

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 10 OCTOBER 1889

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 10 October, 1889.

Question.—Question Without Notice—intercolonial rabbit conference.—The “Hopeful” Prisoners—postponement of motion.—Water Bores for the far North.—Message from the Legislative Council.—Dalby and Bunya Mountain railway.—North Coast extension.—Payment of Pensions.—Supreme Court Amendment Bill—committee.—Supply—resumption of committee.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTION.

Mr. HODGKINSON asked the Minister for Railways—

If instructions have been given to any officer of the department to survey a line of railway from the Northern Railway in the direction of the Etheridge Gold Field.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. M. Nelson) replied—

No.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

INTERCOLONIAL RABBIT CONFERENCE.

Mr. STEVENS said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to ask the Minister for Lands, without notice—Why Queensland was not represented at the Intercolonial Rabbit Conference? as I see by the newspapers that apologies for non-attendance were received from the representatives of this colony.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. H. Black) said: Mr. Speaker,—I would prefer that the hon. member gave notice of his question, as I should then be able to give information that will be thoroughly reliable.

THE “HOPEFUL” PRISONERS.

POSTPONEMENT OF MOTION.

The Hon. P. PERKINS said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to postpone the motion in my name in reference to the correspondence and reports in connection with the “Hopeful” prisoners until to-morrow week, as I understand that His Honour the Chief Justice is about to send in a report on the subject, and I do not wish to anticipate that.

WATER BORES FOR THE FAR NORTH.

Mr. HUNTER, in moving—

That the House will, on Friday next, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of an address to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates for the present year the sum of £20,000 to defray the expense of putting down bores for artesian water at Croydon, Etheridge, and other portions of the far North—

said: Mr. Speaker,—My reason for proposing this motion is that £50,000 was placed on the Estimates some time ago for boring for artesian water in Queensland. The vote was passed by this House without any stipulation as to what part of the colony it should be expended in, and I understood from that that a portion would be spent in various parts of the colony. But I am sorry to find that not one shilling of the money has been spent North of Cape Palmerston, and being a representative of the far North it is only natural that I should ask from this House the same treatment for the North that the South has received. It is not my intention to take up much time this afternoon, because the subject has been pretty well thrashed out by the Northern members. We have on every opportunity requested the Government to do justice to the North in this particular way, but after semi promises and excuses we find ourselves to-day in the same position we were in when the £50,000 was voted for artesian bores. On that account I think I would be perfectly justified in asking the Government to place £20,000 on the Estimates, to be spent in search of artesian water in the far North. Now, some hon. members in this House said a few nights ago that artesian water could not be found on goldfields, but instead of coming here and arguing about it it would be better to try. There has been much time spent in talking about it—the cost of keeping the House together to discuss it would put down several bores. Now, a large sum of money has been voted for this purpose, and it is a most peculiar thing that every one of the bores put down have been sunk in districts represented by hon. gentlemen sitting on the Government side of the House. I believe there is not one exception. Not a member on this side has had an artesian bore put down in his district. When we see the district represented by the two members for Burke so badly in want of water, it is only natural that we should come to this House and ask for some substantial sum to be placed on the Estimates to be spent in the direction I have indicated. If there is any objection that can be offered to this motion, I shall be most happy, on receiving a promise from this Government that the work I have alluded to will be attended to, to withdraw the motion, because I do not wish to occupy the time of the House. I simply want what is fair and what is not only due, but considerably overdue. There was a return furnished to us a few nights ago showing that we in the North are entitled to something like £150,000 more than we really receive, and we have every reason to believe that that state of thing will still go on on the same lines. I do not think the sum I have asked for is anything out of the way. I pointed out the other evening that three years ago there were something like 8,000 people at Croydon, and I believe at the present day the number is a great deal nearer 800. It has dwindled down solely and wholly for the want of water. It is not necessary for me to say that without water people cannot exist. That will be generally admitted. That is the exact state of affairs on that goldfield at the present time. There is only one machine that has been working for some months past, and the whole of the water that supplies that machine is got out of the ground. The people have spent all the money taken from the field, and a great majority have left the field. Those that remain there now are living from hand to mouth, trying to exist until the Government will come forward and do something for them, so that their labour and money may not be entirely wasted. These people are begging for this small expenditure to keep the district going and flourishing—a district capable of supporting from 10,000 to 20,000 people

—and I think I am more justified in asking for this small sum than the Government are justified in voting money for immigration purposes. Would it not be better to put our goldfields in such a position that their attraction will bring people here from the other colonies rather than vote money to bring people from the old country and give them nothing to do when they are here? We land people in the North and send them to Croydon to find that there is no water, and then they have to return. Men come to this country with a view of going on to our goldfields, as places where there are opportunities of making money. They are perfectly correct. Those are the right places to go to, if they were properly treated; but those people go to the goldfields and find out that the things which are really necessary the Government refuse to grant. This Croydon district will support a large and flourishing population if the Government will only give it fair treatment, and a good water supply. Therefore I feel quite sure that if hon. members will only look at the thing in a fair light, consider what has been given to their districts, and consider all the surrounding circumstances, they will see their way clear to support this motion.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. W. Pattison) said: Mr. Speaker,—When this Committee was considering the salaries of the Hydraulic Engineer's Department lately, I explained that the Government had, for certain reasons, not been able to put down a bore at Croydon. The hon. member for Burke knows how the matter stands, and that bores are not things that can be put down in a moment. I then explained exactly the position of the matter. The Hydraulic Engineer reported very doubtfully as to the possibility of securing an artesian water supply at Croydon, and the report was sent to the divisional board at Croydon. I then explained that the divisional board had not replied—we know the reason why—their disorganised state of affairs has prevented them from replying. The matter has been fully considered, and the Government are disposed to do all that they possibly can, not only for Croydon, but for other goldfields. In proof of that, I may state that since the matter was before the Committee I have conferred with my colleague, the Minister for Mines and Works, and Mr. Jack has been instructed to examine and report upon the possibility of securing artesian water at Croydon and other places. I think that must prove to the hon. member for Burke that the Government are doing the best they can. The hon. member for Burke surely does not expect the Government to put down an artesian bore in a place where the Hydraulic Engineer has reported that it is almost impossible for a supply of artesian water to be obtained. After what has been said on the subject, however, the Government have obtained the services of a gentleman whom I consider to be a thoroughly competent man, and that is Mr. Jack, to report upon the place. Mr. Jack has been instructed to report upon the possibility of obtaining artesian water at Croydon, and if he reports that it is useless to attempt to procure artesian water in that district, I, for one, shall not feel justified in recommending to my colleagues the advisability of putting down a bore there; but if he reports that there is the remotest chance of water being procured there, I shall take the matter in hand, and proceed with it vigorously. I may go a little beyond the regulations I have laid down, and allow the Government to take the risk, and trust that in time there will be boards at Croydon and the Etheridge and other places mentioned who will take over the bores if we are successful in securing an artesian water supply. I cannot see that any good can come of the motion of the hon.

member for Burke. The matter, as I have explained, is receiving my best consideration, and with the special circumstances at Croydon—that they have had no rain there for a length of time, and that there is a large population there, I am disposed to treat that district more liberally than I would treat other places.

Mr. HODGKINSON: Then God help the other places.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The junior member for Burke has said that all the bores put down have been put down in the South; but that is not the fault of the present Government. There are very few bores I have recommended, except those put down under the regulations I have fixed; and with respect to bores previously put down, I am endeavouring as fast as possible to get them brought within the scope of the regulations by which the local authorities will have to take them over, if they wish to have control of the water. It may appear that the North has not been fairly treated in this matter, but the North is receiving consideration. For the reasons I have before given, it has been found impossible to get people to tender for one or two bores. But now a scheme is being largely considered, and as soon as Mr. Jack's report is received, possibly tenders will be called for putting down 10,000 feet or 15,000 feet in the Northern district, and that will be a sufficiently large contract to attract people with boring plant and induce them to take it to a distance. The boring plants in Queensland are very limited, and some of the contracts actually let at the present time have, in consequence, been brought to a standstill through the inability of the contractors to carry out their contracts. I have had very considerable difficulty with more than one contract in the Hydraulic Engineer's Department. It is not an easy matter to get contractors with the necessary plant, and I find it is not an easy matter to deal with them, and except upon stringent terms I cannot get them to perform their share of the contract. That is notably so in the case of the Clermont bore, with which I have considerable difficulty at the present time. I need not go further into that now; but I can assure the hon. members for Burke that the matter of a bore at Croydon is receiving my best consideration, and Croydon, Etheridge, and the other places referred to in the motion, will receive special consideration at my hands.

Mr. HODGKINSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I am tired of these miserable excuses. I will not follow the example of my hon. colleague. I will not crave this Government to do anything, but I will see that they do their duty and grant justice to the district I represent. The Colonial Treasurer is, it appears, gradually rousing from his torpidity, and is coming back to admit what I tried to drive into his head three months ago. He has come now to acknowledge that it is useless to talk of putting down one bore in a district, and is coming back to the knowledge that if he wants a bore put down he must call for tenders for boring so many thousand feet. Here we have a miner in charge of the finances of the colony, and another, the Minister for Mines and Works, who knows thoroughly the wants of the mining fields, and yet they do nothing. Croydon is to be penalised for its political action at the last general elections. They were loyal enough to return a Government supporter at Clermont—a deserted goldfield with a population of about thirty Chinamen, and not more than sixty European miners—and that place has a bore. There is not a bore down in the colony that does not represent a Government supporter. Any want of their supporters is promptly attended to. There is a railway wanted at Mount

Morgan where there is a clique revelling in a plethora of wealth, and yet they want to extract more from the colony, whilst everything is denied to the miners who are really developing the wealth of the colony. Do you think, Sir, I am going to crave anything from a Government like this? Is there a Government? Who are they? Where are the Government? We know that in another place they are at sixes and sevens. I shall not crave a Croydon bore. The fact is that it has never been intended to give Croydon a bore until the Government are forced to do it. I shall not argue the point with the Colonial Treasurer, as there is no use in doing so. The district is to be penalised because the people chose to speak out in a manly manner and resist the temporary ebullition of the late general election—from which the country, I am happy to say, is now recovering. I shall tell the hon. gentleman—and he can take it as an idle threat if he thinks proper—that if immediate steps are not taken in this matter, there shall be disclosures made in this Chamber that will hunt those gentlemen from the Treasury benches.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. gentleman who has just sat down has told us that there is a bore put down in every district represented by a Government supporter. Well, I demanded a bore for Camooweal, but I have not got it yet. At the same time, I think the hon. gentleman who introduced this motion did so with a very good purpose, and there is no part of North Queensland in which a bore is more earnestly demanded than the Croydon and Etheridge Gold Fields. I have here the report of the Hydraulic Engineer upon water supply, and there is a paragraph with regard to the Croydon bore in it, which says:—

"The report received last year that overflowing artesian water was tapped in this bore was subsequently found to be premature. Boring operations with a diamond drill were carried on under many difficulties and at great cost until October last, when it was deemed advisable to suspend if not to abandon further operations with such machinery. The total depth bored was 111 feet. The cost was £949 15s. 9d., including £491 18s. 9d. for transport of the plant from Brisbane."

That was done at a little less than £5 a foot, not allowing for the cost of carriage of the plant. The result, it is stated, has been that there is no artesian water to be found at Croydon; but I know that there is natural artesian water to be found in that neighbourhood, and sufficient, I think, to encourage the Hydraulic Engineer to go on with this bore. At no great distance from Croydon Gold Field, and in the same formation, there are natural springs of water bubbling to the surface, and some of them are hot, so that they have evidently an artesian source for their supply. I am glad to hear that the Government Geologist is going over that district. I do not think it would be advisable to send the Hydraulic Engineer until Mr. Jack has been there.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He is there now.

Mr. PALMER: I hope Mr. Jack will be able to report favourably, because there is no district which more urgently demands a water supply than the Croydon and Etheridge. The miners are leaving Croydon daily. The resources of the district, so far as they have been tried by private enterprise, demand that some assistance should be given. So far as I am concerned, I have not been able to obtain a bore for my district which was demanded a good while ago. I know the difficulty in those far-off districts is that they are so far away, and there is a great obstacle to be overcome in the way of land carriage. There are something like sixty tons of plant in connection with a boring machine, and that has to be transported to the site of the

bore before operations can be begun. Then to keep the boring machine working, about 1,200 gallons of water are required per day. I think, however, that these difficulties can be overcome at Croydon. There is water carriage as far as Normanton, and there are only about forty or fifty miles of land carriage to get to Croydon. Then there is sufficient water in the various sinkings to keep the boring plant going.

Mr. HODGKINSON: There are plenty of places in the district wanting bores besides Croydon.

Mr. PALMER: I allude to the mining districts of the Etheridge and Croydon. I am not referring to the pastoral districts at all in the matter. They have often shown they are able to help themselves. Of course they would like the Government to indicate to them in which direction boring operations can be carried on successfully. I think that the intention of the late Premier, the Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith, in putting down bores in the different parts of the colony, was not so much to supply the various districts with water, as to indicate where and how they could find artesian water; and private enterprise has taken advantage of the lesson, and spent a great deal of money in boring. In fact, some of the bores put down by private individuals have been more successful than those put down by the Government. There is one point, however, with regard to the bores which have been already put down; that is, that they have been put down close to waterholes which have never been known to be dry.

Mr. MURPHY: That is wrong.

Mr. PALMER: Instead of going out 400 or 500 miles into the dry, waterless country, they have all been put down near the termini of the railways and near permanent water. I think the proposal of the hon. gentleman is a very sensible one, and I am certain that there is no part of the North where an artesian water supply would be so payable, and would achieve such good results as it would in the goldfields of Croydon and Etheridge.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Burke is perhaps justified in calling the attention of the Government to the want of the Burke district for an artesian water supply, but there was no necessity for putting in his notice of motion the proposal to place £20,000 on the Supplementary or Loan Estimates. We have plenty of money for the purpose of boring without putting any such large amount on the Supplementary Estimates. I have not the slightest doubt that if Mr. Jack indicates to the Government that there is any place on the Croydon or Etheridge Gold Field where a bore is likely to be successful, the Government will put one down. Mr. Jack is at present on the Etheridge. From there he is going to the Gilbert, and thence to Croydon. I do not see that the Government can do any more at present. The hon. gentleman ought to be satisfied with the assurance the Government have given.

The Hon. P. PERKINS said: Mr. Speaker,—I consider the Government have been very stingy over this matter, as I know where two or three boring machines can be got. I am in favour of the motion of the hon. member for Burke, as I consider it is the duty of the Government, in view of the calamities which have overtaken Croydon from want of rain, to give them every assistance.

Mr. WATSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I am surprised to hear the Colonial Treasurer express himself in the manner he has done with regard to the contractors of the colony. I can assure

the hon. gentleman that I have a boring plant at Bulimba, where it has been lying idle for the last fifteen months. The fact of the matter is, that the conditions are so stringent, that contractors can hardly get a living out of the contracts. Why are the conditions not amended by the Government? I remember that when I finished the South Brisbane Railway Wharves, the conditions were so stringent that I could not get £800 which was due to me. I could not get it from the Government.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Have you got it yet?

MR. WATSON: No; and I never shall get it. I shall explain this matter. I mentioned this matter to the Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith. I went to him and told him that by taking my seat as member for Fortitude Valley I lost £800. When I was returned for that electorate, I found, from Mr. Marshall and the Mayor of Brisbane, that if I did not settle my claim as a contractor for those wharves, I would be disqualified from taking my seat in this House by the present leader of the Opposition.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER on the Opposition side: That was the law.

MR. WATSON: It was not the law. My claim was due six months previous to my election. The leader of the Opposition sent a clerk from the Colonial Secretary's office to the Railway Department to find out whether I had been paid or not; but that clerk made the damnable mistake of going straight into the lion's mouth. He went straight to Mr. Marshall and said, "Marshall, has Mr. Watson any contract with you? Has he a contract here so that we can unseat him?" Any man of common sense would have known better than to have done such a thing. The fact was, I was under contract with the corporation, not with the Government. When the hon. gentleman said if it was a fact that the Government owed me any money I could not take my seat in Parliament, I actually went and lost my £800 and took my seat. I outwitted the leader of the Opposition by doing that. Hon. members may laugh, but I can afford to lose £800, or twice £800. What I am trying to maintain is, that contractors do not get the credit that is due to them. They are ground down to the lowest ebb by all Governments.

MR. SAYERS: How did you make your fortune?

MR. WATSON: I made it by two and two, and two and two make four. The Government never give a contractor fair play, and when it comes to a question of arbitration they shunt him if they can. Mr. Dickson, the late Colonial Treasurer, has repeatedly told me that there was not a man in Brisbane like John Watson for faithfully carrying out his contracts. About those bores: I consider the Western watershed deserves every consideration at the hands of the Government. Water can be obtained there, I believe, in any quantity that may be required. It is all very well for hon. members on the other side to laugh. They may have the laugh now, but their turn will come; and when they sit on this side of the House and we sit on that, we shall have the laugh at them.

MR. SAYERS: What about the Brisbane corporation?

MR. WATSON: The Brisbane corporation does good work, and so do the divisional boards, although, if I had it in my power, I would give them a little more freedom than they have.

MR. SAYERS: Tell us about two and two.

MR. WATSON: The hon. member asks me to tell him about two and two. I can tell him

something better than that. I can tell him that three threes are nine, that three fours are twelve, that three twelves are thirty-six, and that four nines are thirty-six. That is a problem, and if the hon. member would like to know, it is on the square; and he does not know what on the square is. What I was going to say is that there is plenty of water to be found on the Western watershed for the whole of that country, and it is our bounden duty to assist in every shape and form the hon. members who represent the Western districts to get water for those districts. I am not a Western man, I am a Fortitude Valley man; but I have a great respect and affection for the Western parts of the colony. It is those parts of the colony that will eventually make our railways pay, and our children will benefit from them in the future. It is all very well for the squatters to tell us that the lands in the West are not worth 2s. 6d. an acre. Eventually they will be worth £1, £2, and £3 an acre; they will be worth £5 an acre in a very short period, as our population increases. Being a contractor, I felt it my duty to speak on their behalf. They have always been overridden by every Government, to this extent, that they have never got justice at the hands of any Government in power.

MR. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—I quite agree with nearly every word that has fallen from the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, as far as contractors are concerned. Although we have visited the "Orlando" to-day, there is no reason why we should get excited on our return. We have had a most pleasant trip. I chiefly rise to refer to what has fallen from the Colonial Treasurer. That hon. gentleman referred to the bore that has been put down at Clermont. That work is, I believe, at the present moment absolutely stopped. I quite agree with the hon. member, Mr. Watson, that it is impossible, in my opinion, for any contractor to comply with the conditions of the Hydraulic Engineer's Department. The gentlemen who got the contract for the bore at Clermont are known to be the ablest contractors in Australia. They have carried out contracts in South Australia, Victoria, and in Queensland; they constructed that piece of line through the desert—some ninety miles—between Adelaide and Victoria. I believe I am correct in saying that the Hydraulic Engineer sent a letter to that firm asking them to apply to him to be allowed to abandon their contract. Why was such a request made? Because it is well known to both the engineer and the contractors that in the country in which they are working it is impossible to go one foot further if they bore for the next thousand years. I believe they have gone down some 700 or 800 feet, but the direct depth of the bore is only 300 feet from the surface. That is owing to the spongy nature of the ground. Those men have not, up to the present time, received one farthing for the work they have done, although they have put their plant on the ground, have obtained skilled men from Canada to work it, and have gone on with the work. I feel sure that the Colonial Treasurer will have this matter so forcibly brought under his notice that better conditions will have to be provided for the putting down of artesian bores. We are deeply indebted to the gentleman employed by the late Government, Mr. Loughhead, who was the first successful borer for artesian water in the colony. I admit that the contractors go into these contracts with their eyes open. Some gentlemen took a contract the other day for some thousands of feet of artesian boring. They can never get out of it under the conditions. I defy any man who commences a contract under those conditions to ever come out of it successfully. It is impossible, and the sooner

the Colonial Treasurer will ask some other engineer to come in the better. Surely we have good engineers in this colony.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: The engineer doesn't know anything about it.

