

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 1890

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 19 November, 1890.

Petitions—Licensing Act Amendment Bill—grants to schools of art.—Question.—Question Without Notice.—Census Bill—third reading.—Valuation and Rating Bill—Legislative Council's amendments—committee.—Supply—resumption of committee.—Adjournment.

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

PETITIONS.

LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. BARLOW presented a petition from the office-bearers of the Women's Christian Temperance Union against the Licensing Act Amendment Bill now before the House; and moved that it be read.

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

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

GRANTS TO SCHOOLS OF ART.

Mr. GRIMES presented a petition from the School of Arts at Rocklea against the reduction of the endowment to schools of art; and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

QUESTION.

Mr. GLASSEY asked the Attorney-General—
1. Is it in accordance with constitutional practice for a minister of religion to be appointed to, and continue to be a member of, the Legislative Council of Queensland?

2. Is he aware that the Honourable Frederick Thomas Brentnall, who was appointed a member of the Legislative Council of Queensland on the 17th day of April, 1886, was in receipt of pay and officiating as a minister of the Wesleyan Church up to and after the date of his appointment?

3. Were any inquiries made and assurance given that the said Honourable Frederick Thomas Brentnall was not in receipt of pay and officiating as a minister of religion at the time of his appointment to the Legislative Council of Queensland?

4. If any such inquiries were made and assurance given, will he kindly state the nature and result of such inquiries?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) replied—

1. Ministers of religion are not disqualified by law from sitting in the Legislative Council; but there is no instance, so far as I am aware, of the intentional appointment of a minister of religion to the Legislative Council of Queensland.

2. I have seen in the Press a report purporting to be a report of the examination of the hon. gentleman referred to, in which he is reported to have said on the 25th September last that he was for some time after 1883 in receipt of a supernumerary's allowance as a minister of the Wesleyan Church, and that he received the last instalment of it in July, 1888, and was still entitled to draw the allowance. I have no further information on the subject mentioned except that stated in answer to questions 3 and 4.

3 and 4. Before recommending Mr. Brentnall's appointment, I made inquiries from him as to his connection with the ministry of the Wesleyan Church, and I was assured by him that his connection with that ministry had absolutely and entirely ceased.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

Mr. SMITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to ask the Chief Secretary, without notice—Whether the Government have considered the advisability of sending some medical gentleman to Europe to investigate Dr. Koch's cure for consumption?

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—I can hardly say that the Government have formally considered the matter. It was incidentally mentioned at the meeting of the Cabinet this morning, but the Government can see no reason for despatching from Queensland a medical man for that purpose. The discovery will no doubt be made public to the world without any such intervention.

CENSUS BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. Tozer), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

VALUATION AND RATING BILL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the Order of the Day for the consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's amendments in this Bill being read,

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that you do now leave the chair.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

On clause 8—"Notices may be printed or written"—

The PREMIER said the first amendment made by the Legislative Council in the Bill was in clause 8, which provided that any notice under the Act should be in writing or printed, and be signed by, or bear the printed signature of, the chairman or clerk of the local authority. The Legislative Council proposed to amend the clause so as to make it read every notice "by or on behalf of the local authority" should be signed, etc. Of course the clause meant that. There was no objection to the amendment, and he moved that it be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 11—"What shall be ratable land"—

The PREMIER said the Legislative Council had amended that clause, which provided that one of the exemptions from rating should be land vested in trustees for any agricultural or pastoral society for the purposes of a show ground. To that the Council had added the words "or race-course"; that was to say that land vested in trustees for any agricultural or pastoral society for the purposes of a racecourse should be exempt. He did not know whether there was any racecourse held by such trustees or not. He moved that the amendment be disagreed to as a matter of principle, because it was an attempt on the part of the Legislative Council to make exemptions

from taxation which that House had imposed. He proposed to give the reasons for disagreeing with the amendment when moving that the amendments in clause 13 be disagreed to, as that would be the more convenient course to adopt.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he believed there was a racecourse in Brisbane in the possession of an agricultural society.

The PREMIER: Where?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: At the Exhibition grounds. Races are held there continually.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Foot races.

Mr. DONALDSON said horse racing was held there also. It was not long since the grounds were lighted up with electric light to enable people to see the races.

Question—That the Legislative Council's amendment be disagreed to—put and passed.

On clause 12—"Valuation of ratable land"—

The PREMIER said the Legislative Council's amendment in that clause was merely verbal, and he moved that it be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 13—"Mode of making valuation"—

The PREMIER said he moved that the Legislative Council's amendment in that clause be disagreed to. The Council by their amendment had altered the whole basis of the Bill, and substituted another scheme of taxation for that adopted by that House. Of course no one disputed the right, or rather the power, of the Legislative Council to throw out any Bill sent up to them, but the Assembly had always maintained that the Council had no right to alter certain Bills, or certain portions of Bills. They had no right to alter an Appropriation Bill, and no right to alter a taxation Bill. That principle had been uniformly established and maintained by the Assembly, and had never, so far as he knew, been yielded. Without going back a very long time, he might mention two or three instances. In 1876 a Navigation Bill was passed by that House. The Legislative Council made amendments in it which in some manner affected or altered the taxation or the revenue of the country; he had forgotten the exact circumstances. The amendments were excellent in themselves, but, acting on the principle always laid down and followed, the Assembly could not accept them, coming from the Legislative Council. In accordance with the practice of the Imperial Parliament in such cases, the Bill was laid aside; and a new Bill was introduced, in which were embodied the good proposals made by the Council; that Bill was sent up to them and accepted. That was an instance where the amendments of the Legislative Council were good in themselves and acceptable to the Assembly, yet the Assembly could not accept them as amendments of the Legislative Council. In 1879 the first Divisional Boards Bill was passed by the Assembly, and the Legislative Council proposed to amend it by altering the basis of taxation, as they had done in the present instance. Strangely enough, on that occasion they proposed to adopt the system of rating which they now disagreed to—that was, to adopt the unimproved value of land as the proper basis of rating.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: They are wiser now.

The PREMIER said that when that Bill came back to the Assembly the then Premier, the present Colonial Treasurer, moved that the amendment be disagreed to, and pointed out the principles which had been adopted by the House of Commons

in England, which had always been followed in this colony. In the argument he used in the first instance, however, the hon. gentleman referred to the general question of taxation for Imperial purposes, and did not advert to the question of taxation for local purposes. He (the Premier) followed him, and, while maintaining the general principle, said he was not satisfied that the argument applied to local taxation. The hon. gentleman then spoke again, and pointed out plainly that the same principle applied to local taxation, and quoted cases in proof of it. He (the Premier) had admitted that that was so, and that it was quite clear the amendment could not be accepted. He therefore supported the position the then leader of the Government had taken up. The Bill went back to the Legislative Council, and in the first instance they insisted upon their amendment. When it was returned the Assembly insisted upon their disagreement for the same reason—namely, that the amendment was a distinct interference with the undoubted privileges of the Legislative Assembly. That was on the 22nd September, 1879. The next instance where a question of the kind arose was in 1885, when the Legislative Council attempted to amend an Appropriation Bill. Hon. members who were in the House at the time, and indeed all other hon. members, he presumed, would be aware of what followed. An attempt to amend an Appropriation Bill was so entirely unprecedented that the Government of the day proposed a joint committee of both Houses to consider the position of public business—because no supplies were granted, and as the Assembly could not accept an amendment to an Appropriation Bill, the Appropriation Act could not be passed. On the recommendation of that committee both Houses agreed to state a case for the opinion of the Privy Council, submitting two questions which were quoted in the memorandum read by Mr. Speaker last evening. Those questions were:—

"1. Whether the Constitution Act of 1867 confers on the Legislative Council powers co-ordinate with those of the Legislative Assembly in the amendment of all Bills, including money Bills?"

"2. Whether the claims of the Legislative Assembly, as set forth in their message of 12th November, are well-founded?"

The Privy Council answered the first of those questions in the negative; that was, that the Legislative Council had not co-ordinate powers with the Assembly, and the second in the affirmative—that was, that the claims of the Assembly were well-founded. The claims of the Assembly were put forward in their message on that occasion in two paragraphs, both of which were also quoted by Mr. Speaker last night. The first paragraph stated:—

"It has generally been admitted that in British colonies in which there are two branches of the legislature the legislative functions of the Upper House correspond with those of the House of Lords, while the Lower House exercise the right and powers of the House of Commons."

And they went on to point out that that was recognised by the Standing Orders of both Houses, and by the form of the preamble used in Taxation and Supply Bills—which had been adopted in all such Bills passed during the present session. The second paragraph referred to the sole right of the Assembly to deal with supplies. The question, so far as it was a legal question, arose on the 2nd section of the Constitution Act, which provided that—

"All Bills for appropriating any part of the public revenue for imposing any new rate, tax, or impost, subject always to the limitations hereinafter provided, shall originate in the Legislative Assembly."

The Legislative Council contended that although all such Bills should originate in the Legislative Assembly, yet that in the amendment of all

Bills their powers were co-ordinate with those of the Legislative Assembly. The question arose in 1885 on a Bill for appropriating a part of the public revenue. The question now arose on a Bill imposing new rates or taxes. The words were the same in both instances, and there could be no doubt that whatever argument applied to one case applied to the other. As to the propriety or otherwise of a nominee House determining the incidence of taxation, he did not propose to speak. Mr. Speaker, last evening, quoted the authorities on the question, and as he assumed hon. members had read that memorandum he did not consider it necessary to repeat them. The principle was clear that the House of Commons had, for the last 200 years, insisted that all matters of taxation belonged to the Commons; that the amount, incidence, and disposition, and the persons by whom it was to be collected were matters for the Commons; but that in incidental matters the Lords might amend such Bills. For these reasons Mr. Speaker had given, as well as those he (the Premier) had pointed out, that the Assembly had always maintained the exclusive right to deal with questions of money, and the raising and expenditure of money, he thought they ought to disagree with the amendment—unless they were prepared to allow the Upper House to control the taxation of the country. That House, of course, had the power of veto, but that the Assembly could not help. The Assembly had never since it was established in 1860 allowed an amendment of that kind to be made by the Legislative Council. He moved, therefore, that the amendment of the Legislative Council in that clause be disagreed to. He had had circulated a printed copy of the formal reasons proposed to be given.

Mr. DONALDSON said he had, of course, no intention of opposing the motion. The memorandum read by the Speaker last night was very clear on the point. But he was not ashamed to confess that he had altered his opinion considerably since the Bill was before the House, and he had considerable sympathy with the amendments that had been introduced into it by the Legislative Council. At the same time he was not going to be a party to the Assembly having its privileges curtailed in any way; and for that reason he should certainly feel it his duty to support the Premier in his motion that the amendment be disagreed with. There was one suggestion he would make, and that was that if the same course was adopted in the present instance as was adopted in 1876 with the Navigation Bill, the Bill might possibly be amended in such a way as to alter the incidence of taxation in the direction provided by the Council's amendment; but such an amendment should certainly not come from the Upper House. A certain course, as the hon. gentleman had pointed out, was pursued with regard to the Navigation Bill, and he should not be sorry if the same course was followed with regard to the present Bill. The proposal would have to come from that Chamber instead of from the Legislative Council.

Question put and passed.

On clause 15—"Valuers"—which the Legislative Council had amended by the addition of the following proviso:—

"Provided that the local authority may make, or alter, or amend any valuation."

The PREMIER said that the clause, as sent up from the Assembly, provided that a local authority might employ valuers, who should make and return valuations in a certain form. It was further provided that a valuation so returned might be adopted by the local authority with or without alteration, and that when adopted the valuation should be the valuation of the local authority. The amendment of the

Legislative Council made no difference whatever in the meaning of the clause, and in effect merely summarised its meaning in a proviso. There could be no objection to it, and he would move, therefore, that the amendment of the Legislative Council in the clause be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the amendments of the Legislative Council in clauses 29, 30, and 41 were disagreed to for the reasons previously given for the disagreement to those made in clause 13.

On clause 65—"Mode of estimating annual value for the purpose of voting," which the Legislative Council proposed to omit—

The PREMIER said he would move that the Committee disagree to the omission of the clause. The omission of the clause and the alteration of the 2nd and 3rd schedules as proposed by the Legislative Council, would have been proper amendments if the other amendments the Committee had disagreed to had been adopted.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the amendments of the Legislative Council, omitting schedules 2 and 3 and inserting new schedules, were disagreed to, as consequent upon those amendments first disagreed to.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to some amendments and disagreed to other amendments of the Legislative Council, and the report was adopted.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that the Bill be returned to the Legislative Council with a message intimating that the Legislative Assembly—

Disagree to the amendments in clauses 11, 13, 29, 30, and 41 for the following reasons:—

Because (as pointed out by the Legislative Assembly in their message of 12th November, 1885, giving their reasons for disagreeing to an amendment of the Legislative Council in the Appropriation Bill of that year) it has been generally admitted that in the British Possessions in which there are two Houses of Parliament, one of which is nominated and the other elected, the legislative functions of the Upper House should correspond with those of the House of Lords, while the Lower House exercises the rights and powers of the House of Commons: This analogy is recognised in the Standing Orders of both Houses of the Parliament of Queensland and in the form of preamble used in Supply and Taxation Bills, and the Legislative Assembly have hitherto invariably and successfully asserted their privileges on the basis of this analogy:

For two centuries the Commons have claimed, and the Lords have acquiesced in the claim, that in Bills which impose taxes, rates, or other pecuniary burdens upon the people, although the Lords may make amendments, those amendments must not make any alteration in the amount of the tax or rate, in the disposition or direction of it, or in the persons appointed to manage it, while the Commons have not objected to alterations in other parts of such Bills not relating to those matters:

The Legislative Assembly have always claimed the same privileges:

The second section of the Constitution Act of 1867 uses the same terms to distinguish the respective rights of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly with respect to Appropriation Bills and Taxation Bills: The rights of the Legislative Assembly and the powers of the Legislative Council with respect to appropriation Bills have been authoritatively declared by the Privy Council upon a case stated in pursuance of a joint address of both Houses to Her Majesty agreed to on the 17th November, 1885:

The same principles are obviously applicable to Taxation Bills:

The Legislative Assembly are therefore unable to agree to the amendments now in question, which alter the amount and incidence of the taxation to be imposed under the Bill.

Disagree to the omission of clause 65, and to the omission of schedules 2 and 3 and the insertion of new schedules—

Because these amendments are consequent upon those first disagreed to.

And agree to the other amendments of the Legislative Council—

Because they do not infringe the privileges of the Legislative Assembly as above defined.

I may add that it is usual when agreeing to amendments of the Legislative Council in taxation Bills, to assign the reasons why this House does agree to them, and that is why the last paragraph is added to this message. Otherwise it is unusual to state reasons for agreeing to amendments of the Legislative Council.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the Order of the Day being read,

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that you do now leave the chair.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think this is generally the time when any member having a grievance brings it forward. I have a grievance, and I dare say there is no hon. member who has not; but, at the same time, I do not think any hon. member can show a greater grievance than that I now complain of. It is with regard to a return I called for, and which was laid on the table of the House about a week ago with reference to the revenue and expenditure in the Gulf country. I moved for a similar return in 1884, showing the revenue received from certain sources and the expenditure of public money in the Gulf country. I combined the two returns, and I find that roughly speaking the Gulf country has got a credit balance—if a balance were struck between the different districts—of over three-quarters of a million, without allowing for loan expenditure and expenditure from trust funds. We stand in this position: We have paid most liberally into the consolidated revenue fund of Queensland, and we have received in return a most disproportionate amount. And that disproportion would be augmented in this way: The Customs returns are given only from the ports of entry, whereas it is well known that a large amount of Customs duties are paid in Brisbane on goods consumed in the Gulf country. So much so that the Premier at one time admitted that 20 per cent. of the duty on goods consumed in that district was paid in the South, whilst some was also paid at the Northern ports. I am quite certain that 30 per cent. would scarcely cover the amount of Customs duties paid on goods landed at Townsville, which proceed inland, and also on goods landed in Brisbane and shipped to the Gulf country. The amount might also be augmented by an error that I see in the returns from occupation licenses. I referred to an error in the returns of pastoral rents in the settled districts, and I think there is also a serious error in the amount paid for occupation licenses, because on referring to the *Government Gazette* of this year I find that the amount for occupation licenses for this year alone is £2,000, whilst in the return for ten years the amount is only given as £7,800. I am sure there is an error of several thousands of pounds. I am sorry the Postmaster-General is not here, because I wish to refer to the hon. gentleman's action in declining to accept tenders for the erection of a post office at Normanton on the ground that the tenders were too high. Now, I believe the post office at Normanton is about the nearest piece of architecture it would be possible to discover in Queensland. The architect—if there ever was an

architect for the building—should be made to live in it, or rather to stew in it, as that is a more appropriate term. And now that tenders have been called for a new post office, the hon. gentleman refuses to accept them because they are too high. I maintain that the district has over three-quarters of a million of money to its credit, and if all the revenue raised in the Gulf country were expended there, I am certain there would be no need for my bringing forward a motion for the construction of a transcontinental railway, or a Cloncurry railway, or any other work, for the funds at our disposal would build railways wherever they were required. I have just called attention to this matter to show that the return I asked for was not called for out of any idle curiosity, but in justice to my constituents, to show the disproportionate amount of expenditure the far-away districts of the colony receive in comparison with the very large and handsome payments they make to the Treasury. I do not believe in taking up the time of the House when we are getting near the close of the session, and I trust that, having directed the attention of hon. members and of the Government also to this matter, they will deal with the claims of my district as liberally as my district has dealt with the revenue of Queensland.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Tozer), in moving that there be granted for the service of the year 1890-91 a sum not exceeding £9,621 for the Secretary for Public Works, said that there was very little alteration in the vote from last year. It was purely owing to the adjustment of the offices since the Civil Service Board had been through the department. He might mention that one clerk, who had formerly been receiving £125, now got £145, and one clerk who used to be in the Secretary for Public Works vote was wrongly there; he should have been in the buildings branch, and he now appeared under that heading. With regard to the messengers, clock-maker, and engine-driver, they had previously been paid from contingencies, and were now put on the Estimates.

Mr. DONALDSON said he wished to know the intention of the Government with respect to the position of Acting Under Secretary of the department.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that last year the late Minister for Works stated clearly the arrangements made in connection with the severance of the departments of Works and Mines, and that the position occupied by Mr. Robertson was that of chief clerk. The Civil Service Board had been through the office, but had made no recommendation on the subject. During the year the question would arise as to the administration of the divisional boards, which was becoming a large matter, and there was a possibility that they might be placed under the Works or under the Lands Department; but at present there was no necessity for the appointment of an Under Secretary for the Works Department.

Mr. MORRY said he wished to know whether it was the intention of the Government to dispense with the services of any of the temporary assistants in the buildings branch; also whether the works in connection with the new public offices had been suspended, and whether the Minister had any idea of the extra cost of the foundations of that work?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that all the temporary assistants in the office had been dispensed with, as there was not enough work to keep them going. With reference to the

new buildings, it had been discovered since the contract was let that at one end the rock was further down than was expected. On that being notified to him by the Colonial Architect, he gave the necessary directions, which involved an additional expenditure of about £1,800. He supposed that the contractor in the course of his operations had found it necessary to get rid of some of his men; but, so far as his department was concerned, the works in connection with the Treasury Buildings had not been delayed for a single minute.

Mr. ANNEAR said he wished to know how many competitors there were for the design of the new museum?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was not able to give the number, but he knew that a great number competed. The late Government called for designs, and the design of Mr. McLay, of the Works Department, was considered the best. Then the late Government considered whether they would adopt the system in force in New South Wales of allowing large works to be contracted for by competent contractors outside the department, and they allowed Mr. McLay to resign his position in order to supervise the work at a remuneration of 3 per cent., subject to the department of the Colonial Architect. He thought the arrangement was both wise and satisfactory.

Mr. ANNEAR said he did not agree with the hon. gentleman in that opinion. He thought it was a very wrong system, and that a great injustice was done to architects, not only in Brisbane, but throughout the colony. When the advertisement appeared inviting designs for the museum, it was distinctly stated that the department of the Colonial Architect would supervise the erection of the building, and the consequence was that many did not compete who would otherwise have competed. The design of a gentleman in the department of the Colonial Architect, drawing a salary of £300 a year, with all the information at his fingers' ends, was accepted, and he was entrusted with the carrying out of the work. The usual commission charged by architects in the city was 5 per cent., and that would amount to £2,000.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He is to get 3 per cent.

Mr. ANNEAR said there was a sum of £4,420 on the Estimates for supervising public buildings, but the amount for the present year, including that £2,000, would be £6,420. Yet there were officers at present in the Colonial Architect's office quite capable of carrying out the work. They supervised the erection of the Treasury Buildings, and they could also supervise the erection of the museum. Had it been known that the person whose design was accepted would have the supervision of the building, there would have been four times as many designs sent in, and he considered that the principle adopted by the late Government in connection with the matter was a wrong one, and should not be followed by the present Government. Even at 3 per cent. the cost would be £1,250, and it was an unnecessary expenditure. He considered that Mr. McLay was given an undue advantage over men outside.

Mr. NELSON said the hon. member seemed to imply that Mr. McLay, in preparing his design, had abused his privileges by making use of information obtainable by him in a Government office; but Mr. McLay had done no such thing. The whole of the work done by that gentleman in making his design for the museum was done out of office hours, and out of Government offices. With regard to the calculation as to the enormous expense that would be to the country, it was a

most extraordinary calculation. The hon. member stated that the cost of supervising public buildings was £4,420 per annum, whilst for the present year, in consequence of the arrangement that had been made with respect to the museum, it would be £6,420. There was only £40,000 voted for the new museum, and it was expected that it would be built within the estimate. Three per cent on £40,000 was only £1,200, and it was difficult to understand how the hon. member arrived at £2,000.

Mr. ALAND: He made his calculation at 5 per cent.

Mr. NELSON: The Minister stated that only 3 per cent. was to be paid.

Mr. ANNEAR: I afterwards said £1,250.

Mr. NELSON said the hon. member also implied by his remarks that the number of competitors was small. That was distinctly contrary to fact. There was a large number of exhibitors, as anyone who took the trouble to inspect them could have seen for himself. The walls of two large rooms in the department were covered with the designs sent in, and the competition was not only very large, but was also very keen. As to the principle of making a contract with the designer of the building, so far from considering that a wrong principle, he thought it was one of the best they could adopt. Who was better able to carry out the supervision of a building than the man who designed it? There was no promise made that the Colonial Architect would superintend the design that was accepted or carried out, and it seemed absurd to argue that the work of supervision should be taken out of the designer's hands and put into the hands of the Colonial Architect.

Mr. ANNEAR: Mr. Clarke designed the new public offices, but they were carried out by the present Colonial Architect.

Mr. NELSON said it did not follow that they were carried out as well as they might have been. He was rather inclined to think that if Mr. Clarke had carried them out they would have been better than they were now. But there was another reason why the Colonial Architect should not carry out the Museum buildings. Though not nominally or publicly a competitor for the design of the building he was *de facto* a competitor. When he was asked to give his opinion on the designs he honestly told the Government that he would rather not, because he had an interest in one of the competing designs. Would it not be rather strange and rather anomalous for a competitor who was the superior officer of the man who made the successful design to supervise the carrying out of the design of his inferior officer? Such an arrangement would not work for the public benefit. If the whole of the circumstances were considered, hon. members would find that the arrangement which had been made was as good as one as could be made. He (Mr. Nelson) was very glad indeed to have had the opportunity of being able to encourage a young man like Mr. McLay, who was only occupying a subordinate position in the Works Department, and yet was able to produce a design which was successful against a very large number of competitors.

Mr. SAYERS said they always found that matters like that which was now under consideration could be explained away, but public opinion outside was not so favourable. For the last couple of months he had heard the matter spoken of in Brisbane, and it was considered that there was something about it not quite straight. He had never seen Mr. McLay. But it appeared to him that that gentleman was placed in a position that no other architect enjoyed in that competition, seeing that he was an officer of the

department receiving a salary from the Government. No other architect knew that the work would not be carried out by the Colonial Architect. At any rate, the public did not know but that the work would be carried out by the department. Why could it not be supervised by the officers of that department? A Colonial Architect, a chief draftsman, seven draftsmen, and a cadet formed a very large staff for the small number of public buildings carried out in the colony.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Very small? The sum of £250,000 is voted for public buildings.

Mr. SAYERS said the buildings were all enumerated in the next vote, and the amount was not £250,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh, no, they are not.

Mr. DONALDSON: What about the post office at Charters Towers?

Mr. SAYERS said the hon. member was aware that that building was very much needed. Why should it be singled out? If it was wrong to build that post office, then the hon. member was to blame.

Mr. DONALDSON: I never thought it was.

Mr. SAYERS said the plans of that building would not take very long to prepare. He found that no matter how public money was wasted or squandered, it was useless for hon. members to draw attention to it in that Committee. They were told that it was all right, and that the best plan had been adopted. He had always understood that it was a rule that Government servants would not be allowed to compete with outsiders, but that rule had evidently been departed from in that case. The Minister for Works had stated that the arrangement which had been made with regard to the museum was a very good one. Then, if the hon. gentleman did what was right, he would in future carry out that arrangement in other matters.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I said that this arrangement was a good one.

Mr. SAYERS: Then it should be carried out in future.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That does not follow. The arrangement is a remarkably good one for carrying out this particular work.

Mr. SAYERS said it was useless for hon. members to point out any abuse, no matter what it was. The Government in power would defend it because they might do the same thing themselves, and the Ministry who had gone out of office would defend it because they were responsible for it. Very likely some of those hon. members who called out "hear, hear," would eat humble pie when they went before their constituents, as they would not be able to vindicate their position. The grievance he had to complain of in that matter was that £1,200 was to be expended outside the department, when it could be avoided by entrusting the work to the department. Why should not the Colonial Architect do the work? But, as he had already said, it was no use calling attention to those abuses.

Mr. DONALDSON said the hon. member was quite right in pointing out abuses when they arose, but on more than one occasion he had fallen into the error of pointing out matters which were not abuses. The arrangement which had been made in regard to supervising the erection of the new museum was not an abuse in any way whatever, and hon. members ought to be pleased to know that a young gentleman occupying a position in the Civil Service of the colony was able to get the first prize in the

competition, notwithstanding that there were competitors from the other colonies. That was a matter which ought not to be lost sight of. He did not know Mr. McLay while he was in the service, and had only met him within the last month for the first time. He was certainly pleased to find that they had at that time in the service of the Government such a competent young man. So far as he knew, Mr. McLay was not known to any member of the late Ministry, and was not favoured in any way. He believed that gentleman would carry out the work entrusted to him with credit to himself and the colony also.

The HON. P. PERKINS said he noticed a new item on the Estimates, "clockmaker," at a salary of £208. He would like to know what were the duties of that officer.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the duties of the clockmaker were to go round and wind-up and keep in repair all the Government clocks in and about Brisbane. That item had been voted previously under the head of "contingencies." He could safely say that there was no harder-worked man in the Government service than the present clockmaker, so much so that it was under consideration whether he should not be given assistance to keep pace with his work. The system previously was to get the work done by tender, but that was found to be most unsatisfactory. The principal object of the contractor on going along the railway lines and to other places nominally to attend to clocks was found to be to make bargains with people for watches, clocks, and other articles. That was deemed most unsatisfactory, and he did not think they could have a better arrangement than the present one.

Mr. MORRY said he totally disagreed with many of the remarks made by the hon. member for Maryborough. He happened to be in a position to know a great deal about the museum designs competition, and he could assure hon. members that a great many designs were sent in. The large drafting-room in the old Works Department, and also one of the ante-rooms, were completely filled with the designs, some of which were sent in by the leading architects in Sydney, Melbourne, and he believed Adelaide, and were very excellent designs. He could say without fear of contradiction that in his judgment Mr. McLay's design was infinitely superior for the purposes intended than any other design submitted for that competition. It was also a well-known fact among the architects of the city that the Colonial Architect, as had been stated by the late Minister for Works, was interested in one of the designs, and therefore very wisely took no part in awarding the prize for the best design. He believed the Government had had very little to do with awarding the premium. He understood that the trustees of the museum, assisted by one or two professional gentlemen, awarded the premium, and he was quite convinced that they arrived at the best selection that could be arrived at. With reference to Mr. McLay being appointed to supervise the work, he thought hon. members ought to be pleased to find that they had in the Government service a gentleman of such high attainments as Mr. McLay possessed. He (Mr. Morry) felt rather proud that they had among them a young gentleman who was able to hold his own with the leading architects of the southern colonies and carry off the first prize. He thoroughly agreed with the late Minister for Railways that no person was better able to carry out a design than the gentleman who designed it; and although it might appear to increase the cost somewhat, in the long run there might be really no increase at all, but, on the contrary, economy.

He thought the time had arrived when the question of making some change in connection with the Colonial Architect's Department should be considered by the Government. It was a question whether it should be continued in the same way as it now existed, or whether they should adopt the system recently adopted in New South Wales, and in many of the States of America; that was, to have a supervising architect to carry out small works at a comparatively small salary, and that all the larger works should be let out to architects in private practice. That would be very much fairer than the present system, because it would give all architects an opportunity of obtaining a share of the work, and he did not see why they should not get a share of Government work as well as contractors and others. As the Minister for Railways had just suggested to him, they would get a very much better variety of designs. He must say that he was very much dissatisfied with the character of many of their public buildings; and the time had arrived when Queensland should strive to get a better style of architecture than that which had been adopted up to the present. Some of their public buildings had not been so successful architecturally or acoustically as they should be. The new police court at South Brisbane was very defective acoustically, and although it was ornamental it was not very well suited for the purpose for which it was intended. He regretted that very much. As had been remarked by the late Minister for Railways, it was a question whether the new public offices would not have been better carried out by the architect who designed them. He believed there were grave doubts now whether the Real Property Office in that building was really fireproof, and it was a most important matter that that office, which contained most important documents, should be entirely fireproof—not merely fire-resisting, but fireproof. It was doubtful whether it was fireproof or not, and he thought the Government should make themselves thoroughly satisfied on that point before it was too late. Otherwise they might discover when it was too late that a very serious mistake had been made. He thought the late Government had done nothing wrong in appointing Mr. McLay as supervising architect for the museum, and he trusted that the present Government would support that young gentleman, and enable him to carry out his work in a satisfactory manner, which he was sure he would do.

Mr. ANNEAR said the question was not one relating to Mr. McLay at all. That gentleman's name had not been mentioned disparagingly by any member of that Committee. But he would ask whether the leading architects of Brisbane would not have sent in designs if they had been made aware that they would have the supervision of the work? But they were distinctly told that the supervision of the building would be carried out by the Colonial Architect's Department. Mr. McLay went in for the designs with his eyes open, and he got the head prize deservedly. There was no doubt that the gentlemen who examined the plans awarded the premium to the proper man. It was no use getting off the proper track; not an unkind word had been said about Mr. McLay. There were officers in the Colonial Architect's Department as practical and as able as any in Australia. What was the use of keeping up the department if the work was to be given out?

Mr. NELSON said that before any decision was arrived at, the most careful calculations were made as to what the building would cost, and all the calculations agreed that it would cost the department more—or, at least, quite as

much—to do the work in the department as to give it to Mr. McLay. Everyone acquainted with the office knew that if the contract for the museum was let within a month or two, and it was to be carried out by the department at once, there would have to be a lot of extra men put on. The regular staff could not do the work, and the number of officers would require to be increased at once. Even if it were ready to be contracted for, the work would extend over two years. It was, no doubt, possible that, as stated, certain architects refused to send in competitive designs, because they were told the work would be carried out by the Colonial Architect's Department; and the Committee were told that that privilege had never been accorded to any architect before. That was possible; but he did not think the same circumstances had ever occurred before. To appoint the Colonial Architect to carry out the work of one of his junior officers would be to place him in rather an unpleasant position. The arrangement had been made in the public interest, and that it would be in every way economical he was certain.

Question put and passed.

BUILDINGS.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £39,375 be granted for buildings.

Mr. SAYERS said he was informed that £1,200 had been given for a building for the residence of the police magistrate at Winton, and that the building had not been occupied since it was purchased. He wanted to know if that was the fact?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he knew nothing whatever about the purchase of quarters at Winton, beyond the fact that some short time before he took office a building of stone containing several rooms, suitable for the residence of a police magistrate at Winton, was bought from a Mr. Steele, at Winton, for £1,800. There was no one living in the building at the present time.

Mr. SAYERS said it would be interesting to know why £1,800 of the public money had been paid to Mr. Steele for the purchase of his house. There was a police magistrate at Winton; why did he not live in the house? He looked upon it as money squandered.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had read the correspondence with reference to the purchase of the building. Considerable attention seemed to have been given to the matter, and the Minister had apparently arrived at the conclusion that it would be wise to have those quarters. Such being the case, he was satisfied that a reasonable bargain had been made. The gentleman who was at present police magistrate at Winton—Mr. Moran—was a bachelor. Whether he would continue to remain a bachelor was more than he (the Minister for Works) could say. Possibly some consideration on that point might have been in the mind of the Minister when he made the purchase. At present the building, which was purchased four months ago, was not occupied by the police magistrate, for whom it was intended.

Mr. CORFIELD said that as he was possessed of full knowledge concerning the item referred to by the hon. member for Charters Towers, he might say a word concerning it. The price paid for the police magistrate's residence at Winton was not too high for the property secured, which consisted of a dwelling and outhouses, built of stone in a first-class manner. The buildings and a large underground tank cost more without the land than the Government paid for the whole property. The building was sold because the original owner, being also the proprietor of the principal hotel in

Winton, had to take over the business of the hotel in consequence of an unfitting tenant failing in his agreement to purchase it. As to the necessity for purchasing the building, he might remind hon. members that it had long been agreed that police magistrates should be shifted regularly, and the reason that had not so far been done as often as was desirable was because of the injustice that might be done to some of those officers through the want of accommodation in different places, and especially in the far west, where a building for the purpose, if procurable at all, could only be got at a rent of about £3 per week. The gentleman at present occupying the position of police magistrate of Winton was a bachelor, but he thought that objection to the gentleman was one that would not hold good for any length of time, as when he visited Winton a short time ago the gentleman in question appeared to him to be going the way of all humanity, and preparing to take a partner for life. If the Winton police magistrate was removed without first being asked his intentions, it would be a source of regret in the district, where he was held in high esteem for his ability and impartiality in the discharge of the duties of his office.

Mr. GOLDRING said he would like to hear from the Minister whether any complaints had been received by the department from Judge Noel as to the want of accommodation in the court-house at Cloncurry? The accommodation provided by the present building was so limited that the district court sittings had to be held in the divisional board hall, which was inconvenient for the judge and the public generally. The fact that the court could not be held in the present building was sufficient to show that a new court-house was required at that place.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that no complaints had reached him concerning the court-house at Cloncurry, but he had noticed that excessive amounts had been paid for renting private buildings there in which to hold a court. Only yesterday plans had been submitted to him for a building for the purpose of a court-house and other quarters at Cloncurry. He was considering the matter with an officer of the Department of Justice at the present time. There was not much business at Cloncurry just now, and the question for him to consider was whether they could afford the expenditure in that locality? He could assure the hon. member that the matter referred to would not escape his attention even for a day.

Mr. LUYA said he would like the Minister to inform the Committee whether there was any communication in his office from the Commissioner of Police as to the accommodation for twenty or thirty men in the new police quarters at South Brisbane? Would the hon. gentleman at the same time state whether accommodation was being provided there for that number of men.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that from memory he could not state what accommodation was being provided for in the new police quarters at South Brisbane; but he might tell the hon. member, as the history of the affair, that tenders were called for a building which would cost something like double the amount voted by Parliament for the purpose, and his predecessor had directed plans to be prepared that would bring the building to be erected within the vote. Those plans provided for the accommodation of at least thirty constables, and tenders had been called for that building. Recently he had let the contract, and he had every reason to believe that sufficient accommodation would be provided for all present purposes, and ample provision had been made in the design for the extension of the building as circumstances required.

Mr. LUYA said he could inform the Minister that the tenders were for a building that would provide accommodation for thirty men, and the accommodation now being provided was for only fourteen men and two officers. The plans were for the accommodation of thirty men, with provision for extension to accommodate fifty men, which it was anticipated would be required in a year or two. The tender was somewhere about £3,300, and it included a tank that would cost nearly £200. That exceeded the estimate on the loan vote by nearly £1,000, and the plans were cut down, and a tender since accepted at a cost of £2,300 for a building to accommodate fourteen men and two officers. It would not accommodate the sergeant in charge, and the result would be that the Government would have to do, as had been done before, and pay £2 a week for a cottage for the sergeant. That would mean 12 per cent. on the money knocked off, and the accommodation required would not be provided after all. That was a kind of economy he could not understand. If accommodation was required at present for thirty men, what in the name of goodness was the good of providing accommodation for fourteen only, especially when the Commissioner anticipated that within two years accommodation would be required for fifty men at that place? Would it not have been far better economy to have put the extra £1,000 on the Estimates, and thus have secured the accommodation required, than to pay 12 per cent. on the amount knocked off without securing the accommodation necessary? The thing looked well at first blush, but it would not bear looking into, and that kind of economy would not go down with the country when it was understood.

Mr. SAYERS said that since he had called attention to the purchase of the building at Winton for £1,800, he found that there was a sum of £1,500 down on the Estimates for police quarters at Winton. As the building that had been purchased was not being used for a police magistrate's residence, he did not see why they could not make a police barracks of it. He understood it was a very strong building, and they could stand a seige in it. The hon. member for South Brisbane complained about the police quarters at South Brisbane; but in places nearly as large as South Brisbane eight or ten policemen were simply furnished with two rooms, having all to sleep in one room, and that in the tropics. He did not think the hon. gentleman had any cause of complaint. He did not object to the police having decent quarters in South Brisbane; but he did not see why all the money should be spent there and none anywhere else. Neither could he see why a building at Winton, costing £1,800, should be allowed to lie idle whilst police quarters were required.

Mr. POWERS said he would like to ask the Minister for Works whether the Government had dropped all the other works proposed by the late Government? There were the Allentown lockup and police quarters, the Bundaberg drill-shed —

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That appears in my estimates as Bundanba, but that is a mistake.

Mr. POWERS said there were the lockup and police quarters at Cawarral, drill-shed and quarters for caretaker at Charters Towers, boatmen's cottages at Cooktown, the lockup and police quarters at Emerald, the Gympie drill-shed; quarters for caretaker, Ipswich drill-shed; Maryborough and Mackay, sub-collector of Customs quarters; Mackay drill-shed, quarters for caretaker; Rockhampton bondstore; Toowoomba drill-shed, also omitted. The late Government

had intended to construct those buildings as they were considered necessary, and he would like to know if the Minister for Works had decided not to go on with them at present? They would give a great deal of employment, and if it was necessary that they should be built next year, there was no saving in putting off the work until then. Of course the hon. gentleman would be quite justified if he had come to the conclusion they were not necessary at all. He would also ask the hon. gentleman about other votes. The vote for hospital buildings was reduced from £2,000 to £1,000, other buildings from £8,000 to £2,000, and he would like to know whether the amounts now asked for were the amounts that had been expended last year. He also noticed that for quarters for police magistrates and wardens, for which £5,000 had been voted last year, the hon. gentleman only asked for £1,000; for country court-houses and police buildings, additions, repairs, etc., last year £7,000 had been voted, whilst now only £3,500 was asked for. What sums were actually spent last year from those votes? It was false economy to put off repairs that were necessary, and he would like to know if the amounts now asked for would be sufficient.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. gentleman was in error in imagining that there were not enough public works to be carried out, notwithstanding the fact that only £68,925 appeared upon those Estimates. The fact was that out of last year's Estimates for the works in progress there was an amount not expended from contracts let of £51,212. There was also £66,757 on the Loan Estimates, and an amount of £39,008 for bridges, making the total to be expended during the year by the Works Department of £225,902. In view of the present condition of the country, it would be wise to postpone some of the items that were not so urgently needed as those which appeared on his Estimates. He could assure the hon. gentleman that none of the items were knocked off because they would never be needed. They were knocked off after consultation with the Ministers in whose departments the various votes were, and in view of the financial condition of the colony. Those items left on had all been promised by the late Government, and appeared to the present Government to be necessary, such as the Normanston gaol and the Winton police quarters. With reference to the general votes, he might say that as he had so much work in hand he considered the balances left by his predecessor were quite sufficient for all purposes during the year to carry out all promises made by the late Government, and the calls that would probably be made upon him. He had no reason to doubt that the money at his disposal would be sufficient. The balances from the votes the hon. gentleman asked for, on the 30th September last, were, for hospital buildings, £134 17s. 8d., which would give him £1,434 to expend. For other buildings the balance was £3,986 2s. 11d.; for quarters for police magistrates and wardens, £3,467 10s. 6d.; for defence buildings, £33 15s. 2d.; for post and telegraph offices, £2,201 19s. 10d.; for country court-houses and police buildings, additions, repairs, etc., £1,194 1s. 4d.; under the head of painting, £360 7s. 1d.; and rent for public offices, £210 7s. 9d.; so that although the hon. gentleman fancied he had cut down the Estimates, he had never taken credit to himself for economy in the Works estimates. He found that certain balances remained on account of works promised, and they were sufficient to enable him to put a reduced sum on the present year's Estimates. With the railway expenditure and £230,000 for buildings there could not be any outcry that there were not sufficient public works being carried out during the year.

1890—4 x

Mr. SMYTH said the hon. member for Burrum referred to the drill-shed at Gympie as one of the works proposed by the late Government which had been struck out by the present Government; but seeing that the Premier had been entertained in that drill-shed somewhere about two years ago, he did not think the hon. gentleman should have quoted that place as an argument.

Mr. POWERS: The sum I spoke of was for quarters for caretaker, and not for a drill-shed.

Mr. SMYTH said it should be "Caretaker for the rifle range." The town he represented had the champion team of riflemen in the colony, who had been sent to Melbourne to compete against the pick of Australia; they had also the best mounted corps in the colony; and the people of Gympie were proud of their volunteers. The court-house at Gympie was altogether inadequate to the requirements of the town, whoever designed it, and he hoped that the Government would build a court-house there, so that the judge when he visited the town could sit in decent quarters. If the Minister would hand over the court-house to the school of mines they would put up with it for a time, and they would like the Government to build a new court-house at Gympie. Within a few months Brisbane and Gympie would be connected by rail, and then the population in and about Gympie would very soon advance from 14,000 to 20,000.

Mr. NELSON said he was not sure that he understood the Minister for Works in his remarks regarding the Estimates. As far as buildings were concerned, the vote had been reduced from £47,000 to £10,000, speaking roughly. Of course the amount required for buildings did not depend on the Works Department, but on the various departments for which buildings were required in various parts of the colony. When the Estimates of the previous Government were being prepared, the usual requisitions for buildings were sent in by the various departments, and they were cut down to about one-third. Strict inquiry was made, and the Government were assured that the buildings then put down were such as could not be postponed. But somehow the present Government had got the departments to sanction the postponement or doing away with many of those works. With regard to general votes, he understood that the Minister was not going to wipe out any votes, but that all the balances were to be carried forward and made available for the expenditure of the current year. If that system was to be followed, it was evident the finances would get into a muddle. Though they were now asked to sanction the expenditure of £28,400, they would probably find at the end of the year that the expenditure up to the 30th June had been £70,000. They were led to believe that the Government were going to confine the year's expenditure to £28,400 with regard to general votes, but now he understood the Minister to say that that did not represent the expenditure at all, and that he was going to expend a larger sum, making use of the unexpended balances of votes previously passed. He admitted, with regard to buildings, that it was not always advisable, or even possible, to lapse a vote passed for any particular building. It appeared quite right that when a sum of money was voted for a particular building, and the building was not put up in that financial year, the vote should not lapse unless it appeared afterwards that it was passed in error and the building was not required. With regard to the general votes, they were supposed to include the expenditure for the financial year, and he thought that some explanation was necessary. In connection with

local matters he wished to point out that last year the sum of £750 was voted for a police station at Warra, where police quarters were very much required. It would be satisfactory to know whether it was the intention of the Government to expend that money during the current year. The district was a large one, and the whole of the traffic from Auburn, at the head of the Burnett, instead of going to Dalby, went to Warra station. He thought there had been a policeman at the place till lately, at any rate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was rather surprised at the hon. gentleman criticising the mode in which those balances had been carried over. It was very much like Satan rebuking sin, because it had been the practice always to carry over those particular votes, and he had simply followed precisely the system practised by his predecessor. He had in his hand a statement of the balances carried forward for the year 1888-9, and he found that all the items which had been carried over by him were carried over by the then Minister—namely, repairs and incidentals, defence force buildings, quarters for police magistrates, other buildings, etc. When he came into office he found that contracts had been let for certain public works amounting to something over £40,000. That sum, of course, had to be carried over because the contracts were let, and he had to provide the money for them. In addition to those contracts which were let, there were amounts promised by his predecessor which were nearly sufficient to swallow the general vote, and it was impossible for him, during the short time he had been in office, to say whether he would endorse the policy of carrying out those promises, but he accepted the promises in the same manner as he accepted the contracts, and carried over the amounts. He had, therefore, in addition to placing such a sum on the Estimates as would meet the promises of his predecessor, made provision for such new works as he felt the colony could afford at the present time. If he had had more time at his disposal the probability was that he would have gone more definitely into each item; but that was impossible for a young Minister who had within a week to supply revised Estimates to the Treasurer. He had, however, shown that in carrying over those amounts he was simply following a precedent which had been set by his predecessor.

Mr. NELSON said he was quite sure the hon. gentleman was labouring under a mistake in saying that he had carried over those amounts, as he was not in the Works Department at the end of September in any year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not say you personally. I said my predecessor.

Mr. NELSON said he was not guilty of anything of the sort. If reference was made to the Railway estimates, it would be found that that department started with a clean sheet. There were no votes carried forward.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This £93,718 for works was carried forward in the Works Department from your time.

Mr. NELSON said, as he had stated before, he did not see any objection to that as far as buildings were concerned, but it was very different with regard to general expenditure. The same system should, as far as possible, be introduced into the Works Department as had been carried out in the Railway Department. Of course, where money was voted for buildings in course of erection, it would be impossible to adopt that plan unless they resorted to the system of revolving part of the money. What he desired to point out was that the public might be under the

impression that the expenditure on general votes for the current year would be £28,400 when it would probably be double, and possibly treble that amount. They were not informed of that in the Financial Statement, and it would completely alter the balance between the receipts and expenditure when that was taken into account. The hon. gentleman had not answered his question in regard to the police quarters at Warra.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he must apologise to the hon. member for not having done so. He had never had the matter of police quarters at Warra before him, and he had not intentionally struck out any of the items promised by his predecessor in office. If an amount for that work was voted for last year it would no doubt appear on the stand-over Estimates, and would be applied to that purpose. It was probably one of the works which was to be constructed out of the £51,212 he had before mentioned during the present year.

Mr. PAUL said he would remind the hon. gentleman that shortly after he took office, he (Mr. Paul) asked him whether it was his intention to carry out the promise made by the previous Government in regard to any buildings or improvements in the electorate of Leichhardt. The hon. gentleman stated that it was his intention to do so; but now it appeared that a vote for new police quarters at Emerald had been left off the Estimates. A new lockup was required there, as the present building was not safe to keep prisoners in.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member had not the slightest cause of complaint. The hon. member approached him in reference to a vote on last year's Estimates for a police station at Rolleston, and he informed the hon. member that the money having been voted for that purpose the work would be carried out, and the work had been carried out. He had never had any communication with the hon. member in reference to the police quarters at Emerald. The only reason why that work was not included in those Estimates was that the Commissioner of Police had reported that there was not the same urgency for building police quarters at Emerald as there was for the erection of other buildings.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman and the Government of which he was a member were making a great mistake with reference to the economy they were supposed to be practising in regard to public works. The same thing was done three or four years ago, with very disastrous results to the colony. When the late Griffith Government got into financial difficulties, they began to cut down the Estimates for public works outside of Brisbane. That principle was carried out for two or three years, and for the last year of the term of office of that Government the amount put down on the Estimates for public works, including the expenses of the staff, was £30,000. The expense for the last year or two had been about the same, and £30,000, including the expense of the staff, was a mere bagatelle of the works that were required outside Brisbane. Brisbane was not cut down. There was still a large expenditure carried on in Brisbane, but it was chiefly out of loan. The result of that mistaken economy was that when the McIlwraith Government came into office they were inundated with demands from the different departments for public buildings all over the colony.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The result of the elections.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was not the result of the elections. It was the result of the deterioration of public buildings, some of

which had been in existence from twenty to twenty-five years. That Government had to put on the Estimates a sum of £121,670 to meet those requirements, as against the £30,230, and that sum was really not sufficient to cover all the public buildings that were required in different parts of the colony. The then Government had to spend that money rapidly, and rapid expenditure was not economical expenditure. It should be always going on. Most of the public buildings were constructed of wood, and were continually deteriorating from the effects of the ravages of white ants and the weather, so that almost the same expenditure was required every year. In another year £107,000 was put down; that was necessary also. Now they found the present Government cutting down the estimate of the late Government by about £30,000, or nearly one-half, and adopting the pernicious system of transferring votes for perishable wooden buildings from revenue to loan expenditure.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said there should be no buildings charged to loan expenditure, except those that were built in the most solid manner and capable of standing scores of years. Instead of that, paltry buildings costing £700, £800, and £1,000, and likely to last only ten or fifteen years, were charged to loan expenditure. That was not economy. It would be far better, instead of pretending to be economical, to ask for the amount that would actually be required, and spend it as it was required. The £39,000 asked for, including the cost of the staff, was not sufficient to carry on the public buildings required all over the colony. He knew that the estimate for public buildings was cut down as low as possible, consistent with efficiency, by the late Minister for Works, having gone over the list himself, and knowing the number of applications that he himself had received from the Police Department and the Colonial Secretary's Department, which the present Minister for Works must also be aware of. He protested against that system of cutting down in spasmodic fits of economy, which resulted in more extravagant expenditure afterwards.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that with regard to wooden buildings being placed to loan expenditure, the hon. gentleman had not attempted to give a single case in proof of his statement. No such thing had been done by him (the Minister for Works) and no single item had been transferred to loan expenditure except buildings which had been built from loan, or were being built from loan. In the case of two buildings which had been constructed out of loan some additions were required, which had been provided for out of loan. With regard to the buildings at Mungindi, to which reference had been made, it was not contemplated to erect them of wood. On the Loan Estimates of 1884 a sum of money was provided for those buildings; was it wise therefore, before that money was spent, to place the same sum on the Revenue Estimates for the same purpose? Therefore he denied the statement that any wooden buildings were being constructed under his directions out of loan moneys. With regard to the statement that the public buildings of the colony would require a lot of money to keep them in repair, he quite admitted that; and he hoped that when he approached the Committee on the subject next year that he would be able to bring in a sort of progress report of what public buildings there were in the colony, their capital value, and what buildings had been constructed during the year by the Colonial Architect, so that hon. members might know what buildings they actually had, and form some idea of the percentage it

cost to keep them in repair. The hon. gentleman had stated that only £68,945 was to be spent during the present year in public works; but in addition to that there would be spent £66,757 from loan for purposes of buildings. In addition to that there was standing over from last year's Estimates for contracts let by his predecessor, £51,212, making a total of £186,914 to be spent on public works before the 30th June next. Then, in connection with roads and bridges, there was £39,008 to be spent, making altogether an expenditure in connection with the Department of Public Works of £225,902, nearly a quarter of a million of money; and in the present condition of the colony, and considering the vast amount spent on railways, he thought the Government were not exercising a policy of parsimony, but of true economy, when they postponed all works that were not urgently required.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman had referred to the balances which had not been spent during last year, and evidently fancied that was something exceptional, but it was not so. It went on from year to year, and would continue to do so in future years. That had nothing whatever to do with the question he was referring to. He was talking about the amount the Government had put down for public buildings throughout the colony. The hon. gentleman said it was a large sum, but he (Mr. Macrossan) knew, from six or seven years' experience in the Works Department, that it was an extremely small sum—too small considering the large area of country it had to provide for. The hon. gentleman had said he was going to get particulars as to the capital value of their public buildings outside Brisbane. Many of them had no capital value; were worth nothing at all, being completely eaten with white ants. Some were eaten through by white ants when they had been only three years in existence; and the average life of a wooden building in Queensland was not more than about ten years.

Mr. PALMER said he did not think the Minister for Works should stonewall his own estimates, but he really provoked criticism. The hon. gentleman had said that buildings which had been started out of loan should continue to be kept up out of loan, but he (Mr. Palmer) thought that all public buildings should be constructed out of revenue. The general run of public buildings had been constructed out of revenue.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: All wooden buildings have.

Mr. PALMER said that on the vote there was an item of £2,000 additional for a gaol at Normanton. Previously a sum of £5,000 had been voted for the same purpose. What were the hon. gentleman's ideas about the carrying out of that work? The building should not be of a perishable character, made of wood which the white ants would eat through in three or four years. It should be of brick or concrete.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had been in consultation with the Sheriff on the subject of the erection of a gaol at Normanton, and the Sheriff was of opinion that three or four times the money set apart would be necessary for the purpose of providing gaol accommodation there. Mr. Still, when in England, had been directed to get the very best and newest designs for gaols; that gentleman was now on his way out, and as soon as he arrived they would be able to ascertain what the Normanton gaol would cost, and be prepared to bring down next year proposals for the building of a proper gaol, and not the makeshift that was contemplated by the money voted by the House.

Mr. GLASSEY said he would ask if there was a police magistrate at Mount Perry; if so, whether new quarters were erected for him recently; and the cost?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that Mount Perry, like a great many other mining towns, had passed the zenith of its prosperity some time ago. While in a state of prosperity a handsome and commodious structure was built for the police magistrate's quarters at a cost of about £1,500. Unfortunately the mines had stopped, the population had dwindled to some 150, and the police-magistrate had been removed to Goondiwindi. The quarters were at present being taken care of by the family of the late police magistrate.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he hoped the hon. gentleman, in getting his designs of a first-class gaol from England, would bear in mind that the climate of England was very different from that of Normanton.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. gentleman might rest assured of that. The existing designs for the gaol at Normanton he did not consider at all suitable for the climate. One of the objects aimed at was to get a building suitable for the climate.

Mr. MORGAN said he would call the Minister's attention to the fact that a new lockup and police quarters were badly wanted at Warwick. During the last four years the present buildings had been flooded to a depth of ten feet on three different occasions. On two of them the prisoners in the lockup barely escaped with their lives. The police lost nearly all the furniture they possessed, and had a very good claim against the Government for compensation. That claim was never lodged, although he believed the Government had made it a rule to acknowledge claims of that kind. It was certain that should another flood occur—and it might occur at any time—and the same consequences ensued, claims for compensation would be put in. What was true of the police quarters and lockup was also true of the post office at Warwick, where there was a building provided for the telegraph officer that had been reduced to such a condition by the effects of repeated floods that the department was now paying rent for a private building for the telegraph master in another part of the town. He knew the Government intended to remedy that, and he hoped they would also remedy the complaint concerning the police quarters and lockup. There was another objection to the lockup, and that was that it was situated about half a mile from the court-house; and every petty offender arrested, though he might be innocent of the charge preferred against him, had to suffer the indignity of being conducted through the business part of the town in charge of a policeman. There was documentary evidence in the office of the Colonial Secretary to prove what he said, and he hoped the hon. gentleman, in making up his next Estimates as Minister for Works, would take the case of Warwick in hand, and he would find it was a very pressing case.

Mr. MACFARLANE said the condition of the police quarters at South Brisbane and Warwick had been brought before the Committee, and he could inform hon. members that the police quarters at Goodna required attention. During the last flood the building there had been completely covered by the flood waters, and the sergeant in charge had lost the whole of his property to the amount, he believed, of £300. He believed that the sergeant had been in communication with his department over the matter, and was under the impression that he would be compensated in some way for his loss. He was given to understand now

that the department refused to do anything at all for that man. When a police officer was compelled to live in a building which was liable to be completely covered by water in times of flood, he should certainly be compensated for any loss he sustained in consequence. He was under the impression that it was considered that the warders at the asylum were entitled to compensation for losses they had suffered from the flood, and if so the sergeant of police was certainly entitled to compensation also, and he hoped the Colonial Secretary would see that something was done for that man.

Mr. LUYA said he would like to hear whether the Minister for Works would, having regard to the recommendations of the Commissioner of Police and the requirements of the district, take into consideration the advisability of extending the quarters at present being built for the police at South Brisbane at an early date? It would be a saving of money to have the extension provided for while the work was in progress. There must be something radically wrong when they found the Commissioner recommending that accommodation should be provided for thirty men, and that a building was being put up which would accommodate only fourteen. Either the Commissioner or the Works Department must have made a mistake, and the matter should be looked into. At present small houses had to be hired in which to lodge the police, and the object in providing quarters was to concentrate the force in one building; but that would not be met if the present intention was adhered to.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the amount voted for the South Brisbane police quarters was £2,100, and the cost would probably amount to £2,500. He could assure the hon. gentleman that the building would be sufficient for the requirements of the place, and that when the necessity arose for further accommodation, it would be provided.

Mr. LUYA said the Commissioner of Police had stated that he required accommodation for thirty men at present, and he ought to be the best judge. The sum of £2,100 was voted many years ago, and the population was now five or six times as great as it was then, so that the circumstances had very much altered.

Mr. GLASSEY said it was clear that police magistrates generally were a favoured class. The sum of £1,800 had been paid for a residence for the police magistrate at Winton, a man who had neither wife nor family, though it was said he was on the verge of taking unto himself a wife. Then, again, £1,500 had been spent on the erection of quarters for the police magistrate at Mount Perry, where there was now no police magistrate, and where, as must have been apparent to those in authority, a far less costly building would have been ample. As soon as the late Government came into office, he brought under their notice the necessity for new police quarters and a new court-house at Goodna, to meet the requirements of a very considerable population, and make suitable provision for carrying out the large amount of magisterial work to be done there. When the then Minister for Works, Hon. J. M. Macrossan, stated that the finances were not in a flourishing condition, he recognised the fact, and the negotiations he had with the Minister resulted in £650 being placed on the Estimates for police quarters to be built on higher ground. As had been pointed out by the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, the police quarters were under water during the late flood. Both the police quarters and the court-house were unfit for the purposes for which they were used; yet the sum of £650 only had been put down for Goodna, while at Mount Perry and Winton large

sums had been spent unnecessarily. He had no desire to attribute partiality to any Minister, but he thought the claims of Goodna had not received the consideration they deserved. He therefore asked the Minister for Works to consider the question of providing accommodation suited to the requirements of the place. He wished also to point out the fact that the late Colonial Secretary and the present Colonial Secretary had entirely ignored the claims of Sergeant Atkinson to favourable consideration in connection with his efforts during the late flood. If ever an officer did hard, honest, and conscientious work in a time of danger, neglecting his own property while saving the lives and property of others, it was Sergeant Atkinson. But though he had lost property to the amount of about £270, he had not received 1d. of compensation. He (Mr. Glassey) therefore hoped that, in considering the claims of the district, the claims of that officer would also be taken into favourable consideration by the Government.

Mr. CALLAN said the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Luyt, had taken up considerable time in urging the claims of South Brisbane in the matter of a police station. The population of that borough was 20,000, and thirty policemen were required to keep them in order. Mount Morgan had a population of 5,000, and had only two policemen to keep the people in order. Surely it was entitled to a proportionate number of policemen to those stationed at South Brisbane. He hoped the Minister would take Mount Morgan into consideration, and provide accommodation for a greater number of policemen than two.

Mr. GANNON said he had much pleasure in bearing out what the hon. member for Bundanba had stated in regard to the work done by the police at Goodna at great personal loss and sacrifice. The medical superintendents and warders of the asylum had also done good work during the flood, and sustained very heavy loss. Dr. and Mrs. Scholes had, he knew, given £200 towards making good some of the loss which the men had sustained. When men put their own interests aside, and worked for the public good at great personal loss, they ought certainly to receive some compensation. In order to keep good men in the force, they ought to be looked after by the Government. He would now refer to a matter concerning his own electorate, which was more particularly connected with the Estimates of the Treasury. He was not present when some of those Estimates were going through, and had not therefore an opportunity to call attention to the matter then. He was alluding to the powder magazine at Toombul. It was a serious danger to the large population which was settling in that locality, and when tenders were called some time ago for enlarging the magazine he made such representations to the late Minister for Works that he visited the place and prevented the work being done; he also arranged that, in the event of another suitable site being found, the magazine should be removed. He (Mr. Gannon) had been considering the matter, and he thought that the point on Fisherman Island, at the entrance to the boat passage, would make a good site. It was high and dry, could be easily got at by merchants and others who required supplies, and there was always a sufficient number of men about to look after the magazine. He trusted that the Government would take steps to have the magazine removed from its present position. Then he would like to know whether anything was going to be done with the very dilapidated building used as a post office at the Albion. An amount was to have been placed on the Estimates

by the late Government to build a new post and telegraph station in place of the wretched disgraceful building now used for that purpose.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Postmaster-General informed him that arrangements had been made for effecting alterations in the post and telegraph office at the Albion.

Mr. GANNON said it would be impossible to alter the building in a satisfactory way, as it was one of the most rotten, broken-down places to be found within several miles of Brisbane. The money that it would cost to repair it would go a long way towards erecting a new building. The site was a splendid one, in the centre of the population. The Queensland National Bank was exactly opposite to it.

Mr. GRIMES said he could confirm what had been said in reference to Sergeant Atkinson, of Goodna, and he hoped that officer's case would be considered by the Colonial Secretary. He wished to call attention to the specifications for a drill-shed at Southport. He understood that it was insisted that the timber for that shed should be cypress pine. The result of that stipulation had been to increase the cost very considerably, and he was afraid it would not add to the stability of the building. Passing through the bush recently, four or five miles from Southport, he came upon a sawpit where two men were sawing timber by hand, a thing that had not been seen near Brisbane for many years past. Amused and puzzled at what was being done, he made inquiries and found that the contractor for the drill-shed, not being able to get cypress pine from the mills at a cost of less than 28s. per 100 feet, had sent men out into the bush to cut it by hand. The market price of ordinary timber at Southport was something like 14s. or 15s. per 100 feet, and the difference between that and 28s. would make a considerable increase in the cost of the shed. If cypress pine was specified with the idea that white ants would not touch it, a great mistake was made, because the ants were already in the timber before it was felled.

Mr. POWERS said the amount set down as general votes for buildings was £28,400. Was it intended to expend besides that amount another sum of at least £40,000 from balances that were available? The probable expenditure for the year was estimated by the Treasurer at £3,602,002, and a balance was shown of revenue over expenditure amounting to £6,998. By the explanation of the Minister for Works, not only were those sums to be spent, but, in addition to that, some thousands of pounds standing over as a balance from last year were to be expended.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he thought he had explained that matter before. From the Estimates for 1888-9 about £5,000, and from the last Estimates about £12,000 were carried over.

Mr. POWERS: And will be spent in addition to the £28,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; to meet promises made by my predecessor.

Mr. AGNEW said, with reference to the powder magazine, he had brought that matter up a few nights ago, but got no definite promise respecting its removal. He thought it was due to hon. members that some reply should be given as to what the Government intended to do with it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that matter was in his department, and the question had been answered. The Government had no intention of doing anything during the present year with regard to the removal of the powder magazine.

Mr. GANNON said he would once more draw the attention of the Minister for Works to the serious danger that magazine was to the city of Brisbane. There was serious danger in the manner in which powder and other explosives were taken from that magazine into the city, and if any explosion occurred the Ministry of the day would be responsible for it. The late Minister for Works would bear him out in stating that he had persistently urged the removal of the magazine on account of the serious danger it was, and if it were removed to the site he had mentioned, where there was a large area of Government land and no settlement, it would be perfectly safe, and cause no inconvenience to persons requiring powder.

Mr. NORTH said he would like to know when the Government would establish a post and telegraph office at Laidley. The late Postmaster-General had promised the people there an office if they paid the expenses for twelve months. That time had now expired, and he would like to know when the Government would erect an office there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said if the hon. gentleman would postpone his question until the Postmaster-General's estimates came on, the Minister in charge of them would, no doubt, be able to give him all information.

Mr. AGNEW said it was very difficult to know how the Estimates were worked. Like the hon. member for Lockyer, he was promised by the late Postmaster-General, Mr. Donaldson, that a sum of money would be put on the Estimates for a post and telegraph office at Nundah, and no doubt that would have been done had the hon. gentleman remained in office. But a change of Government had taken place; the building had not been erected, and if he asked the Minister for Works if it was the intention of the Government to carry out that work, he would hand him over to somebody else for an answer. It was very difficult to get any information. If hon. members were not confronted by a board of commissioners, they were handed over to some other Minister when they asked for information.

Mr. NORTH said there was no amount down in "miscellaneous services" for buildings for the Postmaster-General's Department. The previous Government had had £5,000 down, but it had been knocked off.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Postmaster-General would be able to give the hon. gentleman all information. He (the Minister for Works) had nothing to do with directing the Postmaster-General as to where post and telegraph offices were required.

Mr. BLACK said that was an extraordinary way of carrying on business. The Postmaster-General was present, and why did he not answer the question? It would facilitate business very much if the hon. gentleman would give the information asked for.

Mr. ALAND said it was usual for a member who desired information respecting any particular department to wait until the estimates of that department came on. If members did not know how to ask questions, Ministers should not be blamed. As long as he had been in the House, each Minister had defended his own estimates, the other Ministers remaining quiet, unless perhaps the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government found it necessary to explain matters.

Mr. DONALDSON said that was all very well; but, with regard to that particular vote, the circumstances were exceptional. Previously, there was £5,000 down in the Postmaster-

General's Department for the erection of buildings, but that had been struck out, and now there was £7,000 down in the Works Department for those buildings. It would certainly save time if the Postmaster-General gave the information desired.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said if he had the information he would be glad to give it, but he had not. The course of procedure was that the Post and Telegraph Department sent him a requisition stating that £7,000 was required for buildings. He did not know where those buildings were to be placed, but he would carry them out as required, to the best of his ability, and as cheaply as possible.

Mr. DONALDSON said he would again point out that if the Postmaster-General would give the information asked for, it would hasten on business. There was no vote for buildings in the Post Office estimates.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that if they waited until the Postmaster-General's estimates came on, they would be met with the reply that there were no buildings on his estimates, and told that they ought to have got the information from the Minister for Works. The present was the proper time to get the answer.

Mr. GANNON said perhaps the hon. gentleman would kindly ask his colleague, the Postmaster-General, how much he intended to spend on the repairs to the Albion post office.

Mr. POWERS said it would not be out of order for the Postmaster-General to answer a question concerning his department, even though his own estimates were not before the Committee. Not long ago a question was asked about the powder magazine, and the Colonial Treasurer immediately got up and answered it. The Postmaster-General might follow the lead of the Colonial Treasurer and give the information asked for.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon. T. O. Unmack) said he was not prepared to answer any questions in reference to the Post Office. His estimates were not expected to come on that night, and he had brought no papers in connection with them. Speaking from memory, he was not aware that there was any money down for post offices at Laidley or Albion.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he should like to know whether there was anything down for a post office at Esk? There was no place that required a post office more than Esk. They were inundated with post and telegraph offices round Brisbane within half or a quarter of a mile of each other. Esk was a place miles and miles away in the bush, the centre of an immense district, and the terminus of a railway, and there were only a couple of little wooden boxes for post office and police quarters that were not fit for anybody to live in. As neither the Postmaster-General nor the Minister for Works could give any information about the £7,000, it would perhaps be as well to postpone the vote until they came to the Postmaster-General's estimates.

Mr. NORTH said that unless the question was settled now, the present state of things would go on for twelve months.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said hon. members seemed to forget that the vote was only for additions, repairs, and furniture, not for new buildings.

Mr. AGNEW said hon. members seemed to be confusing two items. On the last Estimates there was a sum of £8,000 for "other buildings," and he presumed that that £8,000 included a sum, according to the promise made to him by

the late Postmaster-General, for the erection of a post and telegraph office at Nundah. That £8,000 had been reduced to £2,000. He wanted to know from the Minister what buildings had been knocked out. He hoped the promise made to him by the late Postmaster-General was not going to be repudiated entirely.

Mr. ALAND: Have you got it in writing?

Mr. AGNEW said he had not, but the late Postmaster-General was present, and would substantiate what he had said.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. member stated he had had a distinct promise that a post office would be erected at Nundah, and that an amount for it would be put on the Estimates. He had before him the Estimates of the late Colonial Treasurer framed after that promise was made; and the amount there for post and telegraph offices, additions, repairs, and furniture was £5,000. If the late Colonial Treasurer meant to fulfil that promise, he fancied he could not fulfil it on that particular item. The present Government instead of reducing that item had increased it by £2,000; it was now £7,000 instead of £5,000.

Mr. POWERS: You have knocked it off the Post Office votes. We had £10,000 down.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would ask where was the evidence that they did not intend to carry out any arrangement made by the late Government? There was nothing whatever in the Estimates to show it. They had heard of it that night for the first time. It was done regularly every year, and it was not an improper thing for a Minister to ask for an indefinite vote like that to meet current expenditure in the Post Office. To what extent that vote might be hypothecated he did not know, and the Postmaster-General said he did not know. It would not be a proper thing to insist that a schedule should be provided for every item of that sort, and it had always been done by a general vote, allowing the Minister the privilege of using his own judgment in each case. If the Committee could not trust the Government with the expenditure of that £7,000, let them strike it off the Estimates. The hon. member for Nundah had failed completely to show that the present Government had tried to evade any promise made by the late Government. There was no evidence of the promise on the Estimates of the late Government, and he would like to know where it was. Those little carping criticisms were most unfair, as if they were to schedule everything like that they would require three times the amount they had the modesty to ask for. There was no evidence of any such promise, nor did he hold that they were bound by the promises made by the late Government at all. They asked for £7,000 for post offices, repairs, and additions, and left it to the judgment of the Minister to see that the money was spent in the best possible way, and the Minister would no doubt give fair information as to how it was to be spent if he was asked.

Mr. POWERS said that in the Post Office estimates proposed by Mr. Donaldson there was £5,000 put down, and another £5,000 for post offices in the Works Department estimates of the late Government. So that the late Government set down £10,000 for the purpose, where the present Government set down £7,000, or £3,000 less. He admitted that the Postmaster-General could give no better information than evening than he had given, as he did not expect that his estimates would come on, and was not prepared for such questions.

Mr. DONALDSON said he would say, in conclusion on the subject, that he did make the promises referred to.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: There is no record of them.

Mr. DONALDSON said there was a very distinct record of the promise made with respect to a post office for Laidley. The people of Laidley agreed to supply a post office for a certain time on the condition that if the business there increased to a certain extent within that time they would have a post office erected there. The people there had fulfilled their part of the agreement, and he believed the business had sufficiently increased for them to claim the post office promised them by himself. That promise had been put down fully in writing. He had also made the other promise referred to by the hon. member for Nundah. The Treasurer was perfectly right in saying it would be absurd to schedule all those items. There had been £5,000 set down for the Post Office Department in the Postmaster-General's estimates of the late Government, and another £5,000 for the same department on the estimates of the Minister for Works, and it was the common practice to build post offices out of those votes. He knew the Postmaster-General could not carry all the details of his department in his head, and he thought the hon. gentleman had his papers with him in anticipation of his estimates coming on, and that was why he had spoken as he did, and it was for the purpose of getting the vote through that he suggested the hon. gentleman should give the information that was asked for.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the previous Government had £10,000 on the Estimates for post offices, additions, repairs, and furniture—£5,000 on the Post Office estimates, and £5,000 on the Works estimates. The £5,000 on the Works estimates had not been interfered with, and whether it included a sum for a post office at Nundah and another at Laidley he could not say that night. He hoped hon. members would take that as final. The Government would carry out any promises made by the late Government for which provision was made on the Estimates.

Mr. DONALDSON: You have reduced them by £3,000.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the £5,000 on the Postmaster-General's estimates of the late Government had been reduced by £3,000, because, after going over the matter with the Under Secretary of the Post Office, they had come to the conclusion that £2,000 would be sufficient for the purpose of meeting the expenditure upon repairs, additions, and furnishing.

Mr. DONALDSON said that the two votes of £5,000 each in the Estimates of the late Government had been reduced in all by £3,000.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: One was for post offices, and the other for repairs, additions, and furnishing.

Mr. DONALDSON said that as the hon. member had pointed out, it was probable that £2,000 would be enough for repairs and furnishing, but it had been the practice to use the vote also for new post offices, and that was far better than to put down a sum for a post office here and for another there. The department reckoned up the amount that would be required for repairs and for new offices that might be necessary. The two promises referred to had been made by him, and he would not be doing right if he did not support the assertions of the hon. members who had referred to them. In the case of Laidley a distinct agreement was entered into, and he understood that the Laidley people had fulfilled their part of the agreement.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would like to ask the Minister for Works whether the amount of £1,000 put down for two additional wards at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum would be sufficient to construct two wards?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was able to say that tenders had been accepted for two additional wards at Dunwich for £850.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would like the Minister to tell the Committee what quarters for police magistrates and wardens he proposed to build out of the vote for £1,000 set down. He knew that on an average they cost more than £1,000 each.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not anticipate that there would be a very great demand for quarters during the current year.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: There is always a demand if they choose to apply.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that if there were any demands, there was an unexpended balance of £3,647 10s. 6d. in addition to that vote of £1,000 to meet them.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said there was a demand already. There were many police magistrates and wardens in the colony who received an allowance in lieu of rent, and it would be much cheaper to build residences for them. That was the demand.

Mr. GANNON said that at the risk of being tedious he would once more point out the necessity of removing the powder magazine. He would again ask the Colonial Treasurer—

The COLONIAL TREASURER rose to a point of order. He would ask the Chairman's ruling as to whether the hon. gentleman was in order in discussing a matter that had already been discussed when the Estimates of the Treasury Department were considered. A reply had already been given.

The CHAIRMAN said the hon. member was out of order in again bringing forward a question to which a reply had been given when the Estimates of the Colonial Treasurer were under consideration.

Mr. AGNEW said he wished to know whether the Postmaster-General acknowledged that the sum of money to which he had referred had been put on the Estimates to construct a post office at Nundah.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he acknowledged nothing of the kind. He had said that he had not inquired about that vote, and he was not in a position to give the information that night.

Mr. AGNEW said he received the personal promise of the late Treasurer, and he was satisfied to stand on that promise, that he had put a sum of money on the Estimates for the purpose. He was satisfied to accept the assurance of the present Minister that he had no intention of interfering with that vote.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the late Treasurer had not said it was on the Estimates.

Mr. AGNEW said the late Treasurer stated that he had recommended or placed the money on the Estimates; and he accepted the assurance of the Postmaster-General that he had no intention of altering it. If that was the understanding he was satisfied; if not, he was still prepared to discuss the matter.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. member would not get a bit nearer having a post office at Nundah by using language of that sort. The Government did not admit the responsibility of anybody except themselves, and

they were prepared to accept the whole responsibility of their actions. He never heard till that night that the promise referred to by the hon. member had been made by the late Treasurer, and he would like that hon. gentleman to say now whether he had made the promise or not. But even so, the responsibility lay with the Government, and it was quite possible that, under altered circumstances, promises made by the late Treasurer would not be suitable to the present circumstances of the colony. He would like the late Treasurer to state distinctly whether he put a sum of money on the Estimates for a post office at Nundah or left a schedule that would enable his successor to know that he had made such a promise.

Mr. DONALDSON said the amount was not put on the schedule, but it had been the practice to pay for a lot of buildings out of the vote for "other buildings."

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. member would simply like to have done it, if he could.

Mr. DONALDSON said he fully intended to build a post office at Nundah if he had remained in office, and he believed there was sufficient money on the Estimates for the purpose.

Mr. AGNEW said he took the Colonial Treasurer's speech to mean that if he (Mr. Agnew) persisted in speaking they would get no post office at Nundah. He did not care whether they did or not, but he had the courage to speak according to his convictions; and even if he deprived the electors of the chance of getting a post office, he was going to have his say on the vote. A distinct promise was given by the late Colonial Treasurer, and in his opinion it was the duty of an honourable Government to respect the promises of their predecessors. If it was not, he apologised for his stupidity in misunderstanding their duty.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. gentleman had not the slightest justification for summarising what he (the Colonial Treasurer) had said in the words he had just used—namely, that if he persisted in talking he would get nothing. He had used no threat, and he did not mean to imply anything of the kind. He had listened intelligently to the expressions of opinion from members on both sides in regard to the wants of their districts, so as to get information that would be useful to Ministers; but he did not know what object the hon. member might have in blocking Government business.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had been waiting for an opportunity for the last few minutes to refer to the ruling given by the Chairman, to the effect that the hon. member for Toombul was not in order in bringing up the question of the powder magazine in connection with the vote now under consideration; and he now wished to know why that ruling was given? The Colonial Treasurer claimed that powder magazines were in his department. There was an item in that department relating to the keepers of magazines; but the buildings were in the Works Department. He therefore wished to know why the hon. member for Toombul was ruled out of order when he was asking a question about public works.

The CHAIRMAN said the question, though relevant to the vote, had been replied to in connection with another item.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Chairman had ruled an hon. member out of order because he asked a question upon a vote that was relevant to the subject under discussion. That was absolutely new.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that what the hon. member had just said was only partially true. There was no doubt that the expenditure on account of the buildings came under the Works Department, but so far as that department was concerned there was no expenditure contemplated at present in connection with the Brisbane powder magazine. The matter had been discussed and settled on a previous vote.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that what the hon. gentleman had stated was only partially true. The building of powder magazines came under the Works Department always, and the salaries of the keepers were paid by the Treasury Department, except in the case of mining magazines. He hoped the hon. member for Toombul would press his question.

Mr. GANNON said he would ask the Minister for Works to kindly tell him whether there was any intention to remove, at an early date, the powder magazine now at Eagle Farm Flats? Once more he wanted to impress upon the Government the necessity for the removal of the magazine, and the extreme danger it was to the citizens in and around Brisbane. He was really sorry to have to take up the time of hon. members over that matter, but he felt so strongly that it was a great danger to the community that he regarded it as his duty to press for the removal of the magazine.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there was nothing on the Estimates in respect to the powder magazine; and, so far as the Works Department was concerned, there was no intention of doing anything with the magazine during the current year.

Mr. ANNEAR said he had a great deal to do with the powder magazine, and he thought the hon. member for Toombul was entirely wrong in his contention that it should be removed. The present site was alongside the river. The explosives came from Europe, and were put into the magazine, and the chief part of those landed in the port of Brisbane were sent to the North of the colony. If the magazine was removed to any place where the explosives would have to be carried by rail or road, it would increase the cost of explosives by at least 2d. per lb. There was no danger from the magazine as it was at present situated. There were not twenty people living within three miles of it. During the last fortnight he had removed from the magazine thirty tons of explosives, which had gone to the North. It was said that the magazine should be removed, so as to be out of the reach of a flood; yet during the last flood, which was the highest ever known in this part of the colony, there was not 1 lb. of explosives destroyed by water. The water did not come within a foot of the floor; but someone removed a quantity of explosives from the powder magazine to the coal shed erected for the Defence Force, and it was in that shed that some explosives were destroyed. So long as the present caretaker was in charge of the magazine there would be no danger of an explosion. The other day a shipment of powder arrived from Germany, and the kegs containing it were fastened with composition nails. The Navigation Act required that all nails used in such cases should be copper nails, and the firm to whom the powder was consigned had to take out all the composition nails and substitute copper nails before the kegs were allowed to be stored in the magazine.

Mr. GANNON said the hon. member who had just spoken regarded the matter from a very interested point of view. The hon. member must know that he had made statements in

regard to the powder magazine which anyone who was acquainted with the district knew were not facts. The place he (Mr. Gannon) proposed to remove the powder magazine to was at Lytton. It was easily accessible, and there was also a prospect of a branch railway being made to Lytton. There was a large area of Government land in the vicinity, and there was always a number of defence force officials about who could look after the magazine. The hon. member for Maryborough must know that there was great danger to the community in connection with the way explosives were brought up to Brisbane. Large quantities were brought into the city on drays nearly every week. He trusted that the powder magazine would be removed.

The PREMIER said he must really once more appeal to hon. members to get on with the business. He had been a great many years in the House, and he did not remember any session in which the progress had been so slow as it had been during the past few weeks when there was not a deliberate intention to obstruct the Estimates. On all sides of the Committee they had been assured that there was an intention to assist the Government to bring the session to an early close, and yet in the way they were going on at the present time it certainly could not close before Christmas. He did not know whether it was due to the inexperience of some hon. members in the committee, but that would be the necessary result of the discussion going on. What was the use of discussing the removal of the magazine? The Government did not intend to alter the site of the magazine, and if hon. members talked about it for two days it would not make any difference. He appealed to the hon. member's sense of the fitness of things not to occupy unnecessarily the time of the Committee over a matter that was not on the Estimates. Of course they could find 365 or 3,650 cases in the colony where buildings were not erected. But if they were to have a discussion on each of them, parliamentary business would become an absolute impossibility. He appealed to members on both sides of the Committee to endeavour to bring the session to an early close.

Mr. GANNON said the hon. gentleman spoke as though hon. members on his side were obstructing the Estimates. Such was not the case. He had been quite long enough in the House to know that if they talked for a month it would not make the slightest difference in the Estimates. With the exception that it afforded an opportunity to hon. members to bring forward wrongs which ought to be righted, it was a perfect farce discussing the Estimates. He believed that there had been far and away more obstruction from the Government side of the Committee by the long speeches made by hon. members on a number of questions, than there had been by members of the Opposition. He did not often speak; but when he did it was on subjects he knew something about. The question of the removal of the powder magazine was a matter of the greatest importance to the citizens of Brisbane; it was one concerning the lives of hundreds of people, who should be taken care of by the Government. And although the Premier said the powder magazine would not be removed, it was well known that such pressure could be brought to bear on the Government that they would have to remove it. He hoped the Government would withdraw from the position they had taken up, and decide to remove the magazine from the Eagle Farm Flats without any such pressure being brought to bear on them.

Mr. DONALDSON said it was unfair of the Premier to accuse members on that side of obstructing the business.

The PREMIER: I appealed to members all round.

Mr. DONALDSON said the hon. gentleman spoke to members on that side. The members of the Opposition had been particularly mild in their criticisms of the Estimates. It must, however, be admitted that the Estimates were going through very slowly, and he trusted they would soon be disposed of. The hon. member for Toombul was, he knew, very much in earnest about the removal of the powder magazine. He had had many conversations with the hon. member on the subject. The hon. member was not present when the Treasury estimates were under consideration, and he now sought for information as to whether it was intended to remove the powder magazine from its present site. However, he had now got an answer, and it was to be hoped that there would be no further discussion on the subject, which was not properly before the Committee, the Treasurer being responsible for the management of the powder magazine, though the vote for the erection of a new building would come under the Works Department, just the same as the erection of buildings for the Post and Telegraph Department came under the Works Department.

Mr. CROMBIE said he knew that people resident in the neighbourhood of the powder magazine were very anxious on account of the danger of explosion. He had sat patiently waiting until the hon. member for Toombul got an answer to his question, and it had taken three-quarters of an hour to get it. The Government were therefore to blame for the delay that had taken place, not the hon. member for Toombul.

Mr. LITTLE said he thoroughly endorsed the remarks of the Chief Secretary and the leader of the Opposition, that they should try and push the Estimates through. The hon. member for Toombul seemed to be terribly afraid of powder. If their fathers had taken the same view of it, few of them would be there that night. He did not think there was any danger at all in connection with the magazine.

The HON. P. PERKINS said he did not know what quantity of explosives was stored in the magazine, which was situated some miles down the river below the Hamilton; but he had noticed a statement within the last few weeks to the effect that there were 600 tons of explosives in the magazine at Bacchus Marsh, about four miles from Melbourne, or about two miles in a straight line. He believed there was nothing like that quantity in the magazine here, and with proper precautions there need be no danger. At any rate, those who raised that storm in a teapot should suggest some better site for the magazine.

Mr. AGNEW said what he wanted to ask was whether the Government would give some assurance that the promise made to him that a post and telegraph office would be erected at Nundah would not be ignored?

The PREMIER said the promise asked by the hon. member was one that could not possibly be given. As had been pointed out by the Treasurer, the Government were responsible to Parliament for what they did. Whatever they did they did on their own responsibility, and not on the responsibility of anybody else; so that the information the hon. gentleman asked for could not be given.

Question put and passed.

ROADS AND BRIDGES.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £8,000 be granted for roads and bridges. Contracts had been let for repairs to the Rockhampton bridge, and for the bridge over the Mary River.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he should like to know on what principle the item of £3,700 for roads and bridges was to be distributed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he intended to follow the principle adopted by his predecessor in apportioning that money in the Northern portion of the colony. The £3,700 would be supplemented by £1,754, so that there would be nearly £6,000 to be distributed, and the sparsely-populated districts were the places where he intended to administer the vote.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: In the Northern portion of the colony?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. BLACK said, with regard to the repairs to the Rockhampton bridge, he understood the arrangement that was made between the late Government and the municipal council was that the Government should pay half the cost. From what the Treasurer had said just now there was some doubt as to whether he would consider himself bound by the promise of the late Government; but if that promise were carried out, he should like to know if £3,000 would be sufficient to pay half the cost of the work?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the contract price for the work was £5,968, and, in accordance with the promise of the late Government, the Government would provide one-half the cost. The £3,000 was put down for that purpose.

Mr. BLACK said he was glad to hear that in some cases, at all events, the Government did not intend to repudiate the promises of their predecessors.

The PREMIER said the Government would repudiate no contracts made by any previous Government; but idle promises made by Ministers when full of good intentions were in no way binding upon their successors. No Government could be carried on if a Government was bound to carry out all the benevolent intentions of their predecessors, as expressed to deputations. Government would be impossible under such conditions. The previous Government had made a good many promises, and perhaps that was one reason why they were not now in office, because it was thought time that an effort should be made to rectify the finances of the colony.

Mr. AGNEW said he had his view of that matter also. The late Government had put down £13,000 for that vote; the present Government had reduced it by £5,000, and it would now appear that the constituencies of those members who had the courage of their convictions and voted in a certain way were to be punished. He was one of those evidently from the vote that had just been passed, and he should have to do his best in the matter. He agreed with the late Minister for Lands that it was a bad principle to inaugurate in the colony, that the promises made by responsible Ministers should be regarded as worth nothing. If the public were to regard the promises and the honour of Ministers of the Crown as not worth anything, then the commercial morality of the colony would receive a deep and severe blow.

Mr. GANNON said he would ask whether anything had been arranged with regard to a bridge over Breakfast Creek on the Bowen Bridge road, near the hospital?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said some papers had recently come before him in connection with the bridge; but no provision had yet been made for it. The matter had been considered by the previous Government.

Mr. AGNEW: And repudiated by the present Government?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Nothing of the kind.

Question put and passed.

RAILWAYS—GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. T. O. Unmack) moved that £14,436 be granted for railways—general establishment. Most of the increases were apparent only, the amounts having been previously paid out of other votes in the department. There was an increase in the salary of the General Traffic Manager, which was promised to him some time ago, in consequence of a rearrangement of his duties.

Mr. DRAKE said he wished to call attention to the alteration that had been made in the time-table on the Sandgate Railway during the present month—an alteration that had inflicted a great amount of hardship and inconvenience on the residents of Petrie terrace, Red Hill, Kelvin Grove, East Paddington, and the whole of that district. Those people had been in the habit of using the Normanby Railway station to some extent for the purpose of coming into town, and to a very large extent for the purpose of travelling to and from stations on the Sandgate line. On the 1st November an alteration was made in the time-table, by which all the traffic was diverted from the line going through Victoria Park, and sent through the Valley. The effect of that had been practically to denude the Victoria Park line of all traffic. On the present occasion, he wished simply to lay the facts before the Committee, without commenting much on them or suggesting any remedies, because the Railway Commissioners had consented to receive a deputation from the residents of those districts next Friday. He still hoped that some arrangement would be made by which the traffic could be carried on in such a way as not to inconvenience the residents. If not, he should take an opportunity before the session closed to endeavour to get from the Government some assurance that the interests of those people would not be entirely sacrificed. Last week he put a question to the Minister for Railways with regard to the traffic for the previous twelve months upon that line from the two stations that still remained open—from the Exhibition station and from the Normanby station. His object in asking the question was to show that during the twelve months ended on the 31st October there was a considerable amount of traffic to and from those stations. Since the 1st of the month, by the new arrangement, the traffic had been practically taken off that line, and no doubt figures would be forthcoming by-and-by to show that the traffic during the present month had been insignificant, and that under such circumstances it would be hardly worth while to carry on the service at all. He wanted to show how that had arisen. In the first place, one station—Bowen Hills—which was on the Victoria Park line, had been taken off that line and put upon the Valley line; consequently the traffic from the district round about Bowen Hills station would in future be credited to the new line going through the Valley, and not to the old line going through Victoria Park. That left only the two stations—Exhibition and Normanby. Since the new time-table came into operation, there had been a service put on between Roma street station and Mayne junction, but it was a service of such a character that there was no possibility of its becoming a paying one. It was not a service of trains, because it consisted of one train only, and it was composed of the engine and two of the old trams that were imported from America eight or nine years ago. That train ran backwards and forwards eight times in

the course of the day; the first train between 6 and 7, and the last between 5 and 6 in the afternoon, and it ran only from Roma street to Mayne junction and back. No doubt the train had been timed as far as possible to meet the trains coming the other way at Mayne Junction; but, as a matter of fact, passengers had to wait nearly every time. He made the experiment once, and had to wait twenty-two minutes. He would point out the inconveniences to passengers attempting to travel by that train. A passenger could not book through to anywhere. If he wanted to go from Normanby station to the Central station he had first to take his ticket to Roma street. At Roma street he had to get out, go over the bridge, get another ticket, and then go back again and start from the same side of the line as he came. He (Mr. Drake) was speaking from information given to him by men who were in the habit of travelling that way. Any one who had attempted to travel in that way would not do so again. If a passenger wanted to go the other way, he had to take a ticket first of all for Mayne Junction, and to wait for a train when he got there; and there was only a small shed and an open platform there. He had then to take another ticket, and start on a fresh journey. Passengers would not travel in that way, and no doubt the traffic upon that branch—if it could be called a branch now—would fall off still further. He did not want to say a word against the Commissioners, who were no doubt endeavouring to carry out what they considered to be their duty to the best of their ability; and their first duty, in their opinion was no doubt to make the railways pay. No doubt they had that object in view, but the convenience of people accustomed to use the railways should also be studied to a very great extent. If the convenience of passengers was not studied they would leave off travelling, and then there would be but a very small probability of the line being made to pay. He just wished to quote some figures furnished to him by the Commissioners through the Minister for Railways in answer to a question which he had put to that Minister. They referred to the passenger traffic in and out of the Normanby and Exhibition stations for the twelve months ending 31st October. From the Normanby station in and out of Brisbane—Roma street and Central station—during the year there were 8,388 tickets issued, and the receipts were £130 16s. 9d., and he might say that he did not think that the Central station had been open during the whole of that time. From the Normanby station in and out of all other stations the passenger tickets issued numbered 39,228, and the receipts were £1,597 16s. 3d. The totals therefore in and out of the Normanby station would be 47,616 tickets issued and £1,728 13s. revenue received. With regard to the Exhibition station, the figures were—in and out of Brisbane—Roma street and Central—tickets issued, 11,335, and receipts, £159 5s. 6d.; in and out of other stations, 49,195 tickets issued, and receipts, £2,379 2s. 10d., making the totals for the Exhibition station, 60,530 tickets issued, and £2,538 8s. 4d. revenue received. The total number of tickets issued in and out of both those stations together numbered 108,146, and the total revenue received from them was £4,267 1s. 4d. Those figures would show that those two stations had been largely availed of by the public, and he claimed that it would be a very great hardship for the people residing round about those districts, who were in the habit of using the Normanby station, if that station was closed; and he saw pretty clearly that the figures that would be forthcoming under the present system would furnish an argument against that station. That station had

been a very great convenience to the people living in the districts he had mentioned, and it was the only portion of the Queensland railway system that touched that district. It was a populous district, and was becoming more populous every day, and it was extremely hard that when they were trying to get increased railway communication there should be a prospect of those districts being actually deprived of the communication they had at the present time. As it was very closely connected with that matter, he should like to say a word about the Enoggera railway, which had been before the Committee on several occasions. A railway had been surveyed, as a great many members knew, some fifteen or sixteen years ago, from a point just beyond the Normanby station, to go out to Enoggera, and the people of that district had been waiting and anxiously looking forward for that railway ever since that time. On several occasions the matter had been brought before the House, and in 1887 the House affirmed by a unanimous vote that it should be amongst the first railways to be constructed. On various other occasions assurance had been given that that railway would be constructed as soon as means were available. A very great number of people were of opinion that an important mistake had been made in the first place in not taking the North Coast Line *vid* Normanby and Samford, and that opinion was expressed by a number of men who knew far more about engineering and railway matters than he did. All the hopes entertained by the people of those districts from time to time that they would have the benefit of railway communication had been disappointed one after the other, and it seemed now from the action being taken that they were going to be deprived of the very meagre accommodation they had at the present time. He hoped the Railway Commissioners would see their way to recommend that action should be taken by which the requirements of the people of those districts would be met. He did not wish at present to suggest any means by which they should be met, because he understood that the Commissioners for Railways had the matter under consideration. He trusted they would see their way to do something, so that a line which had been a useful line, and that should, according to promises held out from time to time, be the first portion of a line to Enoggera, should not be closed through a diversion of traffic.

Mr. NORTH said he would like the Minister to inform the Committee how it was that the £100 previously paid to Stephen Welch, a late engine driver in the employ of the department, had been knocked off? He was not going to allow the vote to go through until he got to the bottom of that case. He meant to fight it out on that vote.

Mr. ARCHER said there was one subject he would like to call the attention of the Minister to. He thought it was a matter seriously affecting the revenue from the railway; but if they had sufficient information it might be shown that it was the best possible way to manage it. He referred to the rates of carriage from the outside districts, which had been greatly lowered because the colony had to compete with New South Wales, which colony possessed physical advantages that Queensland did not possess. That would not be so serious if it affected only one line of railway; but it became a serious matter when the rates on one line were lowered so as to catch the trade that would otherwise go to another part of this colony, and then lowered the rates on the other main lines so as to equalise the rates on the three main lines of railway. At the present time freights were much lower on the Central line and on the Northern line than they

would be if there was no necessity for fighting New South Wales in order to get the traffic that would otherwise go there. He wished to know whether there had been a close calculation as to whether the loss of trade that would accrue on the Southern line by not lowering the freights, and thus enabling the freights on the Northern and Central lines to be raised, would not more than compensate for the loss of trade that would go to New South Wales. If so, it would be much more satisfactory than the present system to everybody, except the squatters, who could afford to pay a little more. At the present time the freight from Tambo to Rockhampton was only half what it used to be years ago, and the wool was only one day on the way to port instead of being four or five months; so that he thought the freights might fairly be raised to a remunerative standard. No doubt the matter had been considered, and he would like to know what result had been arrived at by the department.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said the matter was now under the serious consideration of the department, and a revised tariff would probably be ready within two or three weeks.

Mr. ALLAN said he wished to place on record one or two matters connected with the railways that had been promised in his district. They had been dangled before the electors for many years, but they had not yet been constructed. Nine years ago provision was made for the survey of a direct line to Warwick, and six years ago the sum of £750,000 was included in the Loan Act for the construction of the several lines; but not one shilling had been expended with the exception of the cost of the surveys. It made people lose faith in their representatives, and also made hon. members lose faith in the power of Parliament, when railways were not constructed, though they had been promised and the money had been voted. He also wished to refer to the promised branch line from Hendon to Allora. As hon. members were aware, it was originally intended that the main line should go through Allora, but it was taken by a route which left Allora four or five miles from the railway. After a great deal of agitation, the present Colonial Treasurer, who was then Premier, undertook, on condition that the people of the district would build the line themselves, that money should be found for the purpose under the Local Works Loans Act. He conveyed that information to his constituents, who agreed to the proposition; but the Government afterwards decided that it would be better for them to build the line, and they put the money on the Estimates for the purpose. The vote was stonewalled, however, and thrown out; and now it had been struck off altogether. In order that the facts might be placed on record, he would read the correspondence he had had with the late Minister for Railways and others in regard to the direct line, so that the Committee might know the hardship suffered by his constituents through the action of successive Governments. After the close of last session, on the 18th November, he wrote the following letter to the late Minister for Railways, Mr. Nelson:—

“Brisbane, 18th November, 1889.

“DEAR SIR,

“Now that the House has risen, and while the majority of the Ministers are in town, I wish to refer to some matters in your department which very intimately concern my district. The importance of the subjects you will, I think, consider a sufficient apology for troubling you. I refer particularly to the line from Mumbilla to Landawik—the permanent survey of which has been made—and a short line from Hendon to Allora. In regard to the last, I am well aware that it is not the fault of the Government that this is not being gone on with, as, had the Opposition not stonewalled the work, it would have been one of the first constructed, as the

survey is already made. Would you be good enough to inform me what the Government propose to do with this line next session?

"I would also be obliged if you could inform me when Mr. Lethem may be expected to resume his survey of the direct line; also, if you would be agreeable to let him recommence that work at the Warwick end, which I would personally prefer; also, should Mr. Lethem's services be considered indispensable in a different locality, will you instruct some other competent railway surveyor to undertake this work at once? As to the Mumbilla-Landawk section of the direct line, this is not in my district, but my constituents are much interested in its being proceeded with. I am well aware that heretofore great difficulty would have been experienced by the Government had they brought this on, consequent upon the opposition that existed to it in the House, especially among the Northern members. I am sure this antagonism was caused from want of information, and it is gratifying to know that those best qualified to judge are now in favour of carrying out this work. I believe I may take the liberty of including you in this category, and I understand that none of the Cabinet are adverse. Several of the Northern and Central members, who previously stated they would oppose its construction, have now informed me that they are in favour of it. Under these circumstances, I do not think I ask too much when I request your assurance that the Government will bring the section on for approval of Parliament early next session. The section I have specified traverses, as you are aware, very fine agricultural land thickly populated, very productive, and capable of much expansion. I consider the Government will be fully justified in constructing it simply as a branch line alone, without taking into consideration its connection with the main project of the direct line. You personally know the district, therefore I will not trouble you with statistics of population, and produce grown, and the certainty of there being opened up large industries in timber, coal, etc. I may, however, point out how deeply my constituents and myself have this matter at heart, and feel that the time has more than arrived when some action should be taken by the Government. I will therefore anxiously await your reply, trusting it will be definite and favourable.

"Yours very truly,

"W. M. ALLAN.

"Hon. Hugh Nelson, Minister for Railways, Brisbane." Three days afterwards he received a short and distinct answer from the Minister as follows:—

"Secretary for Railways' Office,

"Brisbane, 21st November, 1889.

"SIR,

"I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 20th instant, having reference to the railway—Ipswich to Warwick—for which £500,000 was provided by the Loan Act of 1884. Knowing the country as I do, I have always been cognisant of the fact that there is good country at each end suitable for close settlement. I have, therefore, been of opinion that to construct a section at each end to connect with existing lines would be a wise measure. In response to your question, it is the intention of the Government to submit plans next session, for a section from Mumbilla, on the Fassifern line, to Landawk, in the direction of Spicer's Peak.

"With reference to the line from Hendon to Allora, I have already expressed my views on this matter, and may remind you that this was included in the list of railways which was brought down to the House last session, and afterwards withdrawn. It is the intention of the Government to bring this matter forward again next session.

"I, yesterday, had some conversation with the chairman of the Commission and the Chief Engineer, having reference to the survey, Warwick towards Spicer's Peak, and find that there will be no objection on their part to the course you recommend being adopted—that is, for the survey, when it is resumed, to be carried forward from the Warwick end. As to the individual surveyor to be placed on this work, that is purely a departmental matter, it being the function of the Commissioners and the Chief Engineer, who are acquainted with the individual capacity of each surveyor, to allot the work. No doubt a competent staff surveyor will be sent as soon as the work in hand allows of this survey being resumed.

"I am, sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"(Signed) HUGH M. NELSON,

"Secretary for Railways.

"Wm. Allan, Esq., M.L.A."

When he received that letter he came to the conclusion that at last they were getting within measurable distance of having that work done, and his constituents naturally came to the same conclusion; but now they found that it was as far forward as it was nine years ago, before the money was put on the Loan Estimates. He might say that the promise given by the late Minister for Railways was carried out as far as it could be carried out. The line was put on the schedule which was tabled at the beginning of the session, and surveyors were sent up with instructions to go on with the survey of the line from Warwick towards Spicer's Peak. He regretted to say that those instructions had been cancelled by the present Minister for Railways, and the surveyors had been withdrawn. Thinking that the line was likely to be proceeded with, and hearing that the Railway Commissioners wished to see the country, he undertook, a few months ago, with their permission, to travel with them over the route of the line. They spent several days on the trip, and carefully inspected the country from Harrisville, *via* Fassifern, Lanhawk, and Maryvale, towards Warwick. He had heard much about the line; but was certainly not prepared to find such magnificent country and beautiful scenery. There was no more beautiful scenery or better soil on the face of the earth than there was on that line. He would not take up the time of hon. members by giving a description of it. He had written a short pamphlet about it, and would be very glad to give a copy of it to any hon. member who desired to obtain information on the subject. He would read a short extract from the pamphlet, which summed up the case more concisely than he could do in a speech. After speaking of the country which the line would traverse, he said:—

"Stopping at the Warwick bridge over the railway, we noted where the main line would be tapped by the proposed line (the *via recta*) which, when completed, will not only open all this country I have attempted to roughly sketch, with its grand soil and scenery, but will also, by a line 62½ miles long, shorten the distance between Ipswich and Warwick, and between Brisbane and Sydney by 67½ miles.

"We have lately heard of the construction of the Forth Bridge by private companies, at a cost of £2,250,000 sterling, in order to save twenty miles in distance and half an hour in time. For less than a quarter of this amount, this line will save three times as much in distance and six times as much in time between the capital cities of New South Wales and Queensland; and in addition open up a great farming, timber, and mineral district for sixty-two miles. Besides, it will save the reduplication of the present line, *via* Toowoomba, which otherwise will become a necessity in the near future. Such reduplication would require the alteration of the whole permanent way, tunnels, and bridges between Ipswich and Warwick—140 miles—and although this would entail much greater cost than the direct line, not a mile would be added to our railway system, nor a single extra acre of country benefited.

"I am glad to say I found the principal freeholders on the proposed line willing to meet the Government liberally. Along the greater distance, and where the most valuable land exists through which this line passes, the owners or their respective representatives were quite willing to agree (or advise their principals to agree) to my suggestion—that they should give up to the Government, free of cost, whatever land was required for railway purposes. In fact, I did not receive one refusal, although of course I was unable to see many of the smaller holders.

"I would like to point out that neither this line nor any section of it has ever officially been before the House. I have been surprised to find many well-informed men, and even some members of Parliament, under the impression that it has. Two lines have been before the House with which the direct line (often appropriately called the *via recta*) has been confused—namely, a proposed line called Thane's Creek line, from Warwick towards Inglewood, and a section of a proposed line from Warwick towards St. George, and for which £250,000 appears in the

£10,000,000 loan. These two proposed routes, as far as they went, were nearly similar, except in name. They did not, however, in any way touch on the direct line; indeed, they are on the opposite side altogether of the Southern and Western Railway. I applied in the House, in 1882, for a survey of the direct line, and it was granted by the McIlwraith Government, and the then Minister for Lands reserved what land he could in the direction it was presumed the survey would take. The Griffith Government included £500,000 in the £10,000,000 loan for the construction of the line, but no section of it has yet been before the House. It was understood, however, that one portion from Mumbilla to Landawik would come on this session."

He need not read further from that pamphlet, but would conclude by pointing out that the line in question was regarded not even as an intercolonial line, but as an international line; and to prove that he would read a short note he had received from a gentleman who was well known as one of the first members of the Parliament in Victoria—the Hon. William Campbell—who had for many years taken great interest in fast means of communication, and had written a pamphlet on fast routes to Australia:—

"19 Portman Square,

"London, 14th August, 1890.

"DEAR ALLAN,

"I have read your paper on the direct line from Harrisville to Warwick. The distance to be saved should of itself be a good reason for constructing it. Hereafter there will probably be a line of steamers from Vancouver to Australia, and Brisbane is the nearest point to reach, and that alone should induce the Queensland Government to shorten the time to the southern colonies. The narrow gauge is a great mistake, as a fast steamer direct to Sydney from Vancouver would deliver mails much earlier than by your present narrow gauge line, so if Queensland aspires to be the terminus for the mail steamers, it should prepare for rapid communication.

"Yours very truly,

"(Signed) WILLIAM CAMPBELL."

So that interest was taken in that line, not only in this and the neighbouring colonies, but had also carried its reputation to the old country. He sincerely trusted that the Government would see their way in the near future to raise funds to carry out some of those works that had been promised for such a long time. There need be no difficulty in raising money if they would only do one thing—get rid of some of their land. However, he was not going into that question now. He believed the great majority of the Committee were of his way of thinking, and that if hon. members sitting on the Treasury benches spoke out they all, with one exception, would express the same opinion. By that means, and the imposition of the beer tax, they would soon get over their troubles, and be able to proceed with those works in the near future.

Mr. NELSON said the question under consideration was not the making of new railways, but whether they should grant the Government a certain amount of money to maintain and manage the railways that they now had. It was, however, only natural for hon. members to ventilate their grievances with respect to railway construction, but the proper time for that was when the Loan Estimates came on, which would not be very long. In order to divert the discussion to the subject in hand, he should like to direct attention to a misconception which, he believed, existed in the minds of a large section of the public. In the estimates before the Committee there had been a reduction made of £14,161 as compared with the estimates submitted only a few months ago, and a good many of the public were of opinion that that reduction had been brought about by some pressure on the part of the Government. Of course the estimates were prepared by the Commissioners and submitted to the

Government, and he felt quite certain that the Commissioners would not submit to any undue pressure in the way of cheeseparing on necessary expenditure for the maintenance and management of our railways. Still that impression had got abroad. It was referred to by the leader of the Opposition during the financial debate, and no proper reply was then given. What a large section of the public wanted to know was this: Whether they were entrusting their lives and their property to the management of skilled experts, as the Commissioners were supposed to be; or whether they were submitting themselves to the management of a Minister who knew nothing, and was supposed to know nothing, about the actual management of railways? When he came to analyse that £14,000, it seemed a wonder that any alteration should have been made in the Estimates at all. It was a mere flea-bite. £14,000 out of nearly £700,000 was hardly worth talking about. When he came to look at the figures by which that reduction was brought about, he noticed that the vote for advertising had been reduced by £250. Had that anything to do with the grievance brought before the House a few days ago with regard to an alteration being made in the running of trains without any notice having been given? Surely it could not be that in order to save £250 the Commissioners were bound, by some means that he could not imagine, to curtail expenditure in advertising! He believed the want of advertising in the case referred to was simply due to an oversight on the part of one of the junior officials. Then again he noticed that, although the number of men employed had not been reduced, the wages to be paid had been considerably reduced.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No. There has been no reduction in wages; on the contrary, there have been increases.

Mr. NELSON said he did not say that there had been any actual reduction in wages, but that there was a smaller sum put down for the same number of men. For instance, for 320 station inspectors, warehousemen, porters, pointsmen, signalmen, watchmen, extra labour, and contingencies, there was provided in July £31,325; that sum was now reduced to £29,525, and the natural inference was that certain increases of wages were due, and in order to economise those increases had been knocked off. Then, again, there was a reduction of £6,000 in maintenance. Of this, £4,000 was on the Central line, and surely it was only reasonable to expect that some guarantee would be given that their railways were going to be maintained in an efficient manner. If it required £61,000 for the Central Railway in July, and only £57,000 in September, there must be some reason for it. On the Southern and Western Railway, the expense of which was more than half of the whole expenditure on railways, there had been a saving of £170. That was hardly worth making. On the Maryborough and Gympie Railway there was a saving of £1,847; on the Central Railway, £6,090; on the Mackay Railway, £400; on the Bowen Railway, £700; on the Northern Railway, £2,064. Those matters the Minister ought to be able to explain. With regard to the saving on the vote before the Committee, he had already alluded to the saving of £250 on the advertisements. That was a very paltry saving; and the saving on travelling expenses, postage and incidentals was so small that it seemed a work of supererogation to make any alteration in the amount. There was also a very paltry saving of £100 for compensation for injuries. That was the amount paid to Stephen Welch, of Laidley, who had been receiving that sum as compensation from the

Government for the last fourteen years. As far as he knew, Welch was just as much entitled to receive the money now as he had been any time during the last ten years. It was a pity that that small reduction had been made. On the whole it was satisfactory to find that the fullest investigation of the present Government had resulted in such a very small amount of saving, showing that the Estimates made in July had been framed with a view to economy, and also to the interests of the public. With regard to maintenance, it was a question whether economy had not been carried too far. He did not intend to criticise the details of the vote. In fact it would be absurd for the Committee to take upon itself the internal management of the railways of the colony.

Mr. STEVENS said he supposed the Government were aware that the New South Wales Government intended to construct a line from Grafton to the Tweed. If so, it would be wise to ascertain where the New South Wales line would tap the Tweed. One of the principal reasons for carrying the South Coast Railway to Nerang was to get the trade of the Tweed by making a shorter route to Sydney. The survey from Nerang to the border had been carried to the mouth of the Tweed. It was just possible the New South Wales line might strike the river higher up, and it would be as well to ascertain that as soon as possible. A line to the Tweed would open up an enormously rich district, and it would practically annex that portion of the neighbouring colony to Queensland. It was a matter of considerable importance to secure that trade if possible. There was another matter he would mention, which had exercised the minds of a number of his constituents lately, in connection with the running of suburban trains. Some months ago it was suggested to the Commissioners that a daily train should be run for the benefit of working men living in the suburbs at some distance from a railway station. That concession was granted, and a train was arranged for to bring those men into town in time for their work. Very few persons took advantage of the train when it was first started, but since then the number had increased to something like a score from one station, and a number of other passengers took advantage of it. The Commissioners, finding that the train did not actually pay, struck it off the time-table. Many of the working men who used that service lived three or four miles from the nearest railway station. On the strength of that service those men had purchased land, on which they had erected cottages for themselves and their families. He need hardly say that it was to the advantage of the community at large that working men and others with small means should be encouraged to live in the country instead of in a crowded city—not only an advantage to the men and their families, but a very great advantage to the colony. The encouragement of that traffic was also one way of making the railways pay. It might be argued that in the management of railways the strictest economy should be observed. But there was such a thing as false economy, and that might fairly be called false economy. In the districts to which he was referring, settlement had increased, townships had been laid out, and allotments sold, chiefly to men of small means, who could not afford to buy land near the city. Houses had already been built, but they were now empty; and before long the men who had been encouraged by that service to settle on that portion of the line would have to abandon their homes. It was absurd to suppose that men would walk, especially in summer time, three or four miles to the railway station, work hard

all day in town, and then walk back from the station in the evening. If the service was reinstated he ventured to say that within twelve months there would be a paying traffic. The matter was one which, under the circumstances, the Commissioners should take into their earnest consideration. It might be that the Commissioners had received instructions similar to those given by a Premier once in Victoria—namely, that there was a certain amount to be expended, and they must not expend any more. If that was the case he could understand their carrying out such a service as that, but he could not understand it upon any other grounds, except perhaps that they had been used to a system in the old country of running lines where there was a heavy population to make them pay at once. That was not the principle upon which lines should be run in this colony if they wished to make a thickly-populated colony of it. He could mention other cases of the kind, which he had no intention of speaking about at present. Another place that he thought was not fairly treated in connection with the railway service was Southport. There was not the slightest doubt that a decently fast train run to that place would pay its expense twice over. He did not ask that it should be run in the winter months, but in the summer months when people were roasting in Brisbane and would be glad of an opportunity to enjoy the fresh sea air and sea-bathing to be had at Southport. The Saturday express train to Southport last year took two hours and forty minutes to make the trip, and it was even more of an express train than the Saturday train now, inasmuch as the train now stopped at two or three more places on the road. Under the present system of economy it took two hours and forty minutes to complete a journey of fifty miles, and the result was that a year or two ago more people visited Southport by water than now visited that place by train. A company was established, and they provided suitable steamers, and did a large business; but immediately railway communication with Southport was established, the steamers were run off, the company was practically ruined, and their boats sold for a song; and now there was a smaller traffic to Southport than there was when the trip took five hours and a-half. Hon. members would understand that it was much more pleasant to spend five hours on a comfortable boat in smooth water, enjoying the sea air during the whole trip, than to be cramped up in railway carriages—some of which must have been built when the first railways were established in Queensland—which were, as a rule, kept closed all night, and were highly odoriferous when the passengers entered them in the morning. He was positive that if the Commissioners would only run a decently fast train to Southport the traffic would pay the expenses twice over. It was supposed that the trains on that line ran only at a certain speed, seventeen miles an hour on the part of the line between Beenleigh and Brisbane, and twenty-two miles an hour on the rest of the line. He had himself seen trains running from twenty to thirty miles an hour on the whole of the line. Whose fault was that? Were they to blame the Commissioners, the traffic manager, the engineers, or the Minister? Of course the Minister was responsible to Parliament; but whoever was responsible, it was quite time that some change took place.

Mr. AGNEW said he did not think he should allow any time to elapse before he drew the attention of the Committee to the statement made by the Minister for Railways at a very unusual time and in his absence. When the Speaker was voted out of the chair some few days ago, the hon. member for Toowoomba raised a

discussion on the railway service of the colony, and he found from *Hansard* for that day that the Minister, among other things, said :—

"In one district, Sandgate, I think, there are two or three different sets of people who want different time-tables, and between them it is hard for the Commissioners to decide."

He would read no more of what was a very long speech, as he did not wish to waste the time of the Committee unnecessarily. The Premier was not a bit more anxious than he was to get through the session; but he would read to the Committee a part of the reply which was given to a Sandgate deputation that waited upon the Commissioners for Railways in July last, and they would then see how that tallied with the remarks made by the Minister for Railways :—

"Mr. Mathieson said, in reply, that the Commissioners were indeed pleased to see such unanimity amongst the people of Sandgate with reference to the train service they would like to have. It was a difficult matter to deal with the question so as to give satisfaction to all concerned."

He need not read any more than that. He was quite at one with the Commissioners in the opinion that it was a difficult matter to give satisfaction to all the people in the colony, but the Minister for Railways was not at all justified in making the remarks referred to. The hon. gentleman virtually said that the people of Sandgate did not know exactly what they wanted, while the Commissioners, on the contrary, said that they were indebted to the people of Sandgate for putting their requirements in a nutshell. He wished now to draw the attention of the Minister for Railways to the remarks he had made, and to the statement made by the Commissioners. He could have moved the adjournment of the House on the day afterwards, but he had never exhibited himself in the House as a member who was disposed to waste the time of the House by motions for adjournment or in any other way. He took the present opportunity, though it was not the first, of asking the Minister to correct the statement he had made.

Mr. GRIMES said the hon. member for Enoggera had referred to the alteration made in the running of the trains, and had stated that the alteration was not giving satisfaction. There was a grievance in connection with the matter existing in his electorate, and he wished to bring it under the notice of the Minister, seeing that they could not well get at the Commissioners. The Sherwood station was one of the principal stations along the line between Brisbane and Ipswich, and it was one of the first established on that line. The people of that district had far better train accommodation six or seven years ago than they had at the present time, as express trains from Ipswich regularly called at the Sherwood station. Express trains now ran right past it to the great inconvenience of residents of the district, many of whom were business people, and were anxious to get into the city as quickly as possible. A train used to leave at 8.27, getting to Brisbane at 8.55; but now the express train ran past, and they had to start eleven minutes earlier in order to get to Brisbane at the same time. In the evening they used to have a train at 7.17, which was very convenient for those who wished to attend meetings in town; but now the train in the evening left at 7.2, which did not give sufficient time for people to have their tea and get back to the station again; and there was not another train leaving Sherwood for town till 10.17. He trusted that when the Commissioners made their alterations they would take that matter into their consideration, and give the Sherwood people the same accommodation as in the past. There was a rumour that the Commissioners in-

tended to do away with one of the stations near the Indooroopilly bridge, and shift the Chelmer station some distance towards Brisbane. That would be a great hardship to persons who had bought land and put up buildings in the district. They rightly thought that when a station was fixed by the authorities it would not be removed; and he hoped that an explanation would be given with regard to the matter.

Mr. GOLDRING said that an agitation had been on foot almost ever since the Northern line was opened to Hughenden to have an alteration made in the time-table. Persons travelling by rail from Hughenden had to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning to catch the train. That was an inconvenient hour, and in the winter, when the mornings were dark, people travelling in vehicles ran the risk of running against fences or other obstacles. He hoped the Minister would ask the Commissioners to attend to the matter when an opportunity offered, instead of leaving it to the traffic manager of the Northern line, because he thought they would be able to meet the wishes of the people at the far end of the line. There was a goods train run as far as Torrens Creek, but the great proportion of the goods carried on the line past Charters Towers were for Hughenden, and it would be far better for that train to run right through. The passenger train had to stop at every little humpy along the line to leave goods or mails, and he thought that if it did not stop at so many places it might leave Hughenden one or two hours later, and get to the terminus at about the same time. He hoped the Minister would try to get the desired alteration made. Before leaving Hughenden a short time ago some of the railway employes waited on him and pointed out that on the Southern and Western line the employes beyond a certain distance received an extra allowance, whereas that privilege was not extended to the employes on the Northern line. He was confident it was only necessary to bring the grievance under the notice of the Commissioners in order to have it remedied. He would like to say a word with reference to the Normanton-Cloncurry railway. It had been stated by the Government that no new railways were to be constructed at present. He did not look upon that as a new railway; but if no new railways were to be constructed, he certainly thought that none which were not provided for at the time the £10,000,000 loan was passed should be constructed. It must be apparent to hon. members that a line for which the money had been voted should be constructed before a new line. One item to which he would refer was the Melbourne street extension. He could not see the necessity for the construction of that line at all, considering the facilities for communication and transport there were at the present time, and also considering the state of the Treasury. A great part of the money would go into the pockets of the owners of land for resumption, and it would be more just on the part of any Government to expend the money already voted for different parts of the colony, than to start a new railway such as that. When the loan was voted it was stated that the money would be spent on certain lines, but the promises then made had not been carried out. On looking at the unexpended loan balances, he found the amount to the credit of the Normanton-Cloncurry line was £427,169, whilst some £73,000 had been already expended—he presumed in surveys. Was the country to reap no benefit from that expenditure? He did not pretend to dictate to the Government as to what their policy should be, because the Government had distinctly stated they did not intend to build any new lines; but the Cloncurry line was not a new one. From an interjection made by the Premier last year or the year before, he had

been led to infer that the line would have been built had the hon. gentleman remained in power, but now that he was in power again the line was not to be constructed. Only the other day when discussing the motion of the hon. member for Carpentaria, the Premier had said that there was not sufficient reason for building the line now; whereas there was even more reason now than when the money was first voted. The construction of the line would do an immense amount of good to the country. It would prove remunerative, unlike many lines which had been constructed, and it would give an impetus to the mining industry and would encourage the pastoral industry. It would also prove of great benefit to the Northern port of Normanton. He hoped the Government would at an early date do something towards the construction of that railway, or if they could not see their way to construct the whole line, at least take it as far as the first crossing of the Flinders River, so as not to allow traffic to be stopped during the wet weather as it was now.

Mr. SMYTH said he had a grievance which had been before the Committee several times. He contended that children going to school should be carried free of charge on the railways. It would pay the department very much better to do that than to have to build schools and pay schoolmasters. He gave the Minister for Railways a ticket at the beginning of the year showing where a child had to travel about twelve miles to school, and paid a guinea a quarter for a ticket from the Railway Department, or £4 4s. a year, to go to the nearest school. That was an excessive demand, and he hoped the Minister for Railways and the Minister for Public Instruction would come to some arrangement by which children would be able to go to the nearest school free of charge by railway.

Mr. PAUL said it was very easy to find fault with the Commissioners, and he was sorry that several hon. members had criticised the action of the Commissioners in a manner which he thought unjust. They had held high and responsible positions in the old country, and the Chief Commissioner had managed one of the largest and most complex railway systems in the United Kingdom. The majority of members in that Committee had supported the measure brought in by the late Government on account, he believed, of the successful manner in which the system had worked in Victoria. They had got as good a man as the Victorians had in Mr. Speight, and there was no doubt that the appointment of the Commissioners in Victoria had had a most beneficial effect. They all knew of the serious accidents that used to occur on the Victorian railways before the board was initiated in that colony, and surely hon. members here should give their Commissioners time to carry out their work properly. He was certain they had good men. Another matter which might have been alluded to during his absence from the Chamber, but to which he wished to refer was the case of Stephen Welch, who had been injured very severely whilst working as an engine driver. There were no pluckier men than engine drivers. They had to travel at a high rate of speed through wind and storm, and often at great risk of life, and when a man met with such an accident as Welch did, whilst going to succour people in time of flood, it was perfectly monstrous to take away the pension of £100, which he had been receiving since 1876, when the accident occurred. He just came in when the member for Logan was speaking about the Beenleigh railway. He said he did not know whether it was the fault of the Commissioners, Chief Engineer, or Minister; but he (Mr. Paul) would tell him whose fault it was. It was the fault of Parliament for voting

1890—4 Y

for a cheap line. The rails were too light, and the train could only travel seventeen miles an hour, whereas from Beenleigh to Southport there was a first-class line. The Fassifern line was another most dangerous line. He had seen a train make four attempts to get up a steep gradient. He thought they ought to thank their stars that they had Commissioners who would prevent the construction of political railways in future.

Mr. BUCKLAND said the hon. member for Logan had referred to the unsatisfactory time-table in use on the South Coast Railway, and he could confirm every word of what the hon. member said in reference to the stopping, without notice, of the early workmen's train about ten weeks ago. That train was timed to leave Sunnybank at half-past 6, reaching town in good time for the men to get to their various places of employment. The train usually carried fifteen or twenty passengers, and, although it was knocked off without notice, people who had taken tickets a few days previously had no allowance made to them. He hoped the Commissioners would see their way to reinstate that train. There was a train timed to leave Stanley street at half-past 4, which never carried more than half a dozen passengers, and he saw no reason for keeping it on and knocking the other off. Referring to the running of the trains on the South Coast Railway generally, there were a great many complaints as to the rate of speed. He had in his possession a slip from a South Brisbane paper, which ran as follows:—

"A gentleman informed us that between Southport and Stanley street one hour and three minutes' time is wasted by the railway, and the officials on that line have to kill it each trip to that extent. He kept a check of the time the train remained stationary at each station over and above that requisite for taking on and setting down of passengers, shunting, etc., and at the end of the journey the total was one hour and three minutes. It would be better to give people at Beenleigh, where refreshments can be obtained, an extra half-hour instead of wasting the whole time along the line. At any rate, it shows that the time of this long and tedious journey could be shortened quite forty-five minutes."

He hoped the Minister or the Commissioners would see their way to reinstate the train he had referred to.

Mr. MORGAN said it was quite evident that they would have to sack the Commissioners, because they could have the railways run much more satisfactorily by appointing a committee of experts from amongst members, one representing the North, one the Central, and one the Southern districts. If they did not give satisfaction to the public they would, at all events, ruin the railways. They had heard a great deal about the Beenleigh and Southport line, and the conduct of the Commissioners in knocking off trains which carried half a dozen passengers. There was a great deal that might be said with advantage about that Southport line, and one fact was the following: Passengers were carried on that line at first-class fares, cheaper than they were carried at second-class rates on other lines. The fare on the Southport line, first-class, was 1½d., and second-class, 1d. per mile. In the country districts, the first-class fare was 2½d. per mile, and the second-class 1½d. Now, why that difference? He knew the Minister was not responsible. He did not think the Commissioners were responsible for originating that state of things. He believed it was done in order to encourage people to go down there and keep up the price of 16-perch lots at the expense of the country. That line was in no way a little suburban line which wanted to be treated specially, and it was an injustice to people living in the country that there should be a differential rate in favour of

such a line. There could be no justification for it, as they were told the traffic was decreasing, and therefore the fares should be raised. He entered his protest against that system of differential fares, which was an injustice to the people residing in the country. He would like to hear the departmental defence of that scheme.

Mr. SMYTH said he wanted to travel to a place called Morningside, on the Cleveland line, and he waited at Stanley street station for half an hour. He then asked a porter when the train would be leaving, and was told it started from Woolloongabba. The result was that he lost his train, although the department lost nothing.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said he would reply to the subjects introduced by the late Minister for Railways as fully as he could. The first question raised by him was in reference to the estimates. Well, the estimates were wholly and solely the estimates of the Commissioners, uninfluenced by him or by any other member of the Ministry, although, of course, he took the full responsibility. The hon. the late Minister for Railways had hit the nail on the head by saying that very possibly owing to two months further accounts being to hand when the present Estimates were prepared to what were available when the Commissioners submitted the Estimates to him, they were now more closely framed. Such was the real fact, and that accounted for most of the alterations and reductions. There had been no interference on the part of himself or any other member of the Government with the Commissioners' estimates. The hon. gentleman referred to the reduction in the vote for advertising. No one knew better than he that Ministers did not interfere with the amount of money expended in those matters, and they had no directions to give. Although £1,000 was voted for advertising last year, the total expenditure was only £700, and therefore it was considered that £750 would be sufficient for the present year. If the advertising had not been done properly in the past, his predecessor in office had never found fault with it, and he (the Minister for Railways) was not in a position to find fault with it either.

Mr. DUNSMURE said he had seen the advertisement regarding the alteration of a time-table in the paper only on the day the alteration had taken place.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said that one of the officers of the department who had charge of the matter had overlooked it, and took the entire responsibility and regretted that it was his fault that the advertising was neglected in that instance. In regard to the next point, he might explain the items guards and stationmasters and porters on the Central line, that there had been no reduction of wages at all. The three items of guards, station inspectors, etc., and gatekeepers, on page 85, had been taken together and totalled up to £44,375, while the actual expenditure for the past year on the same items was £40,400. In reference to the maintenance of the Central line, the vote last year was £60,000, but the amount asked for the present year was £57,000, which was an apparent reduction of £3,000. It was not a real reduction, because during the past year, with the addition of a considerable expenditure in consequence of the floods, the total expenditure was only £55,500, and the Government were now asking for £57,000 for the same work, and the Commissioners considered that would be sufficient. In regard to the maintenance of the Cairns line, on page 89, there was an increase of £1,000 upon last year's vote, and that was because the next section of the line had not been opened.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the distance mentioned was seventeen miles in both estimates.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said the line cost a great deal to maintain; but the Commissioners considered the amount asked for would be sufficient. In reference to the remark made by the hon. member for Logan concerning the intention of the New South Wales Government to proceed with their line to the Tweed, he was aware that there had been an intention to proceed with it, and he was in a position to know, though not officially, that communication would be made to the Queensland Railway Department in order that a terminus might be agreed upon. If such an application were made, the Government would be very happy to respond. In regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Oxley, he might state that there were three stations—Indooroopilly, Riverton, and Chelmer—close together; and, owing to the adoption of the interlocking system, the Commissioners intended to close Riverton and remove the Chelmer station a few chains, so that it might meet the requirements of both places. Hon. members knew that, under the 26th section of the Railways Act, the position of stations was a matter entirely and absolutely in the hands of the Commissioners. In regard to the time-tables, he was sure the good sense of hon. members would lead them to admit that that was not the time or the place to say anything about that. It was not within the power of the Committee to say what special trains should be run, or what time-tables they should have. He was convinced that it was the desire of the Commissioners to meet the wishes of the public, whenever they expressed them, in every possible way, so long as they could do so without detriment to the general service, and he was satisfied that the wishes expressed by hon. members would receive full consideration on the part of the Commissioners. He knew there was a revision of the time-tables in contemplation, and it would come into operation as soon as possible.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said there was no doubt that the time-tables and the traffic were in the hands of the Commissioners; but what he wished to call attention to was that the Commissioners had got rid of some old servants who had been in the employment of the Government for the last twenty or twenty-five years. Those men were not under the old Civil Service Act, and he thought some provision should be made for them. They should not be turned adrift simply because they were two or three years over sixty. Some of them were, he believed, fit for more work yet. He did not say they should be pensioned, but that some allowance should be made them in the shape of a certain amount for every year's service, and he would like to know whether anything of the sort had been done.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said he was very pleased to be able to answer the question in the affirmative. The Government had taken into consideration the position of those gentlemen who had been dismissed through no fault of their own, and had authorised the Commissioners to make an allowance in each case, such allowance to be at the rate of fourteen days' salary for each year of service, but the total amount not to exceed six months' pay. The allowance was granted on the condition that some restitution should be made in the event of their being employed within six months. With reference to school children travelling on the railways, that was entirely a matter for the Education Department, and whatever arrangement the department chose to make with the Railway Department it would be readily adopted.

Mr. AGNEW said the hon. gentleman had not deigned to reply to his remarks. Probably the fault was his own, because he condensed his remarks too much. He would now read the whole of the hon. gentleman's speech.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said he would save the hon. member the trouble of reading it and answer his question. But really it was rather hard, when about a dozen members had spoken, to expect the Minister to remember everything that was said, especially on a matter of trifling importance. It appeared that he stated the other day that there were two or three different opinions among the Sandgate people as to the running of trains on the Sandgate line. He got that information from the evening paper for the day, and that was all the knowledge he had of the matter.

Mr. AGNEW: What paper was that?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The *Telegraph*.

Mr. DRAKE said he hoped the hon. gentleman did not consider the matter he had referred to of trifling importance.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said he did not consider the matter of the traffic from the Normanby station one of trifling importance to the hon. member. But the hon. member in adducing figures in support of his case had hardly stated the matter as it ought to be stated, inasmuch as he included the Exhibition traffic on that line in his calculations. At the present time, the traffic to the Normanby station averaged about 30s. a day.

Mr. DRAKE: That is this month.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said that was for the present month. There was every desire on the part of the Commissioners to encourage traffic in every direction, and only on the previous evening he told the hon. member, when he suggested to him that the traffic was arranged in such a way that it would produce the least amount of revenue, that if he consulted with some of his supporters and ascertained what kind of time-table they desired, he (the Minister for Railways) would then do his best to induce the Commissioners to adopt that time-table, provided it would work in with the general traffic. He could do no more at present. He was very anxious that the line should pay, and it was not profitable to the Government to keep the line idle. But on the other hand it was no profit to the Government to run engines and carriages on the line when there really was no traffic.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Commissioners had lately introduced a new rate of fares which included a ½d. in some cases. He would suggest to the hon. gentleman that he should recommend the Commissioners to abolish that.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It has been done already.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I am very glad to hear it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said the matter was before the Cabinet that morning, and on the recommendation of the Commissioners it was decided to abolish half-pennies.

Mr. NELSON said with regard to the grievance respecting the Normanby station, he thought it was rather late in the day to bring it forward. It should have been brought forward when the Valley line was approved of by the Committee. Every member must have seen, when that railway was approved of, that the traffic along the Victoria Park line must cease. It was inevitable, and to bring forward the grievance at that time

of day, four or five years after the Valley line was approved of, seemed to him rather absurd. It was utterly impossible that the Government could run two railways to the one place. If the Normanby people were determined that they should have the whole of the traffic on the Sandgate line go past their station they should have objected to the Valley line being constructed at all, because anyone who knew anything about railways must see that the Valley line, running from the Central station through the city, was bound to take the greater part of the traffic, which consisted principally of passenger traffic. If there were sufficient traffic to the Normanby station to keep up a train service, and that was proved to the Commissioners, he had no doubt they would continue to run trains to that station, but, unless that was proved, they were not in any way bound to continue the train service.

Mr. DRAKE said when the hon. member who had just spoken was himself in office he complained once or twice that he was rather worried by continual deputations from residents in those districts with regard to railway communication.

Mr. NELSON: I never complained to anybody.

Mr. DRAKE said he thought the hon. member once received a deputation, and expressed himself almost angrily at being pestered with deputations. The hon. member did not use that word, but that was what he inferred; and he believed the hon. member assured that deputation that there was no intention to abandon the Victoria Park line. The hon. gentleman could not at that time have had such very decided ideas, as he evidently had now, with regard to the traffic on the line to the Normanby station. Certainly he had not told the deputation that the question was definitely settled when the Valley line was authorised to be built; and the deputation were led to believe that there was no intention on the part of the Government that the line should be abandoned.

Mr. NELSON said the hon. gentleman was referring to a subject altogether different from the one before the Committee—to the construction of the line to Enoggera. Of course at that time it was not definitely settled what route the line should take, and the deputation were told so. What happened in connection with those deputations was this: One had waited upon him a short time before on the same subject, and he gave them an assurance that the matter would be inquired into, that a survey would be made, and a report obtained as to whether the allegations laid before him were correct or not, and whether the proposals made were justifiable in the public interest. Then when another deputation waited upon him a few days after asking for the very same thing to be done, he explained that it was being carried out. The complaint now made was in respect to a totally different matter; it was in reference to the train service along the Victoria Park line, which had, to a great extent, been superseded by the construction of the Valley line, which was approved of four years ago. Anyone must have known at that time that the Valley line when constructed must to a large extent take away the traffic from the small line running through Victoria Park, and that was the time to have objected to the construction of the Valley line. As to the running of trains, no doubt if the population and the traffic justified it, the Commissioners would run trains as often as required. That was a matter that must be adjusted according to public requirements.

Mr. DRAKE said as he had stated earlier in the evening, he did not wish at present to go into the question of the service of trains, because

the Commissioners were going to receive a deputation on the subject on Friday, and perhaps some arrangement would be come to which would meet the requirements of the people in that district. With regard to the two deputations referred to by the hon. gentleman, he (Mr. Drake) was not at the first, and the second, he believed, waited upon the Minister in consequence of an uneasy feeling which existed in the minds of the people of the district that there was some intention to abandon the Victoria Park line. What he wished particularly to point out was that when that deputation waited upon the hon. gentleman he did not consider it had been decided four years ago, when the Valley line was approved of, that the other line should be abandoned. He contended that the uneasy feeling in the minds of the residents of that district had been fully justified by subsequent events.

Mr. AGNEW said he did not think there was any man in the colony who recognised more fully than he did the difficulties the Railway Commissioners had to contend with. He had been all his life connected with railways, and when the Railways Bill was passing through the House he spoke in the same terms as he was speaking now. The reply the Minister had given him—that he had taken the information from the *Telegraph*, instead of from the Chief Commissioner—he was quite satisfied with, but he thought the Commissioner was the best authority. Another explanation he wanted was this: He saw from a daily paper published in Brisbane that information had been supplied by the traffic manager to the effect that the returns from the Sandgate Railway had fallen off from 1885. He wanted to know in what respect they had fallen off. He had gone through the returns, and could not see that they had fallen off. According to the returns, the amount received from all stations on the Sandgate line was £6,016; last year it was £6,363. That was not a falling off. Again, during last year the number of tickets sold was 42,000, as against 48,000 for the present year. He should like that matter explained before proceeding further.

Mr. GLASSEY said he should like to know the reason for increasing the traffic manager's salary from £600 to £700 a year. He wished to say at once that he did not in the slightest degree oppose the vote from any personal motive. The traffic manager was a gentleman in whom he had the utmost confidence, and he dared say that officer was not overpaid as compared with the salaries paid to officers holding similar positions in other colonies. But considering the large number of men in all branches of the service who had claims for increases which were not recognised, while men high up in the service got considerable increases, he contended that the matter required some explanation. On looking at the Estimates he found that the traffic manager's salary was £600, and that he had quarters and fuel valued at £150, making £750 in all; and there was a foot-note to the effect that he was paid 2s. a day when travelling. That was a very considerable sum, and altogether that officer was very fairly paid. Where others were paid more than that, they were overpaid. Notwithstanding the high opinion he held of the traffic manager and the views he had expressed with regard to his salary, he would at once tell the Minister and the Committee that if he stood alone he was going to move that that increase of £100 be taken off the Estimates, and not only in that department, but in all other departments, until justice was done to the claims of persons who, in his opinion, were underpaid. He thought the traffic manager was fairly well

paid with £750 a year, considering the large number of persons in the service working for less than £100 a year. He moved that the item, "Traffic Manager, £750," be reduced by £100.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said the General Traffic Manager occupied the most responsible position that any officer could possibly occupy. All the lines throughout the colony were under his charge, and the slightest mistake made by an incompetent man might cause an accident that they would be sorry for. He was assured, first, that the proposed increase was a long-standing promise made and sanctioned by his predecessor. He was assured, secondly, by the Commissioners and by those who knew, that the salary was by no means what it ought to be in accordance with the salaries paid to similar officers in England and in the colonies. The salary of a competent man such as they had, and with similar duties and responsibilities, would be from £1,200 to £1,500. He considered Mr. Thallon's salary was by no means excessive, and it was richly earned. He hoped the Committee would not allow the proposed reduction to be made.

Mr. ANNEAR said the Minister talked about promises made. A man getting a small salary was entitled to as much consideration in the matter of keeping promises as the traffic manager. There was a man at Maryborough—he was only a lamp-cleaner—who had been promised by Mr. Curnow, the late Commissioner, that he should have the same pay as the lamp-cleaner at Gympie and Bundaberg; he was only getting 4s. 2d. a day. That promise was never kept. The present traffic manager was receiving a very good salary. Some time ago his salary was increased £100, and since that time three other gentlemen had entered the department to perform many of the duties that Mr. Thallon used to perform. It seemed that the less work an official had to do the more salary he wanted. He should vote for the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said the traffic manager had now increased duties to perform. He used to have charge only of the Southern and Western traffic; he had now control over all the lines in the colony.

Mr. NORTH said he should like to have an answer to his question as to why the £100 compensation to Stephen Welch had been knocked off.

The CHAIRMAN said he would remind the hon. member that the question before the Committee was an amendment to reduce the vote for the traffic manager by £100. The hon. member could not raise any other question until that was disposed of.

Mr. NORTH said he claimed his right to speak before the vote was put.

The CHAIRMAN said the hon. member could not do so. Standing Order 278 provided that—

"When a motion is made in Committee of Supply to omit or reduce any item of a vote, a question shall be proposed from the chair for omitting or reducing such item accordingly; and members shall speak to such question only until it has been disposed of."

Mr. MURPHY said that did not preclude the hon. member from bringing forward his grievance after the amendment had been disposed of.

The CHAIRMAN said the hon. member would be precluded from doing so by Standing Order 280, which provided that—

"After a question for omitting or reducing any item has been disposed of, no motion shall be made or debate allowed upon any preceding item."

Mr. NORTH said he objected to the amendment going to a vote until he got an answer to his question.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow any discussion to take place on that subject until this question is disposed of.

Mr. NORTH said that in that case he would object to the Chairman's ruling.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Chair, chair!

Mr. NORTH said he could object to the Chairman's ruling, and have the matter referred to the Speaker.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said he did not wish to take the hon. member at a disadvantage.

Mr. NORTH: You took me at a disadvantage before.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said he objected to any such statement. He had never taken the hon. member at a disadvantage, and did not wish him to be taken at a disadvantage now. They all knew that unless the mover of the amendment before the Committee withdrew his amendment, the hon. member for Lockyer could not afterwards speak upon the point he wished to refer to. The only way out of the difficulty was for the hon. member for Bundamba to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. GLASSEY said he had no desire to object to the hon. member bringing forward his grievance, and he would, of course, withdraw his amendment to enable him to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the amendment be withdrawn?

Mr. MORGAN: No.

Mr. NORTH said he wanted an answer to the question he had put.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Order, order!

Mr. NORTH said the amendment had been withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment cannot be withdrawn, because an objection is raised to its withdrawal by a member of the Committee. The question is—That the item, General Traffic Manager, £700, be reduced by the sum of £100.

Mr. MURPHY said it was not fair to prevent the hon. member for Lockyer from bringing his grievance before the Committee, and he appealed to the hon. member for Warwick to allow the amendment to be withdrawn so that the matter might be discussed. The hon. member for Lockyer did not want to obstruct business, but he had been surprised in the way the motion he had brought forward had been dealt with on a previous occasion.

Mr. MORGAN said he had no desire to stop the hon. member for Lockyer having a discussion upon the subject he had brought forward; but he wished to have a vote taken on the amendment moved by the hon. member for Bundamba.

Mr. NORTH: It can be taken afterwards.

Mr. MORGAN said that possibly it could after two hours' discussion and in a thin house, when by a catch vote the hon. member for Bundamba might secure a victory. He did not want that to take place, and the hon. member for Lockyer could bring his business forward on any vote connected with the railways.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said he would point out that the hon. member for Lockyer could not increase the Estimates. The hon. member a few weeks ago had a motion on the paper to ask the Governor in Council to place a certain sum on the Estimates, and that motion had been negatived, and he (Mr. Unmack) maintained that they could not discuss the matter at all now, because the question had already been dealt with by the House during the present session, and the motion put upon the paper by the hon. member had been negatived.

Mr. NORTH: It was not. I was not treated fairly over it. I was jockeyed out of it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said they had nothing to do with that. The question now was that the matter having already been dealt with during the session could not be brought up again. The hon. member could not put the sum on the Estimates, and he did not see how it could now be discussed at all.

Mr. BARLOW said he would ask the ruling of the Chairman as to whether the Committee knew what went on in the House? He would ask further, whether, if the amendment before the Committee was carried, it would not be the duty of the Chairman to put the question that the lesser sum of £14,436 only be granted; and he would like to know whether upon that question the hon. member for Lockyer could not speak as long as he liked. He submitted further that, even if the amendment was negatived, the original question would have to be put again, and the hon. member could then speak upon the matter to which he desired to refer.

Mr. HAMILTON said he did not see why the hon. member for Lockyer should not be heard. The hon. member had been two hours trying to get an answer to his question. They were not going to let the hon. member be burked in his desire to ventilate his grievance. If an objection had not been raised to the withdrawal of the amendment, the matter would have been decided long ago.

The CHAIRMAN: In reply to the hon^d member for Ipswich, I must inform the hon. member that clause 278 of our Standing Orders provides that:—

"When a motion is made in Committee of Supply to omit or reduce any item of a vote, a question shall be proposed from the chair for omitting or reducing such item accordingly; and members shall speak to such question only, until it has been disposed of."

Then clause 280 says:—

"After a question for omitting or reducing any item has been disposed of, no motion shall be made or debate allowed upon any preceding item."

Mr. BARLOW said that speaking to the point of order the Chairman was now putting the question that the specific item mentioned should be reduced by £100, and when that was disposed of another question would have to be put, as he had before stated.

Question put.

Mr. DRAKE said he should not like the amendment to go to a division without saying a word about it. He intended to vote against it, because he did not think sufficient reasons had been given for refusing the proposed increase. A great number of his constituents felt that they were being very badly treated by the railway authorities, and he thought so too. What with Ministers, and ex-Ministers, Commissioners, and traffic managers, they had a hard time of it, but he would not vote for the amendment, as that would be striking at the traffic manager in order to remedy an injury that had perhaps been inflicted by someone else.

Mr. MURPHY said he thought the hon. member for Lockyer was not being fairly dealt with, and so far as he was concerned he did not intend to let the vote go through until the hon. member got fair play.

The PREMIER: What do you mean? What do you want as fair play?

Mr. MURPHY said the Chairman had ruled that if that vote was taken, the hon. member for Lockyer would be prevented from bringing forward a grievance he felt he had got.

The PREMIER: That is so.

Mr. MURPHY said that then, as a member of the Committee, he intended to assist the hon. member to ventilate his grievance. The hon. member for Warwick had prevented that being done long ago.

Mr. MORGAN: I did not.

Mr. MURPHY said the hon. member had done so by objecting to the withdrawal of the amendment moved by the hon. member for Bundamba. The hon. member for Lockyer wished to bring forward the grievance of a member of the community, who, he felt, had not been fairly treated, and he (Mr. Murphy) considered it to be his duty to do all he could to assist the hon. member in ventilating that grievance, and he would not let the vote go until the hon. member was given the opportunity he asked for.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman said in effect that he would obstruct the Estimates indefinitely—

Mr. MURPHY: Not indefinitely.

The PREMIER said the hon. member said he would obstruct until the hon. member for Lockyer had an opportunity of bringing forward a matter which he could not properly bring before the Committee, and which he had already had two opportunities of bringing