr. Chancellor's case, and found that he was not sixty years of age, nor was he suffering from any illness. He wondered, therefore, how he came to draw a pension, when there was no law under which he could draw one. He had yet to learn that it was in the power of the Government to grant pensions without the authority of Parliament. Because the Government wished an officer to retire from the service, or because the officer himself wished to retire, was not sufficient reason for granting a pension. So far as he had been informed, the pension had been granted to Mr. Chancellor entirely without lawful authority, and, under the circumstances, the Treasurer would be personally responsible for the refundment of the money. The present Treasurer would not be the first gentleman who held that office who had been surcharged by the Auditor-General for moneys paid unlawfully. He understood there was another officer, who had lately left the service, as to whom it was said he was going to get a retiring allowance. That was Mr. Curnow. That gentleman was not sixty years of age, nor had he retired through illness, and there was certainly no law in force in the colony to give him a pension. It was said that that gentleman was going to retire upon a pension, but he could not retire upon a pension. He knew that the Government rather disregarded matters of law of that kind. But it was the duty of Parliament to see that they observed the law. Even in America, when it was desired to give a pension to a man, a Bill had to be brought before Congress to provide for it. The present Government assumed the right to grant pensions to retiring Civil servants without the authority of the law, and without asking the sanction of Parliament. It seemed to him a very extraordinary thing.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that was an arrangement made between the late Vice-President of the Executive Council and Mr. Chancellor before he (the Colonial Treasurer) went into the Treasury. Although a member of the Government at the time without portfolio, he did not take a very active part in the affairs of the Cabinet; and he really could give no information on the subject. Of course if, as the leader of the Opposition had said, the thing was done illegally, it would have to be corrected. The office was, however, abolished, and as the Government could not keep him on in the service, it was better for Mr. Chancellor to retire.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said of course it was much pleasanter for Mr. Chancellor to retire on a pension when his office was abolished, but he could not understand the Government granting a pension that was not in accordance with the law. Surely the Under Secretary for the Treasury, or some member of the Government, could give some information on the subject! Surely one member of the Government did not give a pension to an officer without the other members knowing anything about it! Were they to understand that an officer who wished to leave the service could make an arrangement with the Government to retire on a pension? The pension to Mr. Chancellor certainly appeared to have been granted without any legal authority.

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The COLONIAL TREASURER said no doubt there was one department in connection with which some explanation would be required. Rumour said that Mr. Curnow was to retire.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: It is a fact.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was not there to disclose the secrets of the department. When the Railway Estimates came on for consideration the Minister for Railways would probably give a very full explanation of the matter.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said the only explanation that could be given in that case was that Mr. Chancellor was asked by the Government to retire as his office was about to be abolished. It would scarcely be fair for the Government to dismiss so summarily an old public servant, who had been in the service since separation. Mr. Chancellor was certainly not sixty years of age; he was about fifty-six. He certainly was not in very good health when he retired, and could no doubt have obtained a certificate such as had been obtained by others on the pension list who were enjoying better health than Mr. Chancellor was at the present time. There were other men on that list who were retired by previous Governments, and who were not sixty years of age, so that the retirement of Mr. Chancellor on a pension was not without precedent.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I don't think so.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: What about Mr. Herbert?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: He was over sixty.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: No.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I certainly thought he was.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: What about Mr. Rawlins?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: That was your doing; I don't know anything about that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said it was not his doing. He contended that the country had gained by the retirement of Mr. Chancellor, and Mr. Chancellor could not be expected to retire after nearly thirty years' service without something being done for him.

Mr. FOXTON: What about Mr. Cross?

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: He has not been thirty years in the service.

Mr. FOXTON: Considerably over twenty years.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said Mr. Cross had only been in the service seventeen or eighteen years. That was the whole story about Mr. Chancellor's retirement, and he believed the Government had made a good bargain.

The HON. A. RUTLEDGE said he was not prepared to assent to the statement made by the hon. gentleman. Mr. Chancellor had been thirty years in the service, and was presumably, therefore, a man of large official experience, and, unless incapacitated by ill-health, he ought to have been better qualified for the discharge of the duties of his office than when he was a more inexperienced man. The Treasurer stated that his office had been abolished, but the Estimates did not show that, as provision was made in the vote under consideration for a "chief inspector of distilleries and breweries," at a salary of £100 per annum instead of



£600 as previously. The Government might have waited four years longer, when they could have abolished the office and retired Mr. Chancellor legally. Mr. Chancellor might have been allowed to go on serving the colony and doing the work for the salary he was drawing, and retire when it was lawful to allow him to do so on a pension. The Treasurer said that Mr. Chancellor expressed a wish to retire. He (Hon. A. Rutledge) did not know whether the Government thought it was desirable to avail themselves of the chance afforded by the health of Mr. Chancellor to do away with the highly paid office of inspector of distilleries, but if ill-health rendered it necessary for Mr. Chancellor to retire he should certainly have furnished the usual certificate. The matter required some further explanation than had been given to the Committee.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had given all the information he possibly could. As he had stated before, it was a matter of arrangement between Mr. Chancellor and the Hon. Sir Thomas McLlwraith. The case, however, did not stand alone. Mr. Herbert, Mr. Deighton, Mr. Rawlins, and Mr. Cracknell were all under sixty when they retired.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it certainly ought to be determined by Parliament in some way whether those pensions were to be continued. If they were to be continued, a Bill should be brought in authorising their payment. It certainly could not be tolerated that pensions should be granted at the will of the Government. He knew what hon. members sitting opposite would do if they were in opposition and called attention to such a thing: they would refuse to allow any more business to be done until the Government had given a pledge that they would rectify the matter by an Act of Parliament. The Government had admitted that they were paying pensions without parliamentary authority. He had a certain recollection that Mr. Deighton had waited until he was sixty years of age. He did not remember the circumstances of Mr. Herbert's retirement. The matter would certainly have to be dealt with one way or the other—either the pensions would have to be discontinued, or the Treasurer would have to be indemnified by Act of Parliament for the payments that had been made.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the name of the leader of the Opposition would be found in the list of those who had granted the pensions, at any rate in Mr. Herbert's case; the hon. gentleman could not escape blame there. Mr. Herbert left office, and Mr. Curnow stepped into his shoes.

Mr. UNMACK said they ought to know what the Auditor-General had to say in the matter. Certainly his certificate ought to have been obtained. It was a very serious question indeed; and yet the Treasurer had told them that a friendly conversation between the late Premier and Mr. Chancellor had resulted in the fact of the latter having obtained a pension, when an Act of Parliament distinctly provided that no pensions should be granted except under certain conditions. A most flagrant breach of the law had been committed, and they ought to refuse to go on with any other business until the Government had made a promise to rectify the matter. The plea of the Government seemed to be that because a wrong had been done once they were to go on committing wrongs. It was perfectly monstrous! What was the good of Acts of Parliament at all? The Auditor-General ought to be called upon to report upon those three pensions—those of Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Curnow, and Mr. Deighton. They were bound to take the word of

the Colonial Treasurer that Mr. Deighton was over sixty years of age. The hon. gentleman had tried to fasten that case upon the leader of the Opposition, forgetting that the present Government had practically discharged that officer. Two wrongs did not make a right, and if Mr. Herbert had been wrongfully pensioned, it did not follow that the present Government should pension two or three more officers upon the same terms.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said when a great constitutional lawyer like the leader of the Opposition laid down a certain line, was it wrong to follow what he had done? It seemed that the Government would have to take steps to correct the wrong done by the leader of the Opposition, and also that done—if there was anything found to be a wrong—by the present Government. If that were necessary it would be done to make their actions valid. There was no intention to break the law; he thought hon. members would understand that. An arrangement had been made between Sir Thomas McLlwraith and Mr. Chancellor, and that was all he knew. The Premier was absent through illness; if he had been present, no doubt he would have been able to have made an explanation that would have been satisfactory.

Mr. FOXTON said they all knew that imitation was the sincerest flattery, and if the Government were going to throw themselves upon the mercy of the Committee and say "we did this because our predecessors did so," it might be very flattering to the late Government, but it was highly unsatisfactory to the Committee. The late Government occupied office in a former Parliament, and he failed altogether to see that, because the late Government did that which was illegal, and the late Opposition, of which the hon. gentleman was a member, failed to criticise their action, their mouths were to be closed, and they were to be told they had no right to criticise the action of the present Government. The Colonial Treasurer wanted to screen himself behind the conduct of one whom he described as a great constitutional lawyer. But the leader of the Opposition might have been wrong, and that was no reason why the present Government should do that which was also illegal. In regard to Mr. Herbert's retirement, they had not the facts of the case before them, but only the bald statement that that officer retired under the same circumstances as Mr. Chancellor. Mr. Chancellor's office was abolished, although it appeared on the Estimates still with a very much reduced salary attached to it. The whole thing was illegal, and yet the hon. gentleman tried to justify it by saying that his predecessors had done exactly the same thing.

Mr. WATSON said he was surprised to hear the hon. member for Toowong say what he did. The other evening when the vote for the chairman of the Civil Service Commission was under consideration, the hon. member distinctly stated that that officer was one who had done his duty exceedingly well, and now he wished to bring the Colonial Treasurer to book, while he himself was one who voted for the increase of £250. That £250 was not voted as an increase of salary, but as a pension. It was only when a poor man's salary came before them that there was a word said about it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said as Mr. Curnow's name had been mentioned incidentally, although the Railway Department was not before them, he might state that the Government intended to legalise that retirement, and give that officer a pension of £500 a year, on account of the Commissioners having taken his place. They would legalise Mr.

Chancellor's retirement at the same time, and also that of Mr. Herbert, if it was found necessary to do so. They would also be obliged to indemnify all the Colonial Treasurers since Mr. Herbert was first pensioned. He believed that was the proper way to do it. Mr. Chancellor did not retire upon the bare conversation between him and the late Premier. He was under the impression that Mr. Chancellor was sixty years of age; but whether that was so or not, he knew that Mr. Chancellor was in ill-health at the time, suffering from asthma. He could easily have got a medical certificate, as some other gentlemen on the pension list did, who were still alive and hearty, and likely to live for a long time.

The Hon. A. RUTLEDGE said he wished to allude to a matter not having any connection with the vote before the Committee, but one of considerable local interest in connection with the shipping department. It was stated in the Press the other day that Captain Wyborn was about to retire, and that Captain Withers was likely to be appointed in his place. That statement was subsequently contradicted. He did not ask whether there was any truth in the statement made in the Press, but to express a hope that if at any time there should be a vacancy in the office of shipping master, some of the captains who were well known as old traders on the coast should have a chance for the appointment rather than any other gentleman, however estimable he might be, who was only an occasional visitor to the colony.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there was no vacancy in the office at present, although it was likely that Captain Wyborn might retire. He quite agreed that some of the captains on the coastal boats were well qualified for the position, but they had already in the department men who had been captains of coastal steamers, and he did not see why officers in the department should be debarred from expecting promotion when occasion arose. The matter would be fully considered, and those in the service would be fairly dealt with.

Mr. UNMACK said that with regard to the pensions to which attention had been very properly drawn, he thought the explanation of the Minister for Mines and Works was perfectly satisfactory, and he trusted that before the session closed the Government would bring in a short Bill to legalise what were evidently illegal actions. As to the hon. member for the Valley, he might just as well have let him (Mr. Unmack) alone, for he had made a great muddle of it. The hon. member evidently did not know what he was talking about. The vote referred to did not involve any question of a pension, but to an additional salary of £250 to a gentleman appointed to a very high office, which was an altogether different matter to a pension having been granted by the Government outside any Act of Parliament in existence. He could understand why the hon. member was desirous to have a little slap at him, and that was because he had, earlier in the evening, referred to a matter rather personal to the hon. member himself, which he did not like.

Mr. TOZER said the matter of the pensions was evidently an oversight, but a very serious oversight, on the part of the Government; and nobody was less likely than the Minister for Mines and Works to wish to set a precedent at any time which should not be followed. He thought the Committee might be well satisfied with the promise the hon. gentleman had given, for they all knew that when he made a promise he intended to carry it out.

Mr. GLASSEY said he should like to know if the Government, in preparing the Pension Bill, would be prepared to give pensions to those officers in the service who were receiving small salaries. If not, he should oppose the measure, and do all he could to effectually block it.

Mr. SAYERS said that when the beer duty was taken off last year it was stated that a large sum of money would be saved. He noticed that the saving was between £1,500 and £1,600, while they had thrown away between £30,000 and £40,000 revenue.

Mr. BUCKLAND said that in the schedule, under the heading of "Distilleries," there were two officers with salaries of £300 and £270 respectively for Beenleigh, and Glenmore and Gilston. From what he knew of those districts there could not be much for those officers to do. No sugar had been grown there last year, and consequently there was no material for making rum, which was the only reason for retaining those officers. He might also include Ageston, where very little distillation was going on.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the distilleries referred to by the hon. member were working, and the officer at Glenmore and Gilston went round the various vineyards as well, so that his time was fully occupied.

Mr. UNMACK said he saw no necessity for a special officer for Ageston. It was within a very few miles of Beenleigh, and one officer would be quite sufficient for both places. The quantity of rum manufactured at both places was very small indeed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there was no doubt that the two places were close together, but it had been thought that there was work sufficient for two officers. If it was found that a reduction should be made in the number, it would be done.

Mr. SAYERS said he wished to know where the acting inspector of distilleries was located who received £25. There were two acting inspectors, one at £200 and the other at £25. The latter sum must be paid to an officer having some other appointment.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that amount was paid to the sub-inspector of police at Mackay, Mr. Judge, who acted in that capacity.

Question put and passed.

#### GOVERNMENT ANALYST.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £610 be granted for the Government Analyst. The vote was the same as last year. When Mr. Mar was first appointed it was at a salary of £400 per annum, with the right of private practice; but it had been found that his private practice interfered to some extent with his public duties; therefore he had requested Mr. Mar to discontinue his private practice, and the whole of his time during office hours was now devoted to Government business. Of course there was no objection to Mr. Mar's employing his time outside of office hours as he chose. He had received the report of the Government Analyst that day, but too late to enable him to place it in the hands of hon. members. The report showed the amount of work done during the year, and he would have it distributed amongst hon. members to-morrow, as it threw a great deal of light upon the duties performed by that gentleman.

Question put and passed.

#### MARINE BOARD.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £1,850 be granted for the Marine Board. The vote was the same as last year.

Mr. GLASSEY said he saw an item—fees to members and incidentals—and he would like to ask what fees the members of the Marine Board had received? He would also ask the hon. gentleman if there was any possibility of the appointment of a seaman on that board, or of some person directly employed in connection with the trade in the various ports in the colony; so that the views of the men on matters concerning their interests should receive due weight. Every consideration should be given to the various industries—to the proprietors of the ships, to those connected with the wharves and harbours, and also to the men themselves, as that would strengthen the board.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said with regard to the fees paid to the various members of the Marine Board, the Hon. F. H. Hart had received £34 13s.; Captain Brown, £66 3s.; Captain Dye, £59 17s.; and Captain Sargent, £67 4s. He would not make any promise with regard to the hon. member's other question; but a few months back he had received a deputation from the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce, requesting that their body should be represented on the board. That had appeared a reasonable request, and he had promised to consider the question; and if any member of the board should fail to attend regularly, he would suggest his retirement to make way for some more active member. However, he believed the members had attended fairly to their duties, judging from the fees they had received, and therefore there had been no opportunity to give effect to his promise to the Chamber of Commerce. He was not prepared to give an answer to the hon. member, but if he would call upon him at the Treasury to talk the matter over, and submit some feasible scheme, he would give it every consideration.

Mr. BARLOW said there was good ground for the contention of the hon. member for Bundamba. It must be remembered that seamen were almost unrepresented on the electoral rolls as a body, and that they owed their safety and their lives largely to the jurisdiction of the Marine Board. The objections which had been raised elsewhere to their being represented on such boards had been overcome, and he considered that seamen should be represented in the same way in Queensland.

Mr. GLASSEY said he was perfectly satisfied with the explanation of the Colonial Treasurer. He had mentioned the matter to the Minister for Mines and Works previously, and that hon. gentleman had informed him that the board was connected with the Colonial Treasurer's department, and that was why he had now asked the hon. gentleman to consider the question of the seamen being represented on that board. He had been asked to raise the question when the Estimates were under discussion, with the view of calling public attention to it, and he had done so. On some future occasion he would submit the matter in detail to the hon. gentleman, so that he might consider the question more fully and lay it before the Cabinet. There were nearly 1,000 men engaged in the trade in the port of Brisbane alone, besides a large number at the other ports of the colony. From that fact the hon. gentleman would see that there was some reason in the wish of those men to have a voice in the Marine Board.

Mr. FOXTON said he believed that as the Marine Board was at present constituted there was no gentleman representing the engineers employed in the marine service. The matter was brought prominently before him in connection

with a collision that had occurred on the river. An inquiry was held by the board, and the whole question to be decided was as to whether the captain and the officers on deck were involved, or whether the fault lay with the engineers below. He was satisfied that the board did their best in the matter; and it was probable that no other decision would have been arrived at had the board been differently constituted; still the engineers felt the matter keenly at the time, inasmuch as they were held responsible, and they were of opinion that if there had been a professional engineer on the board, they would not have been censured. From inquiries he made at the time, he found that in the southern colonies the engineers were represented on the marine boards; and he thought that if there was to be a reconstruction of the Queensland Board, it would be very desirable to consider the question of appointing a member to represent the engineers.

Mr. UNMACK said he hoped the Government would take into consideration the reconstruction of the present Marine Board before long, because he did not think the present board was constituted as it ought to be. He had no desire to cast the slightest reflection on any member of the board in what he had to say. One member of the board was Captain Sargent, who was a ship chandler. He knew that Captain Sargent was a man of high honour and probity, who would not wilfully allow his judgment to be warped; but the board had to deal with accidents involving repairs and other things, and when a member of the board had an indirect interest in those matters, a wrong construction might be put on his actions. The members of the board appeared to be appointed almost for life, and he thought the present constitution of the board ought not to continue. The number of members ought to be increased, and, as had been suggested to the Government by the Chamber of Commerce, it should be reconstructed in a form analogous to the marine boards of the other colonies. As to the question raised by the hon. member for Bundamba, he knew of no country in the world where seamen were directly represented on a marine board, and he did not think they ought to be. The question was new to him, and he was not prepared on the spur of the moment, to say whether they ought to be represented or not.

Mr. GLASSEY said that of course the Chamber of Commerce ought to be represented on the Marine Board; but it was very wrong for the seamen to be represented! Even if the hon. member who last spoke was not aware of a precedent for appointing a member to represent the seamen on the board, that was no reason why the seamen should not be represented. He was glad that Ministers in Queensland had sometimes made precedents for themselves, and he hoped they would continue to do so whenever it was advisable. It was a mere bubble of an argument to say that because so-and-so had not been done before, therefore something should not transpire now. He wondered what prior claim the Chamber of Commerce had as compared with the seamen, whose lives and limbs and general comfort were at stake. Of course the Chamber of Commerce represented property, and for that reason they wanted to be represented on the board.

Mr. McMASTER said if the Marine Board was reconstructed he hoped the suggestion of the member for Carnarvon would not be lost sight of. He thought it very important that engineers should be represented on the board, as they were second to the captains, and had the lives of persons in their hands.

Question put and passed.

SHIPPING OFFICE.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1889-90, a sum not exceeding £940 for the Shipping Office. There was a slight increase of £25 over last year's vote.

Question put and passed.

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

SLAUGHTERING STATIONS FOR FAT STOCK.

Mr. MURPHY presented the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the establishment of slaughtering stations for fat stock in the interior; and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. The business to-morrow will be the railway motions standing in the name of the Minister for Railways. After that the consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments in the Companies Act Amendment Bill, and then the Diseases in Sheep Act Amendment Bill in committee.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past 10 o'clock.