Mr. ANNEAR: I would not go so far as to say that the present engineer does not know something about it; I should be sorry to say an unkind word about that gentleman; but he is so wedded to the conditions he puts before the contractors that he will not depart from them; he sticks to them, and so long as he sticks to them I say it is absolutely impossible for any man to carry out a contract successfully. The men who started the bore at Clermont have spent between £4,000 and £5,000, and they have not got the worth of the sheet of paper I hold in my hand out of it. I quite agree with the remarks of the hon. the senior member for Fortitude Valley. I have suffered myself. I speak feelingly, and I can believe anything that is told to me as to what may occur when we have to deal with the low type of Government officers and inspectors that we find in some of the departments in the colony. It is high time we wiped some of them out. Let us carry on our business as they do in the other colonies of Australia. The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer occupies the position he does in the best interests of the colony and the people concerned, and I say let him ascertain what I am now going to state—that in no other colony is there any specification the same as that which is issued from the office of the Hydraulic Engineer of Queensland. As regards the motion before the House, I fully sympathise with the hon. member for Burke, Mr. Hunter; but I think that hon. gentleman's claim has been met by the assurance given by the Hon. the Treasurer this afternoon, that when Mr. Jack has finished at the Etheridge he will go to Croydon. If such an assurance was made to me, I should accept it, fully believing that it would be carried out. But before it is carried out, I say let us pause and ask the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer to go back to the conditions under which the first bore in Queensland—that at Barcaldine, in the electorate of my hon. friend the member for Barcoo—was put down. Those conditions were faithfully carried out, and the work completed; but since that time fresh conditions have been introduced.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

Mr. ANNEAR: I say, yes. I have read the specifications under which that bore was put down, and I say that any man is a lunatic, a fit subject for Woogaroo, who would sign the conditions to carry out a contract as they are now issued from the office of the Hydraulic Engineer of this colony.

Mr. AGNEW said: Mr. Speaker,—I agree with every word that has fallen from the hon. member for Maryborough on this matter. I can speak feelingly on this subject, because it is only within the last week or two that I have had occasion to become acquainted with the whole particulars of the case to which the hon. member has referred, and if I had thought it was going to be referred to this afternoon I would have brought the whole of the papers.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I can give them to you.

Mr. AGNEW: But this is scarcely the proper time to bring that matter forward. It is in the hands of the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer at present, and I have every confidence that the hon. gentleman will deal with the general subject of these specifications in the way they ought to be dealt with. If we want to get water by boring in this colony we must ask contractors to work on reasonable, honest, manly conditions. It is well

known that in all specifications there are clauses inserted for the express purpose of preventing men from defrauding the Government, and they are very properly used when any contractor attempts to do that; but it is a new state of things entirely that those clauses should be used to oppress honest, honourable contractors. It is most desirable that we should obtain water in all parts of the country, and when contractors are honestly bent on faithfully carrying out their obligations, and striving to complete their contracts, they ought to be reasonably assisted, and not thwarted in all manner of ways by clauses in the specifications, which, although they were read by the contractors, have never been known to be used as a means of oppressing them.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH: What is the nature of the agreement?

Mr. AGNEW: I think it would be well for the country if all the clauses of this specification were read. The first objectionable feature is this: That boring in Queensland shall be done only by American labour; that no colonial man shall be engaged as a borer. I will read the clauses. The first is—

"The Hydraulic Engineer shall have full power to fix the sites for the bores, hereinafter mentioned, in any part of Queensland; but he is not obliged to fix the site of the first bore before the expiration of seven months from the date of signing this contract."

So that if a man signed a contract yesterday, he could be kept hanging about doing nothing for seven solid months. No. 4 says—

"The contractor shall, at his own cost, import from America and land in Brisbane, within seven months from the date of signing this contract, a sufficient quantity of the most approved and powerful boring machinery"—

Why should it be imported from America? There is nothing at all connected with boring plant that cannot be manufactured in our own colony; yet the contractor is compelled to import from America articles that can be manufactured here, and which, as the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Luya, stated the other night, have actually been sent to various parts of the colonies, and will before long be sent to America. Yet, as I say, the contractor is obliged to import those articles from America.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Not now.

Mr. AGNEW: That is part of the specification, which goes on to say—

"Tools, implements, and duplicates thereof, together with all plant of every description that may be required for properly and expeditiously carrying on and completing the works of this contract; the contractor to defray all freights, wharfage, and charges on such plant; and the contractor shall also in like manner engage and bring from America to this colony, at his own cost, two thoroughly experienced, skilled, and reliable drillers to work the machinery and perform the boring operations comprised in this contract in the most approved and speedy manner."

Why should he bring men from America? According to this specification he is not entitled to draw a solitary penny from the Government until he has gone down 500 feet, and what is it to the country who puts the bore down 500 feet? If the contractors are willing to bore with colonial labour, why should they not be permitted to do so? Why should they be forced to place the work in the hands of two American experts, who simply manage the contractors, instead of the contractors managing them? They know very well that their services cannot be dispensed with, because the contractors would be compelled to get the same class of labour again from America. I can state that the contractors who have been mentioned this afternoon are putting down a private bore in this colony, and

they will prove to the country that boring in Queensland can be done with Queensland labour. Clause 5 says—

"The Hydraulic Engineer will furnish the contractor with such and so much casing, wood, and water, as the Hydraulic Engineer shall consider necessary for the work."

That is the clause under which the great difficulties have arisen in connection with the bore mentioned by the Colonial Treasurer. In this particular instance the casing should be not less than 16 inches, if the contractors are to have the remotest chance of penetrating the loam or running sand through which the bore passes; but instead of that, the largest sized casing provided for in the specifications is 10 inches. The contractors, in order to get through this material, if possible, have at their own expense provided over 250 feet of 12-inch casing, although it is distinctly stated in the specifications that the Hydraulic Engineer shall provide the casing. And yet, notwithstanding that, they are in this difficulty to-day, and a serious difficulty it is: they are 18 feet nearer the surface of the soil to-day than they were three months ago, although they have been working night and day ever since. They have spent £3,800 on the contract, and have not yet received one penny from the Government. Although the Colonial Treasurer stated distinctly that this clause has been altered, it may be used in an oppressive manner and—

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I never made such a statement.

Mr. AGNEW: I understood the hon. gentleman to say that that clause had been altered. It is an oppressive clause, and I am sorry to think that it is being used in a manner that cannot and will not induce contractors to undertake boring in Queensland. It would occupy too much time to go through the whole of the specification, but I think every member would do well to obtain a copy and read it for himself. We are only in our infancy in boring in Queensland. The whole of the colony will yet be opened up by artesian bores; and to ask a contractor to bore 500 feet in country where it is doubtful whether he will get water, knowing that he cannot get one penny until he has gone down that depth, and that he may encounter the difficulties which have been referred to this afternoon, is to ask him to do what is most unreasonable. I confess that I have some feeling on this matter, and I am very diffident about placing this particular case before the House at the present moment, because the matter is in the hands of the Colonial Treasurer, who I notice is now reading the documents in connection with it. I regret very much that the matter has been referred to this afternoon. I have the greatest confidence in the hon. gentleman, and believe that he will thoroughly sift the matter out, and remove the difficulties under which contractors now labour.

Mr. ARCHER said: Mr. Speaker,—It is hardly necessary to say that I am in sympathy with the hon. member for Burke, Mr. Hunter, in asking for a sum to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates, for the purpose of procuring artesian water in the North. But I do not think anyone can support the motion, at all events until we have the report of the Government Geologist as to the probability of water being obtained at the places mentioned in the motion. We know that in some places in this colony boring for artesian water has been successful, but we also know that in other places boring has been attended with no satisfactory results, and therefore to ask the Government to put money on the Estimates for the purpose of boring where probably there can be no satisfactory result, is unreasonable. To expend money

under such circumstances would be a wasteful expenditure of the public funds. Therefore, I do not think anyone can vote for the motion at present. We must take the word of the Treasurer, that after a report has been received from the Government Geologist, proper steps will be taken to see whether there is artesian water at those places or not. With regard to the other matter that has been discussed, I am not going to hear the Hydraulic Engineer run down in the way some hon. members have taken it into their heads to run him down this afternoon. I know the Hydraulic Engineer very well, and I insist that he is a man of superior attainments; and though he is a gentleman of strong opinions, his opinions are in the right direction, and he is not easily driven from them. The charges brought against him this afternoon were minimised when we had the facts read out from the specifications. We were first told that he would not allow a colonial to be employed in boring for water; but what do we find when we come to the specifications as read by the hon. member for Nundah? We find that the Hydraulic Engineer merely insists upon two skilled workmen being introduced from America to superintend the work; that is to say, he was not going to make the Government pay for educating men to do the work. The hon. member for Nundah stated that the engineer would not allow one colonial to be employed on the work, when, as a matter of fact, all that is required is that two Americans must be introduced, who are thoroughly acquainted with the process of boring, for the purpose of instructing the men who are not acquainted with the work.

Mr. WATSON: We can bore as well as Americans.

Mr. ARCHER: We cannot if we do not know how. Australians are no doubt awfully clever; they are the first nation in the world, and can do things without being taught. But I say they cannot put down bores properly without being taught. In America they have been boring for oil and water for many years, and the Hydraulic Engineer only insists upon two skilled men being brought from there to superintend the work; all the other men employed may be colonials. If the hon. member for Nundah had stated what is true, that two men were to be obtained from America to superintend the work, then we should have said all right; but when the hon. member tells us that no colonial men are allowed to be engaged, and then reads the clause in the specifications which states that two skilled men must be introduced from America, he gets into difficulties.

Mr. ANNear: That condition applies to all contracts.

Mr. ARCHER: I do not care what contract it applies to, whether to the bore at Barcaldine, at Cunnamulla, or at Charleville. What these skilled men are wanted for is to educate our people in doing the work properly, and that is much better than employing persons who are unaccustomed to the work, and who may spoil the machinery. I believe that if the case was stated fairly, and we had a report from the Hydraulic Engineer on the subject, the matter would look very different. I know that the Hydraulic Engineer is an exceedingly hard-working officer; that he is so interested in his work that he is never content except when he is actively employed in carrying out schemes for water supply. If the hon. member will only call for all the papers on the subject, and ask for a debate on it next session when we have all the information before us, and not simply the statements of the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. Watson, and of the hon. member

for Nundah, Mr. Agnew, I will with pleasure meet the three of them in combat and take the part of the Hydraulic Engineer against them. I know that officer too well to believe that he is spending money in a careless, reckless, or unjustifiable manner. For everything he does I am sure he is quite prepared to give a good reason. I am not going to enter any further into this matter. If I can at any time assist the hon. member for Burke, Mr. Hunter, to procure artesian water for the places mentioned in his motion, I shall be glad to do so. If the Government Geologist reports that it is a place where boring can be undertaken with a reasonable chance of success I am quite certain every member will agree most willingly to voting the money necessary for carrying out the work, but to ask for the money before we know that the country will yield artesian water is absurd. The hon. member ought to accept the Treasurer's promise that Mr. Jack will report, and I am quite prepared, if all the reports connected with boring are laid before us, to defend the Hydraulic Engineer against any charges that may be made against him.

Mr. SAYERS said: Mr. Speaker,—I quite endorse what the hon. member for Burke has said about artesian water. I think in the North we are entitled to a certain sum of money to be spent in that direction. I know that Croydon and Etheridge are suffering from the want of water, and I can also say that within a distance of twenty miles of Charters Towers a large number of people who pay the Government is. an acre for every acre of homestead which they occupy, are also in want of water. They have been driven away time after time by the drought, and I think where a large population is settled, the Government should be anxious to keep them there. I do not blame the Government for supplying the outside districts with water, but let them try a locality like the tableland near Charters Towers and keep the people on the land. All around Charters Towers for thirty miles there are homesteads, and if it could be only proved that artesian water could be found there private enterprise would do the rest. It may be the opinion of Mr. Jack that artesian water cannot be found there, but I can tell the Government that at a place called Millchester, about two and a-half miles from Charters Towers, in working a mine there, there was a vein of water struck which was sufficient to swamp out the Hope Gold Mine. The company obtained exemption for six months and got pumps and other appliances, but were unable to keep the water down. I think under such circumstances it would be in the interests of the country to put down a trial bore. It is only in certain districts that boring has been carried on. There is one bore in the Hughenden district, but the population there is very sparse, and I venture to say that within ten or fifteen miles of Charters Towers there are more people living there than on any 200 miles of the back country. The Government should take into consideration the claims of such districts. We heard the other day that the North has been paying nearly the whole surplus revenue for last year, and even more, and that if it had not been for the North we would have had a large deficit. I think, therefore, it is the duty of the Government to spend more money in the North. There has been a bore put down at Eagle Farm. I have been to see it, and when I was last there it was down 1,760 feet. I do not know whether Mr. Jack recommended that site, but it has been a failure. Why should a bore be put down within a mile and a-half of Brisbane, where there are plenty of creeks which could be dammed, and plenty of surface water. I do not know what that bore is

for; whether it is to curry favour with the member for the district or not, but I was assured by the residents that it was not asked for, and was not wanted. On the other hand, members who represent distant constituencies have to strive night and day to get anything done for them. I think it would have been far better in the interests of the whole country if the Government had spent in the North the money which has been wasted at Eagle Farm. There is to be a large vote for the water supply of Brisbane, and yet we find artesian bores are also put down. Why not spend the money in the west, north, and north-west, where, if artesian water is obtained, it is the only water the people can get? It is not as if those districts were able to get a water supply like Brisbane from the Upper Brisbane. I believe it was proposed to put down another bore near Brisbane, but that, we are told, has been abandoned. I hope the Government will take the matter into consideration, and let justice be done; give the North some portion of the surplus revenue to be expended in the different districts. I do not ask anything for my district if it is not worthy of it; but considering the large population there and the revenue they contribute to the country, I think the Government should do something to keep them settled on the land. I shall support the hon. member's motion.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon J. Donaldson) said: Mr. Speaker,—I am not at all surprised to hear the hon. gentleman take exception to the bore put down at Eagle Farm, because he is not in a position to know the very great danger we were threatened with a few months ago. It is well known that at that time there was very great anxiety indeed about the Enoggera and Gold Creek water supplies, and it was really thought that in a short time, if no rain fell, there would be no supply of water for Brisbane.

Mr. HUNTER: We have been like that at Croydon for two years.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I know something of it now. I have had experience of droughts, and I felt very anxious at that time, and so did every member of the Government, for fear that if we did not have a reasonable rainfall within a short time Brisbane would have to suffer from a water famine. At that time Mr. Jack was brought down, and reported as to the probability or possibility of getting water by boring at a reasonable distance from Brisbane. The place he fixed upon was Eagle Farm, and he said there was a possible chance of getting water there. I confess it was an experiment; but in the fear that the water supply of Brisbane would run out, it was an experiment well worth trying. If the dry weather had continued for a few months longer there would not have been a drop of water in the Enoggera or Gold Creek reservoirs. No rainfall had taken place for many months to put any quantity of water worth speaking of into those reservoirs, and the consumption in consequence of the dry weather was very great.

Mr. HUNTER: It was the same over the whole colony.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: There was a great consumption of water going on, and though it was an experiment to put down that bore, it was tried under circumstances that I trust are not likely to arise again in this colony. I believe that with the water supply at present in the Gold Creek and Enoggera reservoirs, and with the proposed supply from the Brisbane River, which should be completed within a couple of years, there is no danger in the immediate future of a water famine here. I daresay hon. members residing at some distance from this bore did

not know of the great danger there was at that time, and even the residents of Brisbane were not fully aware of it, but those who take an interest in the water supply of the city knew it. I am sure that the Government in making an effort to procure artesian water here at that time were only doing their duty. I have no desire at any time to see a large waste of public expenditure, but that expenditure had my most hearty concurrence, and I am very pleased to find now that there was no necessity for it. Although it has had no good result, it is at least something to have learnt that there is no water to be obtained at a reasonable depth close to Brisbane; and I hope that in the future there will be no necessity for trying further experiments in that direction. With regard to the specifications that so much has been said about this afternoon, I think hon. gentlemen who take any interest in this question know that all the first bores tried in this colony proved to be large failures, and very costly failures too. The bore tried at Croydon cost a great deal of money and it was a rank failure. There was a bore tried at Blackall, and I do not know how many months they were at it.

Mr. MURPHY: Two years.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Yes; they were at it for two years, and when they got down to a depth of something like 1,000 feet they could not make any further progress. That bore cost something like £5,000; and it was certainly a very costly experiment to the country.

Mr. HUNTER: The Croydon bore was only put down 111 feet.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It turned out to be a failure, but I am not speaking of that so much now as about the specification. Another experiment was tried between Thargomindah and Windorah. That bore was worked at for two years and was put down about 700 feet, and they could not make any further progress and the plant was removed. There was another tried in the north-western portion of the country, though I am not familiar with the name of the locality at the present moment. All these failures showed the necessity for the Hydraulic Department framing regulations under which they might be assured of some success in future operations. The late Government took a great deal of interest in the matter, and the late Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Dickson, went most heartily into the matter, to make artesian bores a success in the colony. I had many interviews with him on the subject, and I know he did all he could to try to make the sinking of bores for artesian water successful. When the present Government came into office, it was their duty to go on with the large expenditure to prove whether artesian water could be obtained in all parts of the colony. We have to depend to a great extent upon the scientific reports we get, and for that reason Mr. Jack not only visited Brisbane, but other parts of the colony to report upon the probability of procuring artesian water at various places. To refer again to the specifications: the failures in the first instances caused the department to try and get specifications and conditions framed to prevent the failures that occurred in the past. We all know that in America they have had considerable well-boring experience which we have not yet gained in Australia. It was therefore very necessary to have at least two experts imported from Canada, with a special knowledge of the machinery referred to in the conditions read by the hon. member for Nundah.

Mr. AGNEW: The contractors were not paid.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It is not a question of their getting paid. If a man does not make reasonable progress, he is not entitled to be paid at all.

Mr. AGNEW: He is not to be paid until he finishes the bore.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No bore was ever finished in this colony at a depth of 500 feet yet. It is something like Columbus and the egg—a great many know how to bore now who two years ago did not know how to bore. They are getting experience from those who were brought here, and I hope those gentlemen will be able to train our own people to bore as well as themselves, and I am sure success will follow. To make this colony great, I am certain artesian water will have to be sought for in all parts of it. I believe the success of the colony depends very much at the present time upon the success of artesian boring. I know of nothing so important as the discovery of permanent water for the dry seasons out in the far West. I do not think the regulations and conditions would be much good if they were not very stringent. As to the case referred to by the hon. member for Nundah and by the hon. member for Maryborough, I am not acquainted with the reasons for the failure of that bore, and I cannot say whether it arose from the peculiar nature of the soil or from mismanagement, but I think that, as the case is *sub judice* at present, it would be just as well not to refer to it until such time as the Colonial Treasurer has had an opportunity of investigating it and seeing what the facts of the case are. With regard to the motion now before the House, the hon. member for Burke ought to know that this matter has my entire sympathy. I am just as desirous as he can be to see artesian water secured at Croydon, because I have a large interest in that place. But I would be one of the last to say that we should put down a bore there if there is no probability of getting water. The interest I hold there is quite sufficient to make me desire that the boring for water there should be successful; at the same time I say we should wait until we get Mr. Jack's report before we throw away large sums of money upon a pure experiment. I hope we shall get Mr. Jack's report before long, and I further hope we shall be able to find water there. If we do, I am quite sure it will do more for that field than any other discovery that could be made there, unless it were the discovery of a very large quantity of gold. To the assertion made this afternoon—for it is a pure assertion—that only certain constituencies in this colony have been favoured with regard to getting a water supply, I can give a flat denial, because, although I occupy the position of a Minister, and several bores are required in my district, not one of them has been put down there. It is impossible for the Government to find bores for all parts of the colony at one time. We must wait until we get a sufficient number of persons well enough acquainted with boring to start operations in this colony. At the present time we have not a great many contractors in the colony, and some of them, I am sorry to say, have not been successful. Some of them have failed from want of experience, and some through not having proper plants. But see the success which has attended our efforts during the last twelve months! The well at Barcaldine is a great success. The bore at Blackall, after going on without success for two years, has been put down in a few weeks by another contractor. Then the Tambo bore was put down in a few weeks. Another at Cunnamulla, and another at Charleville have proved very successful. Then there are several private bores in the

south-western portion of the colony which have proved successful. On the other hand, some of the private bores have been attended with anything but success. At Lansdowne, which is only a short distance from Tambo, a bore is now down 2,500 feet, and has cost upwards of £5,000. I know another private bore, not very far from Clermont, which cost about £4,000, and the plant had to be removed from the place, because the Government Geologist said there was very little probability of water being obtained, and to continue such an expense after that would have been absurd. Then, again, west from Rockhampton, private bores are going down at a great expense, and only two of them, on Wellshot Station, have been successful. The others, although they have cost large sums of money, have proved unsuccessful. I think it is the duty of the Government, before putting down too many bores, to wait until they get the report of the Government Geologist, to see whether there is a prospect of getting water in the various localities. I do not say that in every case the Government Geologist will be right as to the possibility of water being obtainable, but at all events, his opinion is worth a great deal, and it would be well to have it before money is spent. I trust the hon. gentleman will not press this motion any further, because a sufficient sum of money has been put down on the Estimates for boring for water. There is no necessity for causing this additional sum to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates. It is not a question of want of funds, but one of want of plant; but, even if we had the plant, we should wait for the report of the Government Geologist before we go on making experiments. I am sure the hon. gentleman has not the slightest desire that a large sum of money should be spent in a pure experiment. I am sure that he honestly believes that a supply of water can be obtained at Croydon. It is only a matter of waiting a little longer now. Experiments must be made in that district; but we are now on the verge of the wet season, and even if we had the plant in Brisbane now, it would be hardly possible to start the boring before the wet season is upon us, and there will shortly be plenty of water to carry on for a few months. I again ask the hon. gentleman not to press this matter, because there is not the slightest necessity for placing the sum of £20,000 on the Supplementary Estimates, as we have enough money to bore a large number of wells.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—The motion of the hon. member for Burke, so far as it means that the Government should continue boring for water in the different parts of the colony, has my warmest support. I hope the Government will see their way, even if the Government Geologist may think that water is not likely to be found at Croydon, to put down a bore for 2,000 feet or 2,500 feet, and test whether the Government Geologist is right or wrong in his conclusion, should he report against a bore at Croydon. I do not think that the search for artesian water, so far as it has gone, has yet given us a full insight into the underground water supply of the colony. I am quite sure that when the first bores were put down in the western parts of the colony by the late Government, they did not get any very great encouragement from the Government Geologist. It was thought hardly possible that water would be found, but still we know now, so far as the Western districts are concerned, exactly the class of country in which to look for water. I think it would be well worth a trial to bore at Croydon, even in the face of what the Government geologist may think. Boring for artesian water in any part of the colony—whether on a goldfield or in the pastoral districts—has my warmest support, because I know the enormous

advantage which has already accrued to the colony, and the still greater advantages which will accrue hereafter, from the discovery of artesian water in the West. I know that mining requires water perhaps even more than the pastoral industry. Neither industry can be successful without water, and there is an enormous area of pastoral and auriferous country which cannot be developed unless artesian water is found. I should like to point out to the junior member for Burke, that all the bores which have been put down in the Western districts have been bores for public purposes. They have been put down either on a main road for the purpose of keeping up communication, or, combined with that, they have been put down to give a water supply to towns. The hon. gentleman cannot expect the Government are going to bore for every mining company on Croydon.

Mr. HUNTER: They have been put down at every spot for travelling stock.

Mr. MURPHY: The wells in the West have been put down entirely for the purpose of enabling people to travel from one part of the colony to another. None of the wells have been put down anywhere except on Government land, and in the neighbourhood of centres of population, or where the Government intend to settle population along the railways; so that every mine owner in the colony cannot expect to have an artesian well put down beside his mine.

Mr. SAYERS: They do not want any such thing.

Mr. MURPHY: If the Government put down bores here and there throughout the mining districts to show that water can be had, that is all they can reasonably be expected to do.

Mr. SAYERS: That is all we ask for.

Mr. MURPHY: Private enterprise must then do what it is doing in many parts of the West. There are more private drills at work now in the West than Government drills. With regard to the question of importing these drillers, if we did not do something of that kind we should have no persons at all competent to contract for bores, because the art of boring is a thing which a man can only learn by actual experience, and we have not yet had sufficient experience of this work in the colony to train men to know how to work the machinery. When a man is boring at 2,000 feet from the surface in a small hole only 5 inches in diameter, he must be a skilled man to know exactly what is going on in the bottom of that hole.

Mr. ANNEAR: How many do we want?

Mr. MURPHY: Many holes have been lost in this colony through the driller not knowing how to get the tools from the bottom of the bores when something has gone wrong with the machinery. I know of cases where tools have been dropped down, and they have never been able to recover them. The American drillers have had long experience of this work, and they know exactly what is going on down below. Even from hammering the drill at the top they know exactly what is being done below. All that has to be learned by practice. When boring commenced here there were no people in the country who knew anything about boring for artesian water, so that the Hydraulic Engineer had to protect himself from incapable men, and the only way he could do that was to say that those men should be brought out from a country where they had become thoroughly familiar with the art of boring. I have no doubt that in the future we shall have plenty of our own men educated to the business, and then we shall be able to do without this portion of the specifications. There is nothing about drilling that any intelligent man cannot learn, but he cannot learn

a trade unless he has somebody to teach him. These men are acting as instructors to the men employed under them. In addition to the skilled overseer, there are five or seven men attached to every drilling machine, and those men are all learning the business; and we shall soon have plenty of competent drillers educated by these men. We bring out scientific men from England, America, and other places to teach us in other arts. Why not do the same in the case of drilling? When we get a sufficient supply of thoroughly trained men, there will be no necessity for this clause to be maintained in the agreement. At the present time I do not think we have the men. It is very difficult at the present time for private parties to contract for boring, who have no such agreement as the Government has.

Mr. ANNEAR: Does that clause exist in the Victorian agreements?

Mr. MURPHY: I do not know. They are not boring for artesian water in Victoria.

Mr. ANNEAR: They have been boring for artesian water at Sale.

Mr. MURPHY: That was only like putting down a hand-auger through a soft deposit of alluvium, and water was struck at 100 feet or 120 feet. There has been no such thing in Victoria as what we understand by boring for artesian water. It has only been tested in the western portion of New South Wales, as in the western portion of Queensland. I quite agree with the hon. member for Nundah and the senior member for Fortitude Valley that perhaps the Government agreement is too stringent. I am now myself boring for water in the West, and I could not get contractors to sign a similar agreement to that drawn up by the State. I got a copy of the Hydraulic Engineer's agreement, but I never submitted it to the contractor, for I saw at once that he would want me to pay a very much higher price for the drilling if I asked him to sign such an agreement. As I wanted to get the work done as cheaply as I could, I contracted with him to bore to a certain depth; he gets two-thirds of the contract price as he proceeds with the work, and the other one-third I retain in my hands as a guarantee that he will do the work. That is all he loses in the event of failing to complete the contract. It is very hard on a contractor that if he fails to bore 500 feet he shall not be paid. It has this effect, that it frightens men from entering into Government contracts, and therefore restricts this kind of work to a very few men. I hope the Colonial Treasurer will see his way to modify the Hydraulic Engineer's conditions—not that I do not think the Hydraulic Engineer framed them in all good faith for the protection of the State, but because they are unnecessarily stringent. If they are made less stringent we shall have greater competition and more men willing to bore for water. The motion of the hon. member has my sympathy, and I hope the Government will see their way to put down bores on all goldfields where water is required.

Mr. SMITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I sympathise with the object the junior member for Burke has in his endeavour to get a bore for the Croydon Gold Field. If there is one portion of the colony more than another which requires a supply of artesian water it is Croydon. I think the hon. member should be well satisfied with the assurance given by the Postmaster-General—for such I took to be the meaning of his remarks—that due expedition will be exercised in having a bore put down there. Even if Mr. Jack's report is not altogether favourable, the experiment is well worth trying at Croydon, if there is the faintest expectation of getting water

there. There is a large population at Croydon, and the great enemy of that part of the colony is the constant drought. I trust the Government will take this matter up very seriously, and use the utmost expedition in having the wants of Croydon supplied by granting them this supply of artesian water if it is possible to get it. I heard this very day, casually, in conversation, that the people there are in very great straits indeed for want of water, and that the health of the community is endangered thereby. I am sure the Government have every wish to see that the wants of the people of Croydon are supplied, and that they will do their utmost to obtain for them, if it be obtainable, this supply of artesian water. I fully sympathise with the hon. member's motion.

Mr. MELLOR said: Mr. Speaker,—I am glad to hear so much sympathy expressed in connection with the motion, and I hope that now the attention of the Government has been so forcibly drawn to the necessity of obtaining a supply of water at Croydon, the people there will get the benefit, at all events of a trial to get water by boring. It is admitted that boring for water is a very important matter for the colony generally. It has also been admitted that some of the bores put down have failed, and therefore the Government will do nothing more in the matter unless they get a report from the Government Geologist. I do not know whether it is a fact, but I have been led to believe that it was on Mr. Jack's recommendation that the bore was put down near Brisbane, and it has proved a failure. In one place, I believe, about £5,000 was expended, and they got no water. I should like to know whether there are any other places like that, and whether Mr. Jack made any recommendation in that instance?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: What I said was that if there was any probability of water being got it was at Eagle Farm.

Mr. MELLOR: I should like to know whether the Government are thoroughly satisfied with the reports of the geologist—whether they have been borne out by experiments made afterwards? I believe he reported on the districts about Brisbane.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: There was very little hope that water would be got.

Mr. MELLOR: In that case it was wrong of the Government to go to the expense of putting down a bore. At the same time, I believe boring for water in the country has been generally a success. The Charleville bore is a very great success. I understand the outflow of water there is about 3,000,000 gallons daily, and I should like to know if that water is running to waste?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No; it is not.

Mr. MELLOR: How is it, then, that the department can state that 3,000,000 gallons are flowing from it daily?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: By testing it.

Mr. MELLOR: I hope the water there will not be allowed to go to waste. I am satisfied that if Croydon had the benefit of a regular water supply it would become a very great success as a goldfield. It is only for want of water that the people there are languishing. If they had plenty of water, Croydon would, I believe, be one of the most successful goldfields in Queensland. I hope the Government will take early steps to put down bores, in order to encourage the gold-producing industry. We know that the pastoral industry is being encouraged by bores being put down in various

districts; we do not complain of that, but we think it is time that bores should be put down for the purpose of encouraging the mining industry. I think trials should be made at once, almost before getting reports from the Government Geologist. It is possible that that officer may be mistaken as to the probability of a bore proving successful. I think what has been asked by the hon. member for Burke is only a fair and reasonable request for the North, and I trust the Government will concede it. The assurance given that the Government will take the matter into consideration is satisfactory so far as it goes; then why not let the motion pass?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We have money in hand, voted last year.

Mr. MELLOR: Then I hope the Government will see that it is very soon expended. There are other districts in the colony where it is believed artesian water exists. It has been stated on good authority that artesian water exists at Gympie, and if a bore was put down there we might get a sufficient supply without going to the expense of constructing waterworks. We have a beautiful river passing through the gold-field, and I suppose we shall have to take the natural course to procure water supply there. I believe there is plenty of artesian water to be got in other places in the coast districts, where it would be a great benefit. Of course, it means great expense, and I think the local authorities should take charge of those works, and have some control over them, so that when water is procured they would be able to charge the surrounding district for the supply. I hope the Government will see their way clear to put a bore down at Croydon as soon as possible.

Mr. PAUL said: Mr. Speaker,—I have had several conversations with the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer with regard to the bore I asked to be put down in the Leichhardt district, and he tells me that the delay has arisen principally from the want of experienced hands to carry out the work, it being necessary to send to America for thoroughly competent men. I hope the hon. gentleman will see his way to give effect to the promise made—that when the department is in a position to proceed with the work, the bore at Emerald will be carried out.

Mr. LISSNER said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to say a few words on this question, as I am one of the members who lately visited Croydon, in company with the hon. member for South Brisbane, and know the distress that exists there. I know that on a public platform there was nothing more forcibly pointed out to us, than that all the distress and stagnation on that field are due to the extraordinary demand for water. There is a regular water famine there; and there is no place in the colony that deserves more attention from the Government in the way of getting water for the people than Croydon. I do not like to commit myself exactly to the expenditure of £20,000, as stated in the motion, but I think something should be done to provide a supply of water at Croydon. I believe hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches have put a lot of money into Croydon, and, therefore, they know exactly where the shoe pinches. I went all round the field, and it was a most distressing sight to see expensive dams with costly machinery lying alongside, and hundreds of thousands of tons of payable quartz lying there, which might as well be at the top of Mount Macedon, until they can get water to crush it. I do not wish to detain the House, but I trust the Government will not pass this matter over in the usual way, and depend on red tape reports from any geologist, but that they will go into it

at once, and try and procure water where it is really required—not in any particular electorate, but for the benefit of people who are actually starving for want of water. I do not believe they have enough water on Croydon to mix their grog. They are always expecting rain, but it never does rain there scarcely. While I was on the field and was speaking, a few drops fell, and the people rather admired my style, but it did not last half long enough; not more than one-tenth of an inch fell. I do not see that we can afford to spend £20,000 to put bores down there, but I think a trial bore should be put down whether the Government Geologist approves of it right away or not. I think it worth making a trial, and if it is a failure then the only thing to do is to give Croydon best. If there was a good supply of water on that field it would employ a lot of capital, give employment to a large population, and become one of the most important districts in the colony. But without water it will never be anything. I trust that the Government will take the earliest opportunity of putting a bore down there, without waiting for any information from any geologist.

Mr. HODGKINSON: By the time Mr. Jack gets there the wet season will be on.

Mr. HUNTER, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—I thank hon. members for the kind sympathy they have expressed, and I believe sincerely expressed, with the object I have in view in trying to obtain an artesian water supply for Croydon, and they must not think me hard when I tell them that a sympathy which is like the sympathy of America with the dock strikers in London is not the sympathy we want. The sympathy we want is money from the Treasury, and I hope hon. members will show a real sympathy with the people of the North by supporting the motion before the House. We are told that we are to have the report of Mr. Jack to tell us whether water can or cannot be obtained by boring at Croydon. The Minister for Mines and Works could not have adduced a better illustration in favour of my contention than that of Columbus and the egg. As the egg would not stand on its end until the surface was broken; so I maintain it is impossible to say whether there is water beneath the surface at Croydon until the matter is actually tested by boring, and I shall never be satisfied as to the probabilities of water being obtainable by a report from the Government Geologist. What I ask the Government to do is to test the country, instead of debating the question in this House at a heavy expense to the country, quarrelling among ourselves, and wondering whether water can be found by boring or not. Let the money be spent in boring, and prove by actual experiment whether it will be a success or not. It is said that Mr. Jack is to report upon Croydon. But my motion embraces the whole of the far North. Is Mr. Jack to report on the whole of the far North? Let the Government show that they are sincere in this matter, by giving instructions to Mr. Jack to pick out the most suitable site for a bore at Croydon, and having a bore put down there, even if the report of Mr. Jack be unfavourable. The people of Croydon will not be satisfied with any such report; they want water, and we know that no man in the world can tell whether there is water underground, unless it is tested by a proper experiment. We want the same experiments made in the North as have been made in the South. I can assure hon. members that we do not begrudge the money spent in other parts of the colony, but £20,000 can be very profitably spent in boring experiments in the far North. If the motion is carried, and this money expended as desired, the people of the colony will find

that it is £20,000 well spent, and that it will return many thousands of pounds to the country, and not merely 4 per cent. as is paid by local authorities for loans. Too much altogether is made of loans to divisional boards and other local authorities. Should we have the large water supplies now flowing in the far West if we had been dependent on divisional boards for them? I do not think we should; I rather believe that we now should be where we were six or seven years ago if we had left the matter of boring for water to divisional boards. And if we had always acted on the advice of geologists the people of the West would still be in the same position as are the people of the far North. Gentlemen acquainted with goldfields who have visited Croydon have been astonished that gold should be found in such peculiar country as Croydon. We are told by scientists that it is possible to tell by the surface of the country whether it carries gold or not, but that conclusion is not borne out by Croydon. Gold is found there in places which there is not a single man in the colony would pronounce gold-bearing country; and I maintain that a similar state of affairs exists in regard to artesian water, and that we really cannot say whether water is obtainable below the surface except by boring. As a representative of the North, therefore, I shall not be satisfied until that test has been made, and I hope that whoever may be the members for the district will always hold the same view. From what we have heard this afternoon Americans are necessary to carry on boring operations successfully, and as they have had considerable experience of boring in their own country, probably it would be as well if the Government obtained a report from a scientific American with regard to boring for water at Croydon. The Postmaster-General in speaking on this question, gave a flat denial to my remark that districts represented by members on the Government side of the House had been favoured in regard to water bores. But the hon. gentleman did not point to any districts represented by members on this side of the House where artesian water had been obtained, and that is the only way in which my statement can be successfully denied. The hon. gentleman also alluded to a bore for water which had been put down at Croydon, and stated that it was a failure. But who made it a failure? I contend that it was not really a failure: it was not abandoned because water could not be obtained there, but because the machinery was the wrong machinery.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Who sent it there?

Mr. HUNTER: I do not know who sent it there. But it does not make any difference who sent it there. The fact that the wrong machinery was sent does not prove that artesian water cannot be got at Croydon. Croydon is now over four years old, and these terrible trying circumstances have been staring the Government in the face during all that time. Applications have been made to the present Government for the last two years for a bore to be put down for water, and on every occasion we have had an equally substantial promise to that given this afternoon by the Treasurer. Are we to throw those former promises on one side and believe that the promise given to-day will be carried out? I cannot take that promise as some hon. members wish, who have asked me to withdraw the motion. I want something more substantial. I know that the Government with their cast-iron majority can defeat the motion, but I will only withdraw it on the condition that the Government Geologist is instructed to pick the most suitable site for a bore at Croydon, and that a promise is given that

a bore will be put down at that site whether the report of the geologist be favourable or not. Hon. members sitting on the other side of the House who desire me to be satisfied with the handsome promise made by the Government, and withdraw the motion, have more faith in the Government than they can expect me to have. The hon. member for Barcoo remarked that the Government cannot be expected to put down bores for every mine. I think it would be quite time enough to make a statement of that kind when members ask for a bore for every mine. We want an example set in the matter of boring for water in the North. Let the Government set us that example, and show us that water can be obtained in that way, and I am confident that private enterprise will continue the work, and find sufficient water to carry on the industries of the district. I therefore hope that those members who sympathise with the motion will show their sympathy by voting for it, and I can assure them that £20,000 will be well spent in boring for artesian water in the far North of Queensland.

Question put and passed.

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

DALBY AND BUNYA MOUNTAIN RAILWAY.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that that House had approved of the plans, section, and book of reference of the Dalby and Bunya Railway.

NORTH COAST EXTENSION.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that that House had approved of the plans, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the North Coast Railway, section No. 4.

PAYMENT OF PENSIONS.

Mr. BARLOW, in moving—

That an address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be laid upon the table of this House, copies of Executive minutes, instructions, or correspondence, if any, authorising the Auditor-General to certify to the payment of pensions to Mr. W. G. Chancellor, late Chief Inspector of Distilleries, etc.; and to Mr. Edward Deighton, late Under Secretary for Mines and Works—

said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall not take up much time in moving this motion. Hon. members are aware that the constitutional question raised in connection with this matter makes it desirable that His Excellency should be addressed on the subject. I therefore move the motion standing in my name.

Mr. McMASTER said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to move an amendment. I think it desirable that we should have all the papers. If I am in order I shall move the omission of the following words:—"if any, authorising the Auditor-General to certify," with a view of inserting the word "relating."

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—Before you put that motion I should like to ask the hon. member to amend his motion. I asked him when he put it on the notice paper to amend it, and he refused to do so. That was the reason why I called "Not formal." I have no objection whatever to any correspondence or Executive minutes regarding the pensions to Mr. Chancellor or Mr. Deighton being produced, but there are others in the same position, and I would like to have the correspondence regarding them produced also. There are a great many more that I know of. Hon. members will recollect that I

mentioned the other afternoon, that a validating Bill will be required, and I would like to know the whole number of persons that will have to be included in it. I know that Mr. Herbert comes under this category, and I think Mr. Rawlins also. I am not certain of Mr. Rawlins, but I am of Mr. Herbert. Mr. Herbert was forced to resign against his will. There was nothing more the matter with him, than there is with the leader of the Opposition; in fact, I believe he was in much better health than the leader of the Opposition is in at the present time. I would, therefore, like to add Mr. Herbert's name, and Mr. Rawlins' also, to this list, and, if possible, I should like to add all others who have been similarly pensioned. I am certain we shall not be able to get all the information necessary for a Validating Bill this session, but I should like to have all the pensions dealt with in the one Bill, as it will be absolutely necessary to validate them.

The SPEAKER: Does the hon. member propose any amendment?

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: I saw the leader of the Opposition writing, and I understand he is adopting the suggestion made, and will propose an amendment.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said: Mr. Speaker,—It will be necessary, I think, to go through the list of names of all the persons who have retired to see how many have retired before the age of sixty, and include their cases in the return. Perhaps the member for Fortitude Valley will not press his amendment, as I wish to propose an amendment that will include them all.

Mr. McMASTER: Hear, hear!

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I propose then to omit all the words after the word "correspondence" with a view of inserting the following:—

"Relating to the retirement of, and the granting of retiring allowances to, any members of the Civil Service who have retired under the age of sixty years."

I hope we shall not be told that the Government do not know whether they were sixty or not.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: We must do our best to find that out.

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

SUPREME COURT AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

On the Order of the Day being read, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into committee to further consider this Bill.

The HON. C. POWERS said that as it was impossible to go on with the Bill this session, he would move that the Chairman leave the chair.

Question put and passed, and the House resumed.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply to further consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that there be granted for the service of the year 1889-90 the sum of £10,480 for the Secretary for Public Lands—salaries and contingencies. Hon. members would see there was an increase over last year's vote of £500. It was found necessary for the efficient working

of the department that two additional clerks should be appointed—one in the auction sales branch. Hon. members knew auction sales had last year assumed a position of considerable importance, and that branch required additional assistance. Another officer had been appointed in the selection branch, owing to the very large area of land selected during the year making that appointment necessary. There were some increases of salary in the department to officers who had been a very considerable time in the service, and to whom, he believed, increases had been indirectly promised for some time past. Then there were some increases in the salaries of a number of junior officers, whose salaries, in his opinion, were insufficient for the duties they were called upon to perform. The advertising vote was the same as last year—namely, £2,700. He might mention that the amount actually expended last year was £2,699 16s. 2d. There was a slight addition of £100 in the vote for postage, fuel, and incidental expenses, £800 being asked for in lieu of £700, in consequence of the expenditure last year having been £859 18s. 1d., or £159 18s. 1d. in excess of the vote.

Mr. UNMACK said the Minister for Lands had made some explanation in reference to an increase in the number of clerks. He (Mr. Unmack) was under the impression that the department—and especially the selection branch—was considerably overstaffed. There were a great many more clerks than there ought to be. Possibly it might be owing to the fact that some of the officers were not as competent as they should be. He considered that a much smaller number of clerks would be quite sufficient, especially considering that they were constantly being told that the land revenue was decreasing, and that there was less work to do. Some further explanation was necessary. Then he noticed there were items for the salaries of two messengers, getting together £220, an office keeper, who was put down at £125 in the Estimates, but who, according to the schedule, got £217, and a night-watchman, at a salary of £120, making nearly £600 for messengers alone in that department. Two messengers for one office seemed one too many, while £600 for messengers alone was a very large sum.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the office keeper had to clean out the offices of the whole of that very large department, and was altogether unconnected with the messengers. He did not think two messengers were at all too many, considering the duties they had to perform. A night watchman was an absolute necessity where so many important records were kept in so very dangerous a building. He could assure the hon. member that, in his opinion, the office was not overmanned. He also believed the officers in the department were extremely efficient, and he was quite sure the hon. member would give him credit when he said that he would not have appointed two new officers to the office, if he had not thought they were absolutely necessary for its efficiency.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH asked whether the Minister for Lands could give the Committee any further information with regard to the sale of land to the Hon. James Taylor without competition? Papers connected with the matter had been laid before hon. members, but they certainly did not show that the sale was brought about, or that any promise was given, by the hon. gentleman's predecessor in office.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he might tell the hon. gentleman that in his opinion it was a very injudicious sale. Mr. Taylor had been communicated with, and had been informed that it was absolutely necessary that the road

should be taken through that reserve, and that in the event of Mr. Taylor not agreeing to what he (the Minister for Lands) considered a reasonable compromise, the land would be taken under the Public Works Lands Resumption Act. That was how the case stood. He did not know whether the leader of the Opposition desired to discuss the question as to who was really to blame in the matter. He (the Minister for Lands) admitted that the conclusion of the transaction, which was commenced by the previous Government, was carried out by himself, believing at the time that it had received the full assent of his predecessor. It was one of the first papers that came before him on taking office. He was not prepared to deny a certain amount of responsibility in connection with the matter, and he also admitted that it was an injudicious transaction, which he had given instructions should be recalled, as far as they could possibly do it. He did not think the land should have been sold. He was not going to blame anyone in particular for it. It was an injudicious transaction.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he understood the hon. gentleman to say that he had treated it as a matter of form, that it was put before him when he took office as a matter which he was morally bound to carry out. That was the only justification, and now the hon. gentleman admitted that it was an unwise thing to do. The hon. gentleman had evidently not inquired into the matter, presumably because he was given to understand that the previous Government were committed to it. As a matter of fact, that Government were not committed to it. There was no obligation whatever to do it; and in reality the transaction, which was admitted to have been improper and injudicious, had been done without the knowledge and sanction of any Government. He did not think such things should be. Matters of that kind should be done not only under a nominal responsibility by the Government, but under a real responsibility. The Minister should know what he was doing. It was perfectly plain to whom the blame was attributable.

Mr. STEVENS said he would like to know whether it was the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill dealing with the questions that had arisen between the Acclimatisation Society and the National Association?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he could hardly reply to that question. He knew it was the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill for that purpose; but whether there would be time to get it through during that session, hon. members on the other side could give better information than he could.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: We are lost in wonder.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said hon. members on the Government side had been in the same condition during the last week. In the interests of both the Acclimatisation Society and the National Association, it was desirable that the Bill should be passed; but, in the absence of the Chief Secretary, he could not give a definite reply.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I have been told that the Bill is ready.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he knew hon. members on both sides were interested in the question, and if any assurance could be given that the Bill would be allowed to pass without unnecessary debate he saw no reason why it should not be passed through all its stages in one evening.

Mr. STEVENS said his reason for asking the question was that the usual vote for the Acclimatisation Society was included in the Estimates of the Lands Department, and an idea prevailed—which might not be correct—that if the trustees of the society got that vote they would be placed in a position of considerable strength—in a much stronger position than those who were interested in the other and much more useful body would like to see them in. Such being the case, it was highly probable that the latter portion of the Estimates would be delayed until some settlement had been arrived at. The Bill had been in print for ten days or a fortnight and had been promised to be introduced shortly. The matter was a very important one, in which many hon. members took considerable interest, and in the interests of the National Association, and with the view of forwarding business, the sooner the Bill was introduced the better.

Mr. UNMACK said he would like to know what system was adopted in the office for paying overtime to clerks? He had special reasons for asking the question, because he believed considerable abuses existed in connection with that system in the Lands Office.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said absolutely no overtime was allowed in the Lands Department. In the event of the work being such as to necessitate officers returning after tea time, they were allowed 2s. 6d., which was supposed to enable them to get a meal.

Mr. MORGAN said he had understood the Minister to say that the vote for advertising in the Lands Department was the same that year as last year, £2,700, and that the whole of the sum was expended last year except 3s. 4d. The return which had been laid on the table of the House the other day showed that the Government had been animated by a very fair desire to economise Government advertising, which for some years past had been allowed to run riot without giving any sufficient return to the country; but he thought there was still room for a good deal of improvement in that direction. He complained—and he did so even though his action in the matter might be misunderstood—that an undue amount of the money spent in advertising the business of the State was spent in Brisbane, and for no useful purpose. He failed to see why advertisements relating to remote districts should be published in two or three and sometimes four or five city papers, some of which possibly never reached the district in which the matter referred to was of special interest. He held in his hand copies of Brisbane papers containing pages of Government advertisements in each issue, referring to districts all over the colony, and those same advertisements appeared in the daily papers in Brisbane also. He repeated that it was unnecessary expense to insert those advertisements—which to a large extent related to purely technical matters of local interest in certain districts, in the Brisbane papers. Surely it was enough for the Government to spend money in advertising in one city paper, and in one local paper, or in the local papers. He had before him a copy of a paper which contained a very large advertisement in tabulated form from the Lands Department, which he was prepared to hand to the Minister if he desired to see it. He thought the total vote for Government advertising in all the departments, which amounted to about £10,000 a year, might be considerably lessened, and better value obtained for the taxpayers generally if greater care were exercised in the distribution of those advertisements. Too much of the money was spent in Brisbane, and papers published in districts which were deeply interested in some of those notifications were sometimes not known to the

Minister, possibly because his Under Secretary, or the officers to whom he looked for information on those matters, did not keep him advised on the subject. In many cases advertisements of deep local concern were not sent to the local papers. He had no particular complaint to make further than that there ought to be more discretion used in controlling Government advertisements than was at present exercised.

Mr. TOZER said he would like to know whether when selling land by auction the auctioneers in rendering their account-sales deduct a sum for advertising, or was the cost of advertising paid out of that vote of £2,700? For instance, suppose land was sold at Cairns to the value of £40,000, would the auctioneer deduct the charges for advertising from the proceeds, or would the advertising be paid out of that £2,700?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the advertising would be paid out of the vote of £2,700. He had no doubt that the hon. member for Warwick was only too anxious to see that the expenditure for advertising was properly curtailed, but he could assure the Committee that it was a most difficult matter to deal with. The applications for advertisements from city, country, and suburban papers were incessant, and each applicant declared that his paper had the largest circulation of any paper in the colony, and that unless the advertisements were inserted in his organ the public interests were likely to suffer. The expenditure for advertising had been very carefully checked during the last twelve months, and he (the Minister for Lands) had frequently supervised the whole matter himself, and had endeavoured as far as possible to keep down the expenditure without unnecessarily interfering with the success of land selection or auction sales. The paper which the hon. member had handed to him had, he believed, a very large circulation, and the total amount paid to it for advertising last year was only £34.

Mr. MORGAN said he was quite well aware that his position in drawing attention to that matter was open to suspicion, but being in a position to know where the shoe pinched, that, he thought, was sufficient warrant for his action, and he was quite prepared to bear the brunt of it. The Minister for Lands had put his finger on the weak spot when he stated that pressure was brought to bear upon him to obtain advertisements for different papers. He (Mr. Morgan) could say that if the whole of the records of the department were searched not one application would be found from his office. He knew that touters were sent round from the metropolitan papers, and he believed that Ministers had listened to them too often, the consequence being that the State suffered. A year or two ago a very interesting discussion took place in the House upon the advertising of the quarterly electoral rolls, and he was afraid that that expenditure had not yet been got under control. He found that lists of persons who had applied to have their names inserted on the rolls for some suburban electorates were published in three or four metropolitan papers. There was really no necessity for that, and surely the Minister at the head of the department ought to have the power and also the courage to say in which papers those advertisements should be inserted. Nobody would, he thought, complain about their insertion in such papers as the *Courier* and the *Telegraph*; but why should every weekly paper that came into existence be subsidised in that manner? The result of advertising so largely in those papers was that almost the whole of the money voted for that purpose was expended in the metropolis, and there was none left to pay for the insertion

of advertisements in papers published in outlying districts, where the matters advertised were of special interest, and the country thus suffered to a very much more serious extent than some members might be aware of. He had known matters of deep local importance that had not been advertised in the local papers at all, while flaming advertisements appeared in the city Press. The money which should be expended in advertising in country papers, and so informing country people on matters in which they were interested, had been expended in getting rid of the advertising touts, who brought pressure to bear on the under secretaries and Ministers in Brisbane. He had called attention to that matter before, and would continue to do so from year to year, so long as the same kind of thing existed and he had a seat in the House. He had done so when the party with whom he was associated sat on the other side, and would do so when they sat there again, if the same state of affairs continued. He did not complain of the Minister for Lands at all. He believed the hon. gentleman was endeavouring earnestly to do the right thing in administering the expenditure under that head in his department; but the hon. gentleman had been got at to some extent, as was shown by the newspaper which he (Mr. Morgan) had put into his hands that evening, though not to a very serious extent. He was afraid, however, that if the hon. gentleman did not put his foot down the extent would soon be very serious. He (Mr. Morgan) thought that when the return was supplied giving the amount paid to that paper, the whole of the vouchers could not have been received at the Government Printing Office. There were one or two cases in which a marked increase had taken place in the amount paid to newspapers for advertising; but, on the whole, the return showed that the Government were imbued with the very praiseworthy desire to keep down the expenditure as far as possible. But if they would direct their attention to the fact that too large a proportion of the expenditure was going on within the metropolitan radius, and too little outside in the country, they would see that the country was suffering from that state of things, and the next Estimates would show a very different state of affairs. Less money would be required, and a judicious expenditure of that would secure very much better value than was being obtained for the present outlay.

Mr. FOXTON said he was glad that attention had been called to that matter, as he had intended to refer to it himself. He had no doubt that the Minister was using every endeavour to curtail the abnormal expenditure for advertisements; but the question was whether the curtailment had been judiciously carried out. A complaint had reached him (Mr. Foxton) from selectors in his district that an advertisement of lands open to selection there had appeared in papers outside the district, but had not appeared in the paper published and circulated in the district, which was as well-conducted a country paper as there was in the whole of the colony, and had a large circulation. That had been done to the great inconvenience and annoyance of intending selectors, and to the detriment of the Lands Department. He had received complaints from a dozen selectors, he believed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said if any such neglect had occurred it was certainly unintentional on his part; and if the hon. member had only directed his attention to it, and named the paper referred to, there would have been an end of the matter. It was an extremely difficult thing always to know which were the best papers to advertise in,

and it would be utterly impossible to advertise in all. He thought it was one of the duties of representatives in Parliament, if they could suggest anything which would conduce to the more successful working of the department, to interview the Minister on the subject, and the matter would be attended to.

Mr. TOZER said the hon. member for Maryborough had explained on a former occasion that when he took that course it was not very satisfactory to himself. The impotency of members of Parliament was resented in the Government offices. If the head of the department was interviewed, he invariably extended that courtesy which was expected of him; but many members of Parliament did not care to adopt that course. He wished to ask the Minister where the vote for commission paid to auctioneers appeared?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said: Under the heading of "sales by auction," on page 67.

Mr. GROOM said he had no doubt that the Minister for Lands did the best he could to remedy any defects in the system of advertising, and, while on the subject, he might deal with it generally. It was not every department that exercised the same discretion. For the first time in the history of the Postal Department the mail contracts had not been advertised in a single local paper, and he did not think he had seen them in any paper. A bald notice had been put in the papers informing the public that the mail contracts could be seen in the *Government Gazette*, and the *Government Gazette* could be seen at the police courts. His attention had been called to the matter by half-a-dozen contractors in Toowoomba. They wanted to know why the new departure had been made. All previous Governments had invariably advertised the mail contracts in full in the journal which had the largest circulation of any in the colony, the *Queenslander*, and then such local contracts as affected particular districts were advertised locally. Thus everyone had an opportunity of seeing what mail contracts were open, and the Government were repaid the cost of advertising twenty times over by the resulting competition. Now an extraordinary course had been adopted. He was told that the Postmaster-General was not responsible for it, but that it was the Under Secretary. He happened to know that that gentleman was thoroughly imbued with red-tapeism. He did not believe there was any officer in the service so imbued with red-tapeism, and so averse to anything that would tend to popularise the department. He thought the innovation was a most injurious one. Several contractors had called upon him, and asked why the mail contracts were not published as usual, and he was obliged to refer them to the *Government Gazette* at the police office. In several cases, unfortunately, those men were not able to read or write, and they did not care to expose their ignorance by getting the clerk of petty sessions to read the advertisements for them. They were men who took the local paper, and whose sons and daughters explained the contracts to them. Whoever was responsible for the new departure was no friend of the public. It was a species of economy that was going really too far. It was bad enough to deprive the public of the advertisements showing the dates of departure of the English mails, but the latest innovation was too bad. Although there might be a saving in the cost of advertising there would be none in the case of the carriage of mails. He knew that his remarks were somewhat foreign to the subject, but as the question of advertising had been brought forward, he would add his testimony to the satisfactory mode of procedure adopted by the Minister for

Lands in judiciously advertising land open for sale. There was a sale to be held at Toowoomba on the 29th October, and it was advertised in the way it ought to be. The land was properly described, its locality given, and anyone could see at once what the land consisted of. He had no doubt the Government would reap full advantage from that judicious mode of advertising. If the same course was adopted in regard to other departments, the advantage to be gained would be very great.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the Estimates of his department would be under consideration in a few days, and that would be the proper time to discuss the cost and manner of advertising. He could reply to the hon. gentlemen, but did not think it was judicious to do so on the present occasion.

Mr. JORDAN said he had no knowledge of the existence of a system of overtime such as had been mentioned by the hon. member for Toowoong. If it had existed when he was in office he should have put a stop to it if it had come to his knowledge. He had always set his face strongly against payment for overtime when Registrar-General. When the exigencies of the office at one time required it, the clerks had most willingly worked up to 6 o'clock in the evening; but he believed he gave great offence to some members of the Civil Service by compelling his clerks to work overtime. He wished to ask the Minister of Lands whether the system of paying overtime in the Lands Office had prevailed before he came into office?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the same system had prevailed when the hon. gentleman was in charge of the department as prevailed now. No alteration whatever had been made. The officers of the department had always been most willing to perform any duties which might be cast upon them.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he thought the hon. member for Warwick deserved credit for bringing that matter before the public, and it was impossible to suppose that the hon. member had any personal feelings in the matter. The hon. member was entirely above suspicion. He was the owner of a country paper, but what was that? The paper the hon. member had chosen to speak of was a weekly paper; the hon. member for Carnarvon also pointed out that there was a country paper in his electorate that had been deprived of advertisements altogether, and the Minister for Lands had said that if the name of the paper was mentioned he would attend to it. That would not suit the objections of the hon. member for Warwick, because, according to that gentleman's statement, none but daily papers, such as the *Courier* and *Telegraph*, would be of any use. The paper in the district of the hon. member for Carnarvon was, he understood, a weekly one.

Mr. FOXTON: Yes.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that according to the dictum of the hon. member for Warwick that paper would be left out. The paper referred to by the hon. member for Warwick was a weekly paper and the general run of farmers in the colony took that paper.

Mr. UNMACK: What is the name of it?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said it had a certain "ear-mark," and that word was now being pretty frequently used in the House.

Mr. UNMACK: What is the name of it?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said it must be the *Australian*, if it was "ear-marked." He was almost sorry the hon. member had touched upon it, and no doubt it was as criminal as any other with regard to advertisements. The people who took it were farmers throughout the colony,

and they seldom read a paper except on Saturdays, so that a weekly paper was all they required. He was certain the Minister for Lands would take to heart the kind and generous lesson he had got from a man who was the editor of a country paper himself, and he hoped the hon. gentleman would take care that that "earmarked" paper was not exhibited next year.

Mr. MORGAN said that the paper, the sheets of which he had handed to the Minister for Lands, was the *Australian*, a Roman Catholic paper published in Brisbane.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: And the only one in the colony.

Mr. MORGAN said the hon. member for Stanley, he had no doubt, was perfectly correct in stating that that paper had a very large circulation. He did not think that paper had had enough, or a fair share of, advertisements last year, in proportion to the circulation it had. He had not said that advertisements should be restricted, so far as the city was concerned, to the *Courier* and *Telegraph*, except in so far as business affecting the metropolitan area was affected. With respect to country business, if they wanted to advertise in a Brisbane paper at all, papers like the *Queenslander*, *Week*, and *Australian* should be selected, because they circulated in the back blocks, and were read by farmers, miners, and all classes in the community, whom a daily paper did not reach. Money expended upon advertisements in the Brisbane daily papers respecting country business, was practically thrown away. That was the complaint he had to make.

Mr. BUCKLAND said that the question of advertising had been raised to some extent for the last two or three years when the Estimates were on. Some hon. members had held that the Government spent too much upon advertisements, and others held that they did not spend enough. If £2,700 covered the cost of advertisements for the whole of the Lands Department, including advertisements respecting the sales of land by auction, it was, in his opinion, a very small amount. He was glad to see that the Government had resorted to a better style of advertising than had been practised in the past, and that the Minister for Lands had followed the example of auctioneers and private owners of land in the matter of advertising. He was certain the result of the new system would be beneficial to the Treasury.

Mr. TOZER said he would ask the Minister for Lands to inform him as to the amount of commission paid on sales of land by auction, over and above the £200 set down, and the percentage paid?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the vote last year for commission on sales at auction was £200, but the actual amount paid was £537 5s. 9d. The amount voted was found insufficient, and the commission rate allowed on sales at auction was, he considered, altogether inadequate, as it was only $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. That might amount to a reasonable sum on very large sales, but it was very little to pay on small sales. He had not laid down any fixed rule, but where he had reason to be satisfied with the efforts of an auctioneer he had allowed a more liberal scale of 1 per cent. in some cases, and in other cases a lump sum. He might mention that the competition for the position of Government auctioneer was very great, as the auctioneers looked upon it in the light of an advertisement to have the prestige of being Government auctioneer, and even if the rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. was adhered to, there would be plenty of auctioneers willing to undertake the business.

Question put and passed.

LAND BOARD.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the sum of £1,040 be granted for the Land Board. The vote was £50 less than last year, and that was in consequence of the retirement of one officer, and the promotion to his place of another at an increase on his previous salary, but at a less salary than that paid to the retiring officer.

Question put and passed.

DIVISION OF RUNS.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that £2,000 be granted for the division of runs. That was £1,000 less than the amount voted for the previous year, in consequence of the services of one of the dividing commissioners being no longer necessary. The officer whose services had been dispensed with was Mr. Harris.

Mr. GROOM said that some time ago a statement had been made in the House that certain dividing commissioners had been known to take up selections, either in their own names or in the names of their sons. The Minister for Lands had then promised to institute inquiries, and furnish a report of the circumstances. Was the hon. gentleman in a position to inform the Committee whether the statement which had been so publicly made had been verified or otherwise?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said inquiry had been made, and he was quite prepared to give the information asked for. In the one case a grazing selection of 3,787 acres was taken up in the Gladstone district by Norman Matthew Rule, junior, the son of the dividing commissioner. The services of the dividing commissioner—the father of the selector—were no longer required on the 15th July, 1887, and the land, with the division of which he had been connected, was thrown open to selection on the 3rd October, 1887, practically three months after Mr. Rule had resigned his position. One of those farms was taken up on the 4th October, 1887—the day after the land had been proclaimed open for selection—by Mr. Rule's son. The contention, when the matter had been referred to previously, was that no relative of a dividing commissioner should select a grazing farm, with the division of which his relative had had anything to do. He would point out that there was nothing in the Land Act prohibiting such a thing. It had been further contended that by that action of Mr. Rule's son public attention had been attracted to the fact that valuable grazing farms were open for selection in that district. With all due deference to hon. members who held that opinion, he was rather inclined to think that it was almost the duty of any officer in the Government service to induce selectors to take up areas of land. He could see nothing wrong in that, and he could see no reason, so long as the transaction was honest and *bonâ fide*, why the relatives of a dividing commissioner, or any hon. member of that Committee, or any Minister, should not be allowed to exercise that privilege in doing something for the future welfare of his son, the same as any other individual. Those were the main facts in connection with the case. There was nothing in the Land Act prohibiting it. The dividing commissioner had not himself selected the land. He had a report from Mr. Rule, and if any hon. gentleman would move that all the papers should be laid on the table of the House, they would be printed. Hon. gentlemen would then see there was nothing illegal, and he thought there was nothing reprehensible. The other case referred to was that where grazing farm No. 26, on Noorama run, in the Cunnamulla district, had been selected by dividing

commissioner, Mr. Thomas W. Palmer. The date of Mr. Palmer's appointment was 14th August, 1885. The grazing farms which Mr. Palmer had divided had been thrown open for selection on 6th February, 1888, he being still dividing commissioner, although at that time employed in a different part of the district. Five months and a-half after the grazing farms, of which there were four, had been thrown open for selection not one had been selected, and then Mr. Palmer had taken up one containing nearly 20,000 acres.

The HON. P. PERKINS: Has he resigned yet?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he was still in the service. Until six months later none of the other grazing areas had been selected.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Had he been dividing commissioner on that run?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had been the dividing commissioner on that run. Mr. Palmer took up a selection five months and a-half after they had been proclaimed open for selection, and the other three were taken up six months later. He had written to Mr. Palmer early in September, forwarding him a copy of the *Hansard* with the debate on the subject, and requesting him to furnish some explanation on the subject, and the following was his reply:—

"Bundelango Station,

"Mitchell, 23rd September, 1889.

"To the Under Secretary for Public Lands, Brisbane.

"SIR,

"I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 6th instant, with copy of *Hansard* of the 5th instant inclosed.

"By some miscarriage your letter only reached me yesterday, hence the delay in reply.

"In reply to your requisition for an explanation in reference to my having been charged with irregularity in the selection of a grazing farm on the resumed part of Noomara Run in the Warrego district:

"I beg leave to state that I did apply for a grazing farm on the Noorara resumption, date of application 23rd July, 1888, since which the application has been approved and confirmed by the Land Board.

"I was of opinion that the 125th clause of the principal Act of 1884 did not apply to dividing commissioners, and I could not see any impropriety in my taking up the farm in question, but before making the application I consulted you on the matter.

"I called on you on the 3rd of May, 1888, at your office, and asked you if you could inform me how long my appointment was likely to continue. You replied that you did not know.

"I then told you that I thought of applying for a grazing farm, and asked you if there was anything in the Act to debar me from doing so, as I wished to make some provision in the event of my services being dispensed with.

"Your reply was that I could take up a selection, and that there could be no objection to my doing so."

Having asked the Under Secretary with reference to this, he wrote a memo. on the margin of the letter as follows:—

"I have no recollection whatever of letting Mr. Palmer know there was no objection, and the impression now in my mind is that I did not."

Mr. Palmer's letter continued:—

"I went from your office to that of the Land Board, and asked the members of the board if there was any objection in the Land Act of 1884, to my selecting a grazing farm (and I believe mentioned the portion I thought of applying for). The reply was, that there was no objection, and that I could do so.

"This confirmed my own opinion, and I made the application as above stated.

"I may mention that the manager of Noorara Run brought the matter of my right to select before the Land Board at Charleville, when the valuation of the improvements on the selection were being settled by the board, and he was informed by the board that I had a perfect right to do so.

"I have always considered my appointment as dividing commissioner as only of a temporary nature, and that my services could be dispensed with at any moment.

"And I considered it was my duty to myself and family to make some provision for the future in the event of my services being dispensed with. And as I thought a grazing farm would be a good means for the purpose, I made the application. My intention was to make a home and reside on it.

"If I have done an illegal act it was in ignorance, and under the best advice obtainable.

"I have, etc.,

"T. W. PALMER,

"Dividing Commissioner."

I referred the matter here to the Land Board, to ascertain to what extent Mr. Palmer might have considered himself justified. This is Mr. Deshon's opinion on the matter:—

"Office of the Land Board,

"Brisbane, 10th October, 1889.

"SIR,

"In reply to your memorandum of this day's date, in which you ask whether it is correct that Mr. Dividing Commissioner Palmer asked the members of the Land Board whether there was any objection to his applying for a grazing farm, I have the honour to state that I have no distinct recollection of the particular conversation referred to by Mr. Palmer, but I have no doubt that his statement is substantially correct, as I am of opinion that a dividing commissioner is not debarred by clause 125 of the Crown Lands Act of 1884, from applying for a farm.

"It appears to me that Mr. Palmer never was a commissioner, although called so in the *Government Gazette* of the 11th August 1885, but that he was a fit and proper person appointed by the Governor in Council to inspect runs, etc. Clause 29, sub-section 5.

"A commissioner—see interpretation clause—is the land commissioner appointed under the provisions of this Act for the district in which the land in question is situated. This plainly alludes to the land commissioner for the district—namely, in this instance, Mr. Francis, at Cunnamulla, whose business it is to approve or accept of all applications, or to reject them.

"I would further draw your attention to the wording of clause 125, in which, by the present tense being used, a commissioner is only debarred from acquiring an interest in land open to selection for such time as he acts as commissioner for the district, and for no longer.

"I am of opinion that it would have been advantageous if a dividing commissioner were prevented selecting on a run that he himself had divided, in the same way that a surveyor is prevented from selecting on land that he has surveyed.

"The Land Board have refused to confirm other applications for land, although by the strict letter of the law they might have confirmed them, and it may be asked why in this case confirmation was not refused?

"My reason for this was that Mr. Palmer was taking no undue advantage of anyone else. The land had been open to selection for some months and had not been applied for. Moreover, Mr. Palmer was not employed in the district at the time when the selection was confirmed.

"I have, etc.,

"E. DESHON,

"Member of Land Board."

Mr. Sword's opinion is this:—

"Office of the Land Board,

"Brisbane, 10th October, 1889.

"SIR,

"In reply to your B.C. memo. of this date, on Mr. T. W. Palmer's letter, dated 23rd ult., I do myself the honour to make the following statement with reference to the matter referred to:—

"Some time before Mr. Palmer applied for the grazing farm on Noorara consolidation, he asked my opinion as to the legality of his doing so. In reply, I said my opinion was that the 125th clause of the Land Act did not apply to a dividing commissioner, but to the land commissioner for the district, and that Mr. Palmer could legally select a grazing farm. This conversation did not take place in the office of the Land Board, but the matter was referred to casually when we were talking unofficially about various matters.

"I do not remember Mr. Palmer asking for the opinion of the Land Board in this matter in their office in May, 1888, as stated in his letter of 23rd ultimo; but

it is quite probable that he may have done so, as he was frequently in the office of the Land Board, and had conversations, the particulars of which I cannot now recall to memory.

"I have no recollection of the manager of Noorama making any objection to Mr. Palmer selecting on that run when the Land Board sat at Charleville on 23rd June last to determine the value of improvements on this and other selections. No record of any such objection having been made appears on the court papers, and I therefore think that no formal protest was made against Mr. Palmer selecting on Noorama Run, or I should have made a note of it.

"When Mr. Palmer's application to select the grazing farm on Noorama was sent by the Lands Department to the Land Board for confirmation, I had not the slightest hesitation about confirming it, as I had carefully considered the 125th clause of the Land Act, and was decidedly of opinion that it was not intended to apply to a dividing commissioner, but to the land commissioner of any land agent's district, who, in case of his applying for land in his own district, would afterwards have to deal with his own application in a judicial capacity. By the 125th clause, a commissioner is debarred from selecting land 'in respect of which he acts as commissioner,' and this prohibition is not extended to land in respect to which he has acted as commissioner, as it is in the case of a surveyor where the prohibition is extended in respect to land in the survey of which he has been, as well as is, concerned."

"The interpretation clause of the Land Act defines the word 'commissioner' to mean 'the land commissioner appointed under the provisions of this Act for the district in which the land in question is situated. The word 'commissioner,' therefore, in the 125th clause of the Land Act must be held to mean the land commissioner for the land agent's district in which the selector in applying for which the offence may have been committed is situated, and not to a dividing commissioner who may have been sent into a district for a time to divide a few runs in it.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"T. S. SWORD,

"Member of Land Board."

It was quite possible that it might have been the intention of the framers of the Land Act that dividing commissioners should not be allowed to select, but the clause was so worded as to leave them the legal right to do so. He had read the letters so that hon. members should be in possession of all the information he had on the subject up to the present. He had only received the opinion of the Land Board that day; and with regard to the case of Mr. Palmer, he might say it was still *sub judice*, as he had not had time to bring it before the Cabinet.

Mr. GROOM said it was very satisfactory to hear that, so far as the case of Mr. Norman Rule was concerned, there was nothing whatever against that gentleman's honour or integrity. Anyone who knew him would know that he would be the last person in the world to try and evade the provisions of the Land Act in any way, and it was satisfactory to hear from the Minister for Lands that that gentleman's character was sufficiently vindicated. It must be admitted that there was a defect in the Land Act, so far as that question was concerned. He had gone very carefully into the matter, and was of the same opinion as the Land Board, that dividing commissioners were not debarred from selecting a grazing or an agricultural farm. It was also a singular thing that "dividing commissioner" was not mentioned in the Land Act at all. The only reference to such an officer was in subsection 5 of clause 29, which provided that the division should be made by the commissioner "or some other fit and proper person appointed by the Governor in Council," and that had been done in all cases. The dividing commissioners were not debarred from making selections, and therefore Mr. Palmer had committed no offence whatever. It might be, as the Minister for Lands had stated, that the original framers of the Act intended that dividing commissioners should not be allowed to select, and

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it was only common sense that they should not be allowed to do so, because it would give them a great deal of advantage which other people did not possess. Even for their own sakes they should not make such selections, and he thought a word of advice from the Land Board to that effect would have a good effect. He was extremely glad to hear that Mr. Norman Rule had come out of the matter without a stain upon his honour.

Mr. NORTON said he would like to say a few words with regard to the case of Mr. Norman Rule, because he was connected with, although he had no interest in, the run on which the selection was made. He might say that he had ascertained that Mr. Rule's son was quite entitled to take up the selection; that there was nothing to prevent him from doing so. Why he referred to the matter at the present time was this: He had recently talked the matter over with Mr. Rule; and he had every reason to believe that the action taken by Mr. Rule's son was taken quite independently of his father, who had no personal interest whatever in the selection. The whole of the money employed in connection with the selection, and the stock also, was derived from the sale of an estate which belonged to the son, and in which the father had no interest at all. He wished to make that explanation, because there naturally might be some suspicion that the father had something to do with the matter; but there was not the slightest reason for any suspicion of that kind. The transaction was one in which the son alone was interested.

Mr. STEVENSON said he might mention that he had seen Mr. Rule since the case had been referred to, and he could endorse all that had fallen from the hon. member for Port Curtis, Mr. Norton. He was also glad to hear that there was no ground for complaint against Mr. Palmer for taking up a selection. He had not brought the matter forward on a previous occasion to do anybody a personal injury, but because he thought the Act should be so amended that a dividing commissioner should not be allowed to select on a run which he himself had divided, because no doubt he would be likely to take up the very best selection and might prevent others from coming on the run. He certainly did not think a dividing commissioner should be allowed to select on a run he himself had divided and hold his position afterwards. If the gentleman referred to was a dividing commissioner still he would like to know how his selection was being utilised?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: By bailiff.

Mr. STEVENSON said he hoped it was being utilised, and that improvements were going on the same as on other selections; that it was not taken up purely as a matter of speculation, because that question arose also. He certainly thought the Act should be altered in the way he had pointed out.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had taken the trouble to get all possible particulars as to what was being done with the selection referred to, and how the improvements stood. As he had stated before, Mr. Palmer had at once spent £320 in cash for improvements; the selection was fenced on three sides, and the fourth side was being fenced. He thought there was no necessity to amend the Act, because the matter could be settled by regulation. There were now only two dividing commissioners, and after the way attention had been drawn to the matter, he was sure they would be very careful not to repeat any transaction of that kind. They only held office during good behaviour, and if the Minister was of opinion that they had been guilty of any gross irregularity, he could dispense with their services. If the

appointment of any fresh dividing commissioners should be necessary, regulations would be framed debarring them from making any selection whatever.

Mr. JORDAN said he did not think any blame could attach to Mr. Palmer, because it was evident the Land Board were of opinion that there was nothing to prevent him from taking up the selection. He would state a case that had occurred when he was Minister for Lands, to show that the Land Board were very careful to keep to the spirit of the Act as well as the letter. A case occurred where the son of a lessee whose run had been divided took up a grazing farm, and the question arose whether that was a violation of the spirit of the Act. There was a difference of opinion between the members of the board on the subject. Both were of opinion that there was nothing in the Act to prohibit it; but one of them was of opinion that it might be a violation of the spirit of the Act. The other member of the board thought differently, and referred the matter to him (Mr. Jordan), because it was provided that when the members of the board differed the matter should be referred to the Minister. He thought it was a violation of the spirit of the Act, and gave his decision accordingly. He merely mentioned that circumstance to show that the members of the board were very careful to see that not only the letter, but also the spirit of the Act, was carried out.

Mr. MURPHY said he thought the hon. member was entirely wrong in his decision. There was nothing in the Act to prevent a son, if he was of age, selecting a grazing farm on the resumed portion of a run of which the leased part was held by his father. Why should a son not have the right to select a farm on the resumed part of his father's run, just as well as on the resumed part of an adjoining run? The hon. member in his anxiety and over zeal to prevent anything like dummying, went out of his way, and outside the Act, in debarring that son from selecting. It was desirable to encourage settlement on the land, and who would be a better settler than the son of the man owning the adjoining run? There, the son would be near his own people, and would have the assistance of his father's advice in improving his block. All the Land Board would have to do would be to give directions to the local land commissioner that the law should be strictly carried out by the selector, and that he should be put under stricter surveillance than an ordinary squatter, so that he should understand that if it was proved that he was in any way dummying or grazing his father's stock, the land would be forfeited. The son of a squatter was not under any ban to prevent him selecting on the resumed part of his father's run; so long as he was not in the employment of his father, there was nothing in the law to forbid his selecting, and the hon. member had no power to refuse to grant a selection to a man who was competent to select. He (Mr. Murphy) knew that in that case a serious injustice was done the young man, as he was practically prevented from selecting alongside his father, where he could have obtained his father's advice. If the young man had applied for a selection on a neighbour's run, then he supposed the late Minister for Lands would have allowed him to select?

Mr. JORDAN: Certainly.

Mr. MURPHY said in that case the only objection was because the young man was selecting on the resumed part of his father's run?

Mr. JORDAN: Yes.

Mr. MURPHY said there was no difference between his selecting on the area resumed from his father's run, and selecting on the resumed

part of the neighbouring run, except that in the latter case he would quarrel with his neighbour, whilst he would not quarrel with his father? Did not such a regulation seem absurd? And not only was it absurd, but it was also unjust and opposed to the letter and spirit of the Act.

Mr. JORDAN said the hon. member who had just sat down stated that he (Mr. Jordan) had done what was illegal, but apparently forgot that he said the members of the board were divided in their opinion, and referred the matter to him as Minister. The question was one which would ordinarily have been decided by the board, and it was not until they disagreed that it was referred to the Minister. It happened that the senior member of the board, Mr. Deshon, was of opinion that it would not be in accordance with the spirit of the Act to allow a son to select on the resumed portion of his father's original run. He (Mr. Jordan) thought that Mr. Deshon was right, and that if any error was made it was made on the safe side. He had known Mr. Deshon for many years, and had great confidence in his judgment. He had not known Mr. Sword so long, but believed that he also was an able man, and that both of them were very conscientious. Apart from his own judgment, the opinion of the senior member of the board would have great weight with him, and in the particular matter referred to he agreed with Mr. Deshon that the son should not be allowed to select. He (Mr. Jordan) could scarcely think that the hon. member for Barcoo meant what he said when he stated that he (Mr. Jordan) broke the law. In support of that contention the hon. member stated that if the young man had selected on the adjoining run, which belonged to somebody else, about whom he knew nothing, he would have quarrelled with the runholder. That was a curious idea to lay down—that all persons who selected grazing farms would quarrel with the original lessees. He was happy to say that that was not the case; very large settlement had taken place on grazing farms, and he believed the original lessees were very friendly with the selectors.

Mr. PAUL said he knew the case which had been referred to very well, and he had advised the father of the selector to take the case to the Supreme Court. He was perfectly satisfied that if that had been done, the decision of the court would have been in favour of allowing the son to select, as there was nothing either in the spirit or letter of the law to prevent a son who was not actively engaged in the employ of his father taking up land on the resumed area of his father's run. The young man at the time was a bank clerk, and had nothing whatever to do with the station. He (Mr. Paul) saw no reason why such a person should not be allowed to select, especially when they permitted the sons and daughters of Victorian squatters to take up half of a run. If that was not wholesale dummying he did not know what was. In the case under discussion the applicant was a native of the colony and totally unconnected with his father, and yet he was debarred from selecting. He (Mr. Paul) never knew anything so monstrous in his life, especially when such wholesale dummying was allowed as took place at Saltern Creek, where a Victorian squatter took up 120,000 acres. He was glad that the Minister for Lands was of opinion that Mr. Palmer had done nothing underhanded, and he was convinced that that gentleman acted within his legal rights.

Mr. MURPHY said the ex-Minister for Lands did not quite understand what he meant when he said it might breed a quarrel between two neighbours, if the son of a squatter selected land on a neighbouring run. It would be entirely

different if a stranger did so; but the neighbour would naturally say, "Why don't you put your son on your own run?" The father of the young gentleman in question respected that feeling by wishing to put his son on his own run, and there was no doubt whatever that the hon. gentleman acted beyond the law, and, as the hon. member for Leichhardt had said, if it had been worth while to go to law the decision of the court must have been in favour of the selector. There was no regulation or decision that the Minister could make, or which the Land Board could make, which could override the law.

Mr. JORDAN said he supposed that, if a dividing commissioner, who, it was seen, was not prohibited by the Act from selecting a grazing farm on land he had himself divided, did apply for a grazing farm, and the Minister told him he could not take up the land as was now proposed to be determined by regulations, the Minister would be held to have violated the Act.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said he was very glad that the Government had not rushed to a conclusion in the matter of the two commissioners, Mr. Rule and Mr. Palmer. Some hon. members seemed to think, when the matter was previously under discussion, that those gentlemen ought to have been at once condemned. Having listened very carefully to the explanation of the Minister for Lands, he was certain that both those commissioners were justified in doing what they did—Mr. Rule without any possible doubt, and Mr. Palmer, he thought, was quite justified, both under the law, and considering that he consulted the members of the Land Board. Under the circumstances, whether what he did was expedient or not, he could not be held blameworthy. He did not see any reason why a dividing commissioner, having entirely ceased his relations with that part of the country, should not be as free as any other man. If he was still a dividing commissioner in that district there might be some objection, but having ceased his connection with that part of the country, he could see no moral or even fanciful objection to his doing what he did. As to the case of a son of a pastoral lessee not being allowed to take up a grazing farm that was a new matter to him. He confessed that he did not see why the son of a pastoral lessee should not take up a grazing selection.

Question put and passed.

SALE OF LAND.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that there be granted for the year 1889-90, a sum of £10,826 for the sale of land. The largest increase to the vote was £300 for commission on sales, and there was an increase in the vote for the preparation of deeds.

Mr. TOZER said he wished once again, and finally, to draw attention to the position in which the land commissioners would be placed by the way in which that vote was brought forward on the Civil Service list. Nobody would deny the fact that the land commissioner's office was a very responsible one, and one in which the very best and reliable men were placed. Upon the adjustment of the Civil Service list the land commissioners would be placed in the third class of the Civil Service. That, he hoped, the Minister would get over by placing the travelling expenses and forage allowances on the Estimates as part of the emoluments, as they really were. If that was done, the injustice to those particular gentlemen would be at once remedied. Having said so much, he would draw attention to the anomalous position of one of the very best land commissioners in the service. He referred to Mr. Board,

the commissioner at Gympie. He did not praise any man unless he knew him well, but in Mr. Board the country had one of the best, most reliable and straightforward land commissioners he had ever known. He found that that gentleman was actually getting less than the land agent at Toowoomba. The land agent at Toowoomba received £350, and the land commissioner at Gympie, who had the large district of Maryborough and Bundaberg also to attend to, received £325 a year. He did not say that the land agent at Toowoomba was overpaid, but there was this anomaly, that while Mr. Board was promoted from Toowoomba to Gympie, the person who was land agent at Toowoomba received more salary than the land commissioner.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Look at the schedule.

Mr. TOZER said he found another £100 on the schedule, but if it was studied it would be found that the land agent at Toowoomba drew more money than the land commissioner at Gympie, Bundaberg, and Maryborough. Take the land agent at Maryborough, who received exactly £300 a year. He would be classed in the same class as the land commissioner. Those were the anomalies he desired to bring under the Minister's attention, and he would not have done it in the case of the land commissioner at Gympie, had he not felt from his experience of that officer's work that he was really underpaid.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he could also bear testimony to the efficiency of Mr. Board as a land commissioner. He was one of the best they had in the colony, and he would be only too glad if a vacancy arose by which Mr. Board could get the promotion he undoubtedly deserved. That gentleman had had very heavy duties to perform recently, in consequence of the absence of Mr. Young from Rockhampton, and the Maryborough officer going to Rockhampton. Mr. Board had Gympie, Maryborough, Bundaberg, and Mount Perry to look after, and he had performed his work in so efficient a manner that he (Mr. Black) had had very grave doubts about the necessity for making any change when the officer, on leave of absence, returned. Mr. Board received £325, with an allowance of £100, and travelling expenses when he went beyond Gympie district. He should like, if possible, before the Civil Service Board was appointed, to have the principle affirmed of allowing a number of those votes passed as contingencies to be added to the salaries of the officers who received them, so that they might be put in a satisfactory condition; but it would be hazardous for any Minister to undertake to revise the salaries of the officers of his department, knowing that that would be one of the duties that would have to be undertaken by the Civil Service Board. He would like to do something for Mr. Board, and other land commissioners, whose remuneration was not proportionate to the importance of the duties they had to perform. Mr. Board was certainly entitled to special consideration.

Mr. SMYTH said he saw there was only one reduction in the list, and that was at Gympie. The former clerk got £150 a year, and the present clerk was to get only £120, and he would like to know the reason for the reduction. The Minister had himself acknowledged that Mr. Board had frequently to be away from Gympie, and the clerk in the office had consequently a great deal of responsibility thrown upon him. It was not wise to place a person in such a position unless they paid him well.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the reduction had been brought about in consequence of Mr. Cole, the previous clerk, being transferred

and another man, named Evans, being promoted to Gympie at a salary which was an increase upon that which he had previously received, and with which he was perfectly satisfied. It was not because the work was less efficiently performed or because Gympie was not as important as ever it was.

Mr. SMYTH said that was a very poor argument. He did not know the new clerk, or whether he was a single or a married man, but if they asked a clerk to undertake such important duties at a salary of £120, it was no wonder if things went crooked sometimes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that Evans previously had a salary of £100 a year, and was perfectly satisfied with his promotion at £120. He did not know that they were called upon to be extravagant when officers themselves were satisfied. Evans was a young man, and no doubt when he had done a little more probation, his salary would be increased to £150, the same as Mr. Cole received.

Mr. SMYTH said the argument did not stand good yet. If Cole got £150 a year, and Evans did the same work, he was entitled to the same salary. If they wanted good work done they should pay their servants well.

Mr. GANNON said he thought that was the proper time to raise his voice once more against the sale of reserves and little pieces of vacant land around Brisbane. He had brought the matter before the Minister for Lands some time ago, and as the House would probably be soon in recess he would like hon. members to express their opinion on the subject. He thought that any pieces of land within the city or suburbs ought to be reserved from sale if they were likely to be of any use to the public. Every small piece of land appeared now to be seized upon, and put up by auction. He did not blame the Minister for Lands for that so much as the officers of the department who brought those things before him. There was a small piece of land near the Normanby railway station and close to the Grammar School, and that was about to be put up for sale, the only reason given being that it was frequented by bad characters. That was a very poor reason, as they could, no doubt, easily find some means of keeping bad characters off it. He hoped hon. members would raise their voices against the sale of those lands as, unless they objected now, a great many of them might be put up during the recess and sold.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member had said he would "once more" raise his voice, but that was the first time he had heard the hon. member raise his voice with respect to that particular piece of land. It was close to the Normanby station, and was certainly not a credit to the people of Brisbane in its present condition. It was close to the Grammar School, and he had received information from the trustees of the school that it was the resort of bad characters, whose behaviour was extremely demoralising to the young men attending the school. He had ascertained that that piece of land had originally belonged to the Railway Department who, finding no use for it, had surrendered it to the Lands Department to put it to the most profitable use. That particular part of Brisbane was certainly the most favoured locality so far as reserves were concerned, as there was the Albert Park, the Government Domain, and the Victoria Park in its immediate vicinity. The land in question was an irregular triangular piece of land, and certainly contained some of the most valuable building sites to be found in Brisbane at the present time. He had not received a single remonstrance against the sale of that piece of land. In

regard to the sale of reserves generally, he was extremely cautious not to sell them where they would be of any use to the public. He had a deputation coming to him to-morrow, who wanted 100 acres reserved; and, in fact, it appeared to him that land might be sold anywhere, except in Brisbane and its immediate vicinity. He thought he had shown great fairness in that connection last year, and very few pieces of land had been sold in the vicinity of Brisbane. He thought the leader of the Opposition knew the piece of land near the Normanby station, and the causes which brought about the proposal for the sale of it.

Mr. GANNON said that the Minister for Lands had said that was the first time he (Mr. Gannon) had raised his voice about the proposed sale of that piece of land, but the hon. gentleman's memory must be very bad on the subject as he had spoken of it lately more than once. He once more said it was a great mistake to sell those pieces of land. If they went to Sydney and Melbourne they would see public reserves in every direction, and there was hardly a reserve around Brisbane except in the vicinity of the land now referred to. He repeated, it was a very great mistake to sell those pieces of land.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said the land referred to was a small block of two or three acres, which at present was a sort of "No man's land," and which ought to be put under some one's control? He hoped the land would not be sold. They had not very much Government land left in the city, and demands would be made in the future upon the Government for land for some public purpose or other. Then the hon. gentleman would be in a position to say that he could not give them any land, because he had none to give—unless he went and attacked some park. It would be wiser to keep any bits of land they had for future purposes.

Mr. STEVENSON: We may buy it back some day.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said the hon. member referred to some land near the railway station in Roma street, which, as he saw by the Estimates, it was proposed to buy back.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: It is actually bought.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said that was a matter for which he would be held responsible, although he had never heard anything about the sale, or knew that it was contemplated, until it had been actually sold. However, he must accept the responsibility. That was an important warning to the Government, and it was a strange thing that they were now proposing to do almost the same thing that they had previously condemned. He hoped they would not sell the land near the Grammar School. As a trustee of the Grammar School he knew the inconvenience caused through the land being a resort for bad characters, but he did not think that the remedy for that lay in selling the land. He could assure the hon. gentleman that in the course of a few years that land would be very useful. It would be found an admirable site for some educational institution, and he strongly advised the hon. gentleman to keep the land. If he sold it, he would make the same mistake that was made by the late Government in 1887.

Mr. SMITH said the hon. members for the city and the suburbs were quite right. It was not right to go in for the wholesale alienation of land. The city had been placed in an unfortunate position in having no large reserves, and he quite agreed with the hon. member for Toombul in protesting against the sale of land which certainly would be required as lungs for the city. But he rose

to particularly protest against the wholesale sale of land in the North which had taken place, and which he had no doubt would take place in the future. By a return placed before them it was shown that very large sales of land had taken place in the North. If such sales were to take place it was only fair that the North should have a proportionate share of the expenditure of the revenue derived from those sales. He trusted that some discretion would be used by the Government for the future in selling land in the North.

Mr. SAYERS said the hon. member for Wide Bay had drawn the attention of the Minister for Lands to the salary of the land commissioner at Gympie. The Minister for Lands agreed with the hon. member for Wide Bay that the gentleman in question was a most efficient officer. He was not going to deny that, but to refer to the tone of the Minister for Lands in answering the hon. member for Gympie with regard to the clerk at Gympie. If the previous clerk received a salary of £150 per annum, when Mr. Board was more confined to his own district than he was at present, the late clerk did not have the same amount of responsibility, or the same amount of work as the present clerk, seeing that now Mr. Board had to visit the neighbouring districts. That young man of twenty-three or twenty-four years of age, although his responsibility had been increased, had had his salary decreased.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: His salary has been increased.

Mr. SAYERS said that at any rate, although he had more work and more responsibility than his predecessor, he was receiving less salary. The land commissioner received £425, and when travelling outside the Gympie district, he received a travelling allowance of a guinea per day. That was not a starvation salary. The clerk, on the other hand, only received £120 per annum—£30 less than his predecessor. Even £150 was not a big salary; it was barely labourers' wages; and it was not surprising when such salaries were paid that robberies and embezzlements occurred. He would not have blamed the hon. gentleman, had the duties of that officer been decreased, for decreasing the salary; but seeing the duties had increased, it was not fair that a smaller salary should be paid now than formerly. It was all very well to say that the officer had received an increase, and that he was very glad to get £120. No doubt hundreds of others might be very glad to have the same salary; but there should be some justice in dealing with those matters. He would now take the case of the land commissioner at Townsville. He did not know what amount of work he had to perform, but it appeared from the Estimates that he occupied exactly the same position as the officers at Cardwell and Mackay. He received a salary of £250 per annum and £50 travelling allowance—making £300 a year. He supposed they were all upon the same level as far as ability was concerned, or they would not occupy the position of land commissioners. In one case there was more work added and the salary was reduced. In the case he was referring to, the officer received £300 altogether, and he thought his salary should be put more upon a level with those of other commissioners. It had been stated that the salary received by the land agent at Gympie would only place that officer in the third class under the Civil Service Act. The land commissioner at Townsville received £250 a year and an allowance of £50 for travelling expenses and forage. If they wanted to find any officer's total salary they had to look at the schedule, but he thought that officer's salary would only place him in the fourth class, while

the other land commissioners would belong to the third class. That seemed hardly fair; but perhaps the Minister for Lands would be able to explain the matter.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the land commissioner at Townsville was a very efficient officer. His salary was £300 a year, and he received a travelling allowance in addition. He should be very glad to be able to distribute £500 in addition to the salaries of several officers in that department, as he knew that some of them were very much underpaid. In the North especially they were underpaid; but the Treasury would not stand it, and they had to be very careful in regard to what increases were allowed. In regard to the young man at Gympie, he was a junior in Brisbane receiving £100 a year, and was anxious to go into the country. He was perfectly satisfied to receive £120 a year, but as soon as he had been longer in the service he would be entitled to promotion.

Mr. TOZER: Why not have sent a senior officer?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said a great many officers preferred stopping in Brisbane, and it was not so easy to get them to go away. There were certain advantages to be gained by living in Brisbane which had an attraction for most of them. There was no reduction in the case that had been referred to, but rather an increase so far as the individual was concerned, and he was perfectly satisfied.

Mr. SAYERS said he could hardly follow the explanation that had been given. It seemed that officers in the Civil Service were paid according to whether they were seniors or juniors, and not according to the work they did. He did not think a private firm would act in that manner. If a senior officer had been sent to Gympie he would have received £150 a year whether there was work for him to do or not. That was a very peculiar state of affairs. If a man held a certain rank, and was of a certain age, he would receive a high salary whether there was work for him to do or not. That was an absurd way of paying away the money belonging to the colony. Everywhere else it was the rule that men were paid according to the work they did, and he liked to see them paid according to the services rendered.

Mr. COWLEY said he would like to ask the Minister for Lands if it was his intention to withdraw all the Northern lands from sale until the Decentralisation Bill had been passed. It was well known from a return laid on the table of the House not long ago, that over £130,000 worth of land had been sold in the North last year, and it was also well known that the North would have no control over the money derived from those sales. There was a lot of land advertised for sale in Townsville that there was really no demand for, and selling that land would be only taking money away from the North. He also wished to know if it was the intention of the Government not to submit any more land to auction until the Decentralisation Bill was passed?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he did not know that the Government could suspend all action in regard to land revenue until that time had come, and they had no intention of doing so. He had withdrawn the land at Townsville from sale at the request of people interested, who said that there had been too much land sold, perhaps, last year; and he had done the same at Cairns, where heavy transactions had taken place year after year. But he certainly could not promise that any further land transactions should be deferred until the Decentralisation Bill

was passed. If the hon. member could assure him that that Bill would be passed in the immediate future, they might make some arrangement.

Mr. UNMACK said he hoped the Minister for Lands would not do what had been suggested by the hon. member for Herbert, so far as regarded any injustice done to the North. He thought the Government should stop all further land sales in the South. A vast amount of land had been sold in the South, and the proceeds had gone into the general revenue, and now that they proposed to tap the lands in the North, the hon. member for Herbert objected. If any more lands were sold in the South, the Southern portion of the colony should have the benefit of them. When they came to look at the Loan Estimates they would find that efforts were being made to recoup the North for what it had suffered in the way of large land sales, and that there would be a very small balance owing.

Mr. PALMER said the hon. member for Toowong forgot that the amount realised from land sales in the Southern part of the colony had been spent in the South, and the amount realised from Northern land sales also. The South had eaten its own cake, and now it wanted to eat that of the North as well.

Mr. UNMACK said the money realised from Southern land sales had gone into the general revenue, and a considerable portion of it had been spent in making the Northern lands more valuable. Such a contention as that—that the money realised from land sales in the South had been spent in the South—could not be made seriously. What was the reason of the present value of land in the North? Because the South had spent its revenue in improving it. To say that no more land should be sold in the North, because the Decentralisation Bill said the amount realised should be spent locally, was an act of injustice. There was not one man in a thousand in the South who would agree to it.

Mr. COWLEY said it was absurd on the part of the hon. member to talk in that way. There were few or no public buildings in the North, and the roads were mere improved bush tracks. There had been no public money spent there until the Divisional Boards Act came into force, and then they were only spending their own money, while for years before nearly the entire revenue of the colony available for the purpose had been spent on the roads and public buildings of the South. If the hon. member had the slightest acquaintance with the North he would not have made the speech he had just made, and he could only attribute what the hon. member had said to ignorance. The bulk of the general revenue had been spent in the South, and the North only wished to retain its lands so that the money might be equalised. Seeing that last year £130,000 came into the Treasury from land sales in the North, as against £28,000 in the South, he thought they were justified in asking that land sales in the North should be deferred until the Decentralisation Bill was decided one way or the other.

Mr. LITTLE said the North had been treated very roughly, and it always would be as long as it was associated with the South. They had sent their money to the South, and what did the South give in return? They had had to make their roads out of their own pockets; they had no bridges, no public buildings.

Mr. UNMACK: You are going to have a gaol at Townsville.

Mr. LITTLE said the hon. member for Toowong ought to be its first inmate for the way he had spoken about the North. Let that hon. member go to the North and see the state of

things for himself before coming there and talking of what he knew nothing whatever about. The South was robbing the North continually, and gave it no compensation at all. The North wanted the revenue it was entitled to, and for that purpose they must have separation. He would never accept the Decentralisation Bill. If anything was required for the South it was given at once, but if the North asked for a school, a bridge, or for anything else all they got was a promise, and afterwards when those who gave the promise were reminded of it their answer was that their memory was a blank.

Mr. SMYTH: You have two Ministers from the North.

Mr. LITTLE said the Ministers did not do much for the North. They could not, because the South looked too closely after them. The North was quietly put on one side, and it would never be satisfied until it got separation.

Mr. GROOM said he thought the Committee might as well get back to the Estimates, and he would like to put in a word for the land agent at Townsville, who, he thought, was very much underpaid considering the very responsible duties he had to perform. At the present moment there were in that land agent's district 135,000 acres of land in process of being made freehold. Looking at the enormous responsibility that rested upon that officer, and at the cost of living at Townsville as compared with the South, it must be admitted that a salary of £300 a year was quite inadequate. The mere fact that the land agent had to furnish the Government with correct reports upon the whole of that enormous area was sufficient to justify a much higher salary. When he (Mr. Groom) was at Townsville the land agent, in answer to questions, said his duties were somewhat heavy, and that there was a very fair business doing in land. Up to that time 136 agricultural farms, representing 25,780 acres of land, had been selected, but the most onerous and responsible portion of his duties was in connection with the 135,000 acres that were in process of being turned into freeholds. He did not think £300 a year was sufficient salary for an officer occupying such a responsible position in Townsville, the most important town in the Northern portion of the colony.

Mr. ISAMBERT said they had heard some very queer arguments from hon. members on the other side of the Committee. According to the time-honoured argument of the land-grabbers, land in the hands of the Crown was no good whatever until it was sold. The Minister for Lands wanted to improve the North by selling land there, and then hon. members complained about it. The amount put down last year for "Commission on sales at auction" was £200; and for the present year it was £500, so that the North was to be improved at double the rate it was last year. He thought the North was to be congratulated on that—that it was to be made so valuable by sales of land. When the Conservative Government were in power before they improved the North at a tremendous rate by selling thousands and thousands of acres of land, and when the stupid Liberals came in they put a stop to sales of land by auction. That took the shine out of the Liberals as to how to square the balance in the Treasury. That was how to deal with deficits. It required Conservative brains to do that—to do away with deficits and improve the country by sales of land. He would like to know if there was any chance of the water reserve taken away from the people by the Hon. James Taylor being got back by the Government? If the Hon. James Taylor had not so much public spirit to give back the land he obtained by a very ingenious

series of false representations he should be made to give it back. That land had been obtained by false representations, and it ought to be re-appropriated to the country. How was it that there were two or three roads through that land, and the divisional board had not been consulted on the subject, and yet when only a little bit of road had to be altered, or a new one opened, the matter had to go through the local authority? In that instance the local authorities were not supposed to exist at all. They had to fish and find out the matter for themselves, and then it was too late. The thing was smuggled through; advantage was taken of the fact that the Minister for Lands was new to office, and did not know all the details of the office. He did not attach any blame to that hon. gentleman, but having been deceived he should move all the machinery in existence to get that land back again for the people; and if that man who was falsely styled "honourable" in the Upper House, who was an officer of state, had not so much public spirit as to give that land up he should be made to give it up. If the state had no legal right to force it out of him, let them pay him for it. He had done wrongs enough by grabbing up land at a very low rate, and by influencing surveyors to run railways through his land; and when divisional boards came to rate his land he took good care to be chairman of the local board and keep the rates low. That was the public spirit of that subject, that individual, that land grabber.

Question put and passed.

BAILIFFS AND RANGERS OF CROWN LANDS.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that £4,960 be granted for salaries, incidental expenses and contingencies for bailiffs and rangers of Crown lands. There was a slight decrease on the amount voted last year.

Mr. PLUNKETT said he wished to call the attention of the Minister for Lands to the necessity of appointing an additional ranger in the Logan district. Some time ago there were two rangers there, but the services of one had been dispensed with. The district was large and densely populated. In the Albert district alone there were 1,200 square miles, all of which was selected with the exception of some scrubs, principally along the range, which were full of valuable timber. There was not a better or more energetic officer in the service than the present ranger, but it was utterly impossible for him to do all the work required. He had not only to supervise the work of the timber-getters, but to see that improvements were carried out on selections; and as he had to look after not only the Logan, but the Albert district as well, it was practically impossible for him to do all the work necessary.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS said there were three rangers in the whole of the district—two in East Moreton and one at Nerang. He would make inquiries, and if the work was more than the rangers employed could do, it would be to the interest of the department to put on another; because unless there were enough rangers to look after the interests of the department in connection with the timber industry, there would be a loss to the State.

Mr. STEVENS said he was glad to hear that the Minister for Lands was going to make inquiries into the matter, and he was sure it would be found that the Nerang ranger had too much to do. He had not only to look after the timber-getters, but also to inspect the selections taken up in the district, and it was physically impossible for a man to carry out his duties thoroughly when he felt that he had more work than he could perform. He

hoped that the Minister would see his way to appoint another ranger in the district, because it was impossible for one man to do the work properly, and that meant not only a loss to the State, but also to the timber-getters themselves.

Mr. GROOM said that in the district of Crow's Nest, for several years past, there had been a systematic evasion of the Land Act, more particularly in the direction of the timber regulations, which had been evaded in the most barefaced manner. He was glad to say, however, that the Crown lands ranger had done his duty effectively. Eight or nine convictions had taken place at one sitting of the court, severe penalties having been imposed by the magistrates in each case. He had been informed that an application had been made to the Minister for Lands to remit those penalties, and he should like to know whether such was the case?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS said the matter had been brought under his notice, and he had caused an inquiry to be instituted into the whole matter by an independent person, so that he could get at the real facts of the case. The matter was only brought under his notice a few days ago, and yesterday he gave instructions for an inquiry to be held. In the case of two of the men who were fined, the evidence appeared to have been such as not to warrant the penalty inflicted, and he had recommended that the fines in those two cases should be remitted. The timber had been cut under the regulations, the royalty had been paid, the timber had been removed from where it was cut, and left on what was represented to be a road; and those two men were fined for taking that timber to its ultimate destination. But what they had done was perfectly legal. In the other cases, however, he did not see his way clear to accede to the request made.

Mr. GROOM said he hoped the hon. gentleman would support the ranger in the effective discharge of his duty. In the case to which he had referred the ranger had done his duty, and the magistrates had discharged theirs. There were parties in that district who had been systematically evading the Land Act for years, and defrauding the Government in the matter of timber licenses, and he was glad to find that the present ranger was prepared to do his duty. He was glad that an independent inquiry was to be held, and he hoped the facts of the case would be ascertained. There were some men in the district with large areas of purchased land. They left that land, and denuded the Crown lands in the district of every bit of timber they could get hold of. There was a railway contractor in the district who got a permit to take whatever timber he wanted from timber reserves, and he had delegated that permit to other parties who had cut down timber in every direction. They had ten and twelve teams of bullocks drawing timber, and in order to accomplish their object they worked seven days a week.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he was sorry the hon. gentleman had brought the matter forward, because it had not yet been decided.

Mr. GROOM: It was decided by the magistrates.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that some people had doubts as to the decision given by the magistrates. When the case came before the magistrates there was a lawyer from Toowoomba to conduct the prosecution; but those men knew nothing about the matter till they were brought to the court from their work. When they found there was a lawyer against them they asked for an adjournment for a week, so that they might get some one to defend them. It

would have been no evasion of justice to have granted that adjournment; but it was refused. With regard to those exemplary magistrates, he was no lover of bush magistrates. Crow's Nest was only twenty-five miles from Toowoomba, and it would be a good thing for the police magistrate to go there once a month. He knew those magistrates. One of them was a brother-in-law of the hon. member, and he was none the worse for that; but those magistrates and those people knew one another when they lived in the same neighbourhood. A police magistrate who was paid by the Government for simply doing his duty was the proper person to send out to try cases of that importance, and he did not think they should be tried by the local justices. Bush magistrates had their likings and dislikings, their little prejudices and political feelings, and it was far better that such cases should be heard by a paid officer of the Government. It was undesirable that they should be tried by bush magistrates, who knew very little about law, and did not understand the badgering of an able lawyer. The request for an adjournment in order to prepare their defence for a week was a reasonable one, and in refusing that a little virulence was shown by the justices, and it was felt in the country that such was the case. The farmers in that district were constituents of his, and he had a right to speak on the matter as delicately as he could, and put the other side of the question before the Committee. There was more at the bottom of the matter than appeared on the surface, and he insisted that the adjournment should have been granted. If the men were guilty, let them be punished; but their mouths should not be stopped. What injury would have been done to the country if those men, hard-working men, had been allowed a week's adjournment? Was it not apparent on the face of it that there must have been some feeling against the men when that application was refused? Their employer was not allowed to speak in the court because he was not a professional lawyer. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) had spoken a thousand times against those little bush magistrates trying local cases, not in that particular spot only, but all over the colony. Farmers and timber-getters, and other persons, were better satisfied with having a case tried by a paid Government officer than by local magistrates. Whatever decision a police magistrate gave they did not grumble at it, because they considered him an impartial man, and knew that he was subject to his superiors.

Mr. GROOM said he quite agreed with everything the hon. member had said, and might say that applications had been made by the magistrate at Crow's Nest that the police magistrate at Toowoomba should go to Crow's Nest. They would only be too glad to see him there. If he did visit the place, the local justices would not take any part in the hearing of local cases, as they felt a difficulty in doing so for the very reason stated by the hon. member for Stanley. There was something peculiar about that case, as the hon. member had said. To the surprise of everyone, one of the magistrates who resides at Toowoomba, who had never before been seen on the bench at Crow's Nest, went on that occasion and adjudicated on the case. His regular duty did not take him there, and the public could not understand why he was present, so that there was something at the bottom of the case more than appeared on the surface. With regard to the adjournment, he knew nothing about that. It was really the employer who committed the offence, but the men had to appear because they were the persons who were violating the Act. He (Mr. Groom) spoke with a certain amount of reserve on the matter, but

having been placed in possession of certain information, and having been informed that application had been made to the Government to set aside the decision of the magistrates and override the action of the Crown lands ranger, he was justified in putting the question he had to the Minister for Lands. The hon. gentleman had given a straightforward answer, and until he heard what the hon. gentleman was going to do he would not take any further action in the matter. The whole circumstances of the case were most extraordinary, and had attracted a large amount of public attention. The appearance of a Toowoomba magistrate on the bench had excited a good deal of attention, and people naturally asked what was the reason of it. The Crown lands ranger was, he understood, obliged, in self-defence, to employ a lawyer, and he believed that the magistrates had arrived at an honest decision on the evidence produced before them.

Mr. BARLOW said if the facts were as stated by the hon. member for Stanley, that a man was summoned and was not allowed to open his mouth because there was a professional man against him, the matter ought certainly to be looked into by the Government. He never heard of such a thing as a man being summoned and not allowed to open his mouth because he had a lawyer against him.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the hon. member was right in a sense, but made a mistake in one point. The employer was not summoned. It was his men who were summoned, and they were actually fined £1 each, but the money would in the long run come out of the pocket of the employer.

Mr. GROOM: The men were fined £5 each.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the employer applied for an adjournment for a week, in order to get the men legal assistance in their defence, but his mouth was shut. There were two sides to the question, and it ought really to be investigated.

Question put and passed.

SURVEY OF ROADS.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS, in moving that there be granted a sum not exceeding £1,875 for salaries and contingencies in connection with the survey of roads, said the vote was the same as last year, except that there was an increase of £25 to each of the two draftsmen, who, as many hon. members knew, were very deserving officers.

Mr. TOZER said he must say he always got the most studious politeness from Captain Whish, and intense sympathy, but he got nothing more. He blamed the system entirely, and some reform should be introduced into the department. He would refer to one case, where great delay had occurred. A man named Harvey had a selection within about 400 yards of a railway station, called Harvey's Siding. He had been in the habit of carrying his timber to that siding through a piece of land which was sold for a very small sum. The present owner had told him he could not use the road any more. Now, the railway was benefited considerably by the amount of timber brought to that siding, and that man asked under the law to have a road opened. It would not do the selection one bit of harm. Everything had been done to carry the matter through, but still it never went through. A surveyor was sent to the spot; the Under Secretary for Lands went to see it himself, and he gave certain directions that Mr. Board was to examine and report. Mr. Board examined, and reported that no harm could be done to the selection. Down came the report, and there it ended. He could assure the Minister for Lands that every time he went to Gympie he was met by Mr. Harvey who made inquiries about the

matter. He (Mr. Tozer) had worn out a pair of boots in endeavouring to ascertain what was being done, and Harvey believed that he was not doing him justice, because he was against him at the late election. At the same time he must say that he knew the man ought to get to the railway siding. He had told him so, but he did not believe him. Therefore he (Mr. Tozer) asked the Minister for Lands to intervene. He believed the Roads Department was undermanned, and that the system wanted reforming. The public did not want to wait nine or ten months until the red-tape of the department enabled them to get across 400 yards to a railway station. He had promised to mention the matter, and he had fulfilled his promise, and now asked the Minister for Lands if he would see that there was no more delay.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he would inquire into the matter, but he would not admit that there was any blame attachable to the officers of the department. No branch of the department required greater conciliation on the part of the officers. They came into contact with divisional boards, selectors, free selectors, conditional selectors, and others, and Captain Whish himself inspected any locality that was within reach of Brisbane. A great deal of tact had to be brought to bear, to smooth difficulties thrown in the way by holders of land. A man who had a piece of freehold land, and who found out that someone wanted to run a road through it, generally resisted to the bitter end, and the Roads Department had to adopt conciliatory measures to bring people together. Those transactions could not always be hurried on, because when everything appeared to be settled, the divisional board often stepped in and objected to the road going in a certain direction. He would have inquiries made into that particular case. He had not heard about it before, and could not offer any opinion as to its merits.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he had not the slightest fault to find with the officer in charge of the department. He believed he was a good and honest man, but the fault was that whenever a dispute occurred it was necessary to send an officer to examine and report. Captain Whish did that, and very often went through a great deal of hardship. He sent in his report; it was put on the table and no more was heard about it. It was never taken any notice of. He agreed with the hon. member for Wide Bay that some reform was necessary.

Mr. TOZER said he wished it to be distinctly understood that he made no complaint against the officer in charge of the branch; but he pointed out that partly on account of the system, partly on account of the law, and partly on account of defects in the Land Act, delay arose. All those things combined should give an impetus to the Minister to try and see if matters could not be rectified.

Question put and passed.

PASTORAL OCCUPATION.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that there be granted a sum not exceeding £7,381 for pastoral occupation.

Question put and passed.

SURVEY OF LAND.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that there be granted a sum not exceeding £43,529 for the survey of land. The chief increase was in the vote of fees to licensed surveyors, which was increased from £15,000 to £20,000. The actual amount spent last year was no less than £30,000, but as they had a large area of land now surveyed, and as it was proposed after

certain roads were defined, to allow selection before survey in future, in certain areas, he thought the sum put down on the Estimates would prove sufficient.

Mr. BARLOW said that, with regard to the 320-acre blocks provided for in the amended Land Act, he hoped the Minister would inform the Committee as to whether it was the intention of the department to survey roads around them, or whether they were to be contiguous? It was very important to provide sufficient means of access to them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that though no instructions had yet been given in the matter, he was of opinion that roads should be surveyed around the whole of them. A 320-acre block was a mile one way and half a mile the other way, and he thought a road would be required all round them, unless the natural features of the country rendered that impracticable.

Mr. SAYERS said he would like the Minister to give some explanation of the increase of five draftsmen at £275? The vote was £825 last year for three, and it was £2,200 for the present year for eight.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the number of draftsmen remained the same; but several had been promoted from one class to another. There was only one additional hand in the whole department.

Mr. MORGAN said he would like a little information upon three items dealing with the same subject. There was an item, "lithographic printers, £400;" another, "stone grinders and labourers, lithographic branch, £300;" and, under contingencies, there was an allowance of £150 for "incidental expenses, lithographic printing;" making a total of £850. Was that department separate from the Lithographic Department near the Government Printing Office?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it was quite independent of the Printing Office. It was a special department, in which all the mapping and lithographs of lands open for selection were executed.

Mr. UNMACK: Could not that be done at the Lithographic Office?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it was a special department of the Lands Office, under the control of the Surveyor-General.

Mr. MORGAN said the Committee were then to understand that there were two Lithographic Departments in connection with the Public Service. Was the office near the Government Printing Office referred to in the vote, or was it an independent office, with independent machinery?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he could only say that there was only one Lithographic Office connected with the Lands Department. He believed the Government Printing Office had a lithographic office of their own, but the one referred to in the vote was under the Surveyor-General, and where all the maps of the colony were printed.

Mr. MORGAN said that in that case he presumed the lithographic branch of the Lands Department had machinery of its own.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Certainly.

Mr. MORGAN said they had again a Lithographic Department near the Government Printing Office, entirely independent of the Printing Office and the Government Printer. So that there were really three State Printing Offices having different plants and under separate control. He would like to know what was to prevent the amalgamation of the two lithographic branches? Why should they have two

independent heads and two independent plants for lithographic work? What was to prevent the Lands Department or any department sending their work to one office to be executed there? Where was the necessity for two lithographic branches with independent control, necessitating expensive officers to exercise an oversight over the working of them? He had no doubt that the machinery in the Lithographic Department near the Government Printing Office, and in connection with the Stamp Office, was quite equal to all the work required by the Government. They were told, and it was news to him, that they had an independent lithographic branch in connection with the Lands Department, in which only the Lands Office work was done.

Mr. WIMBLE said that perhaps he could throw some light upon the question. A similar practice was carried out by the Governments of the other colonies, and every Lands Department had a separate lithographic branch. In Victoria, New South Wales, and in South Australia that had been found advisable, and he understood it was found more profitable and cheaper to follow that system than to have the work executed at the official Government Printing Office. He could say of his own knowledge that there was a large amount of work turned out of the lithographic department of the Lands Office here. The Lands Office was a growing department, and every year more maps were required in connection with it, and it was very necessary that the lithographic branch should be situated in such a way that it might be brought under the local supervision of the authorities of the Lands Department.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he found upon inquiry that, when the Land Act of 1884 came into force, it was considered advisable to have a separate lithographic branch connected with the Survey Office. Previous to that the work was done by the Government Printing Office. The lithographic work in connection with maps had to be extremely accurate, and under the constant supervision of the head of the Survey Department. The machinery consisted of a single gas engine, which was set going when it was necessary to do any printing, and the usual presses. He could say that the work done in the department had been accorded the praise of everyone who had seen it, and it had been referred to by officers of the department in New South Wales, who had actually made inquiries as to how it was that the Queensland Mapping Department was able to turn out maps so much superior to those turned out in the other colonies.

Mr. MORGAN said he was quite sure that the Minister believed the existing state of things was the right one, but for himself he must confess that he held an entirely different opinion. The hon. member for Cairns had told the Committee that such a practice prevailed in the southern colonies, and he believed that that was the reason why it prevailed here. It was started in one of the southern colonies, another followed suit, and Queensland, seeing the precedent down south, it was followed here. As to the necessity for having great accuracy in that matter, they could secure that accuracy if the whole lithographic work was executed by one department just as well as by having two separate departments. Map printing was first executed by the lithographic artist. Then when the map had been inspected and corrected, it was put on the stone, although the corrections could also be made even after it was put on the stone. Proofs could be sent to the Survey Office, and corrected before the maps were printed. There was not the least reason for having two

independent Lithographic Departments in addition to a State Printing Office—making three in all. The Minister for Lands said they had only a gas engine there; but they must also have lithographic printing machinery, and that machinery was very expensive. They had also a gas engine and lithographic machinery at the Lithographic Office near the Government Printing Office, but which had no connection with the Government Printing Office. The whole of their printing ought to be under one head, but instead of that there were three. The Lithographic Office, near the Government Printing Office, could do all the lithographing of the colony, and they could thus do away with the gas engine and machinery at the Lands Department. They could do without one gas engine, and without one set of machinery, and in that way save hundreds of pounds. If any addition were necessary, they would only require another press. The three printing departments, which were at present under the control of three independent and highly paid officials, should be placed under the command of one man. No sufficient reason had been shown why they should have three officers and three departments. He had not known previously that in Brisbane they had two separate lithographic departments. It was a most unsatisfactory state of affairs, and involved the country in an unnecessary expenditure. If a change was not made he should certainly, when the Estimates came on next year, oppose one of the votes for the lithographic departments. The Minister for Lands believed it was all right, but it was all wrong.

Mr. UNMACK said there were some items which he thought excessive. There was an annual allowance of £200 to each of eight surveyors, in lieu of horses, forage, equipment, instruments, etc. Now whatever was purchased out of those allowances became the property of the surveyors. They did not require to buy horses and instruments every year, and he could not see why the same amount should be constantly put down at £200 per annum. The Government would show greater economy if they supplied all instruments, and required an account to be rendered to them of the actual travelling expenses. Then it appeared to be the custom of the department to grant to each of those surveyors pay for one chainman and one surveyor's labourer. Whether they were in camp or not, they got that as a permanent allowance. It was sufficient if the Government paid for the services of chainmen and labourers while the surveyors were in camp. He did not see why they should receive that allowance all the year round. As regarded the finding of horses and instruments, he certainly saw no reason why the Government should not find them, and let them remain Government property, to be duly accounted for by the surveyors.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that instruments should have been omitted from the item. The allowance was practically a travelling allowance, as the surveyors were frequently called upon to move from one part of the colony to another, and that was an allowance to defray the travelling expenses of themselves and their parties and equipments. He did not think it would be judicious for the Government to undertake the purchase of horses and lend them to surveyors. It was better to put down a certain sum. That principle had prevailed for years, and he did not consider the amount asked for was excessive. There might be cases where a surveyor might not expend the whole of the £200, but there were a number of other cases in which the travelling expenses were not covered by that sum.

Mr. SAYERS said the hon. gentleman had not explained about the surveyor's chainman and labourer. He did not see why surveyors should draw the wages for a chainman and a labourer when they were not at work. They must put the money in their own pockets, as none of them remained in camp all the year round. He could not see where the great expense in moving about came in.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that was a general vote, and was not drawn unless it was actually required. They had a number of staff surveyors, who received a fixed annual salary, and that amount for chainmen and labourers was to pay the expenses that might be necessary for them to check surveys, and to make special surveys which were intrusted to them. If it was not required it was not spent.

Mr. UNMACK said the Minister for Lands had scarcely answered the question in the way it had been put. He believed those eight surveyors received that money whether they were in camp or not. They received pay all the year through for one surveyor's labourer and one chainman. He wanted to know whether that was correct. At all events there was a vote set down for eight chainmen.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said they were not necessarily permanently employed. The vote was the same as last year. The total vote last year had amounted to £3,040, made up of £2,240 for surveyor's labourers, and £800 for chainmen. Of that only £2,680 5s. 2d. had been spent. Sometimes a staff surveyor had five or six labourers, but when he finished his work he reduced the number. At the same time he probably kept one man to look after his horses and equipment until he moved somewhere else, when he re-engaged the necessary labour. Hon. gentlemen would see that of the vote for last year £359 14s. 10d. had not been spent.

Mr. UNMACK said that was not an answer to his question. He wished to know whether those eight surveyors each received £200 per annum through the whole year to pay one chainman and one surveyor's labourer?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said they did if they required it, but not otherwise. And they were not necessarily confined to one chainman and one labourer; they might have more, or they might have none at all.

Mr. UNMACK said if they had none at all, did they draw the pay? That was what he wanted to know.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Most certainly not.

Mr. GLASSEY said in reference to the survey of roads through those 320-acre selections that the hon. member for Ipswich had spoken of, he would ask whether special instructions would be given to the surveyors, that in all places where there was water, that water should be conserved for all the persons who were likely to take up land in the neighbourhood, and not be allowed to go to any one particular person to the detriment of the rest? He asked the question because complaints had been made in some parts of the country that the waterholes were being monopolised.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it was quite certain that ample reserves for water would be permanently made before any land was offered by auction, and wherever roads were necessary they would be made, if possible. If necessary, reserves would be made for roads right through any of them.

Mr. GLASSEY said, when the vote was under consideration last year, he called the attention of the Minister for Lands to the very small

salaries given to surveyors' labourers. There were thirty-two labourers down on the Estimates, and the same amount was down for them as last year, £2,240. If the hon. gentleman made the calculation he would see that those men received very small amounts, which were quite insufficient if they had families to keep, and he hoped their salaries would be increased. They had often heard reasonable or feasible excuses given for increasing the salaries of various officers who were already very well paid from his point of view, and he thought hon. members would agree with him that the salaries of the men he had referred to should be increased. He hoped the hon. gentleman would consider the subject during the recess, and he was sure if he did he would come to the same conclusion that he had.

Mr. MELLOR said he wished to know if the new map of Queensland was being engraved in the colony, or outside of it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he was pleased to be able to say that the work was being done within the colony, and within their own Lithographic Office. It would be a magnificent map when completed.

Question put and passed.

TRIGONOMETRICAL SURVEY.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that £2,500 be granted for the trigonometrical survey of the colony, and said that the amount asked for was the same as last year.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that £3,175 be granted for the Department of Agriculture, salaries and contingencies. He said there was a considerable increase in the vote over the amount asked for last year; but hon. members would see that was chiefly owing to the introduction of the travelling dairy, which they knew all about.

Mr. STEVENS said he wished to know if there was any truth in a statement which had appeared in the public Press that lessons were to be given under the auspices of the Government in regard to the curing of hams and bacon? The introduction of the travelling dairy had proved so very successful that if it were followed up by teaching the curing of hams and bacon it would be a step in the right direction.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the Government had not lost sight of that important matter, and the professor of agriculture who was coming from America was, according to the references that had been sent respecting his abilities, specially adapted for giving instruction and taking charge of that department. Of course it was very little use attempting anything of that sort during the summer months, and as the professor would probably arrive early next year, there would be ample time to take steps to carry into effect what he had promised as to giving instructions to the dairy farmers of the colony in ham and bacon curing.

Mr. UNMACK said he must express his satisfaction with the steps taken by the department in introducing the travelling dairy. The Under Secretary of the department seemed to have his heart and soul in the business, and took a most active and lively interest in the work, and it was only right that a word of encouragement should be given on an occasion like the present. He had really great pleasure in voting for the amount asked for, and he trusted the Minister for Lands would not stop short in the efforts he was making, as they were of the utmost value to the colony.

Mr. TOZER said he hoped the Under Secretary would remember that Queensland was a large place, and not confine his operations to the country around Brisbane. He trusted the department would keep its eyes open to what was being done in the other colonies. Within the last week he had read a report of a conference held in Victoria of all persons engaged in agriculture, and particularly in connection with fruit-growing. Although the proceedings at that conference were most valuable, he had not seen any reference made to it in any journal in Queensland. Information of that kind ought to be collected and disseminated by the department. He quite concurred with what had been said about the operations of the department, and hoped they would be continued.

Mr. GROOM said that while concurring heartily in what the department had done, he hoped it would go a step further. Only two days ago he noticed a telegram in the Sydney papers stating that 500 cases of American apples were refused to be landed at Dunedin because, on investigation by an officer of the Agricultural Department, it was found that the apples in some of the cases were more or less affected by the codlin moth. They were ordered to be sent on to Sydney, and as alarm would no doubt be taken there, it was quite possible they might be sent on to Queensland. He understood that Mr. Tryon, who was devoting a very considerable amount of attention to the matter, went a few days ago to a fruit shop in Brisbane and purchased half-a-dozen American apples; and on examining them carefully with a microscope he discovered that they had already been attacked by the codlin moth. Mr. Tryon was under the impression that the insect had not long left its feeding ground and was most likely in the cases in which the fruit was brought to Brisbane. If once the insect got into the orchards of the colony it would mean ruin and destruction to hundreds of persons engaged in fruit culture, and who were at present increasing their orchard areas. It would be very advisable that the department should keep a vigilant eye on the importation of American apples, so as to ascertain that they were thoroughly sound before they were allowed to be landed. The subject was one of considerable importance, and he trusted the necessary authority would be given to the Under Secretary to deal with it with all the energy at his command. Every effort should be made to keep that terrible pest out of the colony—if it was not in it already.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the matter had already been brought under his notice by the Under Secretary, who showed him three American apples which appeared to be infected by the codlin moth. The insect was not in them, but he could see where it had been. The department would take proper steps to keep the insect out of the colony. They had quite enough insect pests of their own in the colony without importing any additional ones from abroad. He was glad to hear that the initiation of the Agricultural Department had given satisfaction to hon. members. From very small beginnings, instituted by his predecessor, who took as much interest in it as he (the Minister for Lands) did, it had advanced stage by stage, and it might be safely said that the money had been well spent; and he was satisfied that in the course of a few years the vote would assume very much larger proportions than it did at present. But even then, if it were the means of educating their people in the proper way of utilising the resources of the colony, it would be money well spent. Hon. members, deeply interested as they were in the question, had very little idea of the magnitude of the operations already being per-

formed by the department—of the trouble taken to collect statistics, to introduce new seeds and plants of an economic value, and the immense amount of correspondence and postage going on in distributing those seeds and plants to all parts of the colony. In fact, the area available for the work of the department was so small that the Government were about to fit up the whole of the old immigration barracks for it, with the view of giving greater scope to the exhibition of the various products that were already in the department. It would also allow the public greater access, and enable them to become more familiar with what was being done in the department.

Mr. MURPHY said if it was necessary to keep out apples from California or other parts of America, it would also be necessary to keep out those coming from Victoria and Tasmania, because they were just as badly diseased with the codlin moth as the American apples, if not a great deal worse. Very few apples came here direct from America, and there was a chance of the insect dying during the voyage, but when they were brought here from Victoria and Tasmania the insect was alive and well, and ready to commence business in Queensland. In all the private gardens and the market gardens in Victoria and Tasmania the apples were diseased, and for years past had been a complete failure through the codlin moth. Therefore, they were more likely to get the disease from those colonies than from America, so that it would be necessary to keep apples out altogether if they wanted to keep out the codlin moth.

Mr. COWLEY said it was generally admitted that the travelling dairy was doing splendid work, but there was another industry to which he wished to direct attention—that was, the preservation of their fruits. He believed that that industry would become a very successful one if proper attention was given to it. It was well known that in Victoria they were educating the people how to preserve fruits. The fruits of this colony were just as valuable as those of the other colonies, and if our farmers could be taught how to dry and preserve them by evaporators or some other means, the importation of fruit would soon cease, and it would become a large export. The present means of transit would not allow ripe fruit to be taken to market. As a rule the lands on large mining centres were not suitable for fruit-growing, and there was a great scarcity of fruit in those places, so that if fruit could be dried and preserved, there would be a large sale for it. He, therefore, felt sure that if an evaporator could be sent round in charge of experienced men, the same as was being done with the travelling dairy, the people would be educated, and would so see the advantages to be derived from the preservation of fruit, that they would eventually club together and buy evaporators for themselves. He thought the matter was one well worthy of the attention of the Minister for Lands.

Mr. PALMER said the board appointed last year to investigate respecting the virus for pleuro-pneumonia had recommended the appointment of a thoroughly competent scientific investigator, who would deal with all diseases connected with agriculture, as well as animal diseases, and diseases affecting human life. The field for investigations of that kind was very large in Queensland. He had intended to call the attention of the Government to the matter specially, but as the question had arisen, he thought it advisable to point out that the scientific investigator appointed should be a thoroughly trained man, one who was capable of instructing classes, so that those whom he left behind him

would be competent to carry on the work. They found that most agricultural products were subject to disease. Wheat was afflicted by rust, the vine by phylloxera, and now they heard that the apples of the colonies were already contaminated by the codlin moth. The work of the pleuro-pneumonia board had resulted in great discoveries with regard to that disease, and he was certain that if a thoroughly competent scientific man was appointed to investigate all matters of that kind, the money would be well laid out. The Agricultural Department being a new one, the services of that officer would be available for that work also; and he thought the Minister might therefore take cognizance of the recommendation of the pleuro board, that such an officer should be appointed. It would be of great benefit, not only to the pastoral industry but also to the agricultural, and in connection with human diseases, such as typhoid, diphtheria, and others which were to be found in all the large centres of population. With regard to the travelling dairy, he could say from personal observation that it was a great advantage to people in the rural districts of the colony, but to give full effect to its good results some concession should be made with regard to the duty that had to be paid on the importation of the machinery required to carry out the operations. Refrigerating machinery was allowed to be introduced duty free, and he did not see why dairying separators should not also be allowed to come in free. Farmers were not men troubled with much surplus cash, and they could not afford to pay the present high duty on those machines, which were so necessary to enable them to carry on dairy farming with success.

Mr. SMITH said the Agricultural Department was one in which they all took great interest, and so far the result of its operations had been eminently satisfactory. With regard to the preservation of fruit, he wished to say that there was a fruit which grew profusely in the North, and tons of which went to loss every year because there were no means of preserving it. The fruit to which he alluded was the mango. It made excellent chutney, and he thought it would be well for the Department of Agriculture to endeavour to obtain such information as would lead to the preserving of that fruit in the colony.

Mr. MURRAY said he wished to know when the travelling dairy would be expected at Rockhampton?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he could not state positively, but it should be sent there as soon as possible.

Mr. MELLOR said he wished to know when it was likely that the travelling dairy would go to Gympie, and other parts of the Wide Bay district?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it would probably go there next winter.

Mr. SMYTH said there were some very good farms in the district, and very good butter was produced there. If the travelling dairy went to the district, Mr. Jones would be able to show the farmers how to make good cheese; but they wanted the dairy when there was some grass, so that they could supply enough milk to give the dairy a fair test. It would not be of any use to send it there in the winter, when there was no grass.

Question put and passed.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. The business to-morrow will be the Federal Council Referring Bill, the Diseases in Sheep Act Amendment Bill, the consideration of the Council's amendments on the Crown Lands Acts 1884 to 1886 Amendment Bill, and the District Courts Act Amendment Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at six minutes past 11 o'clock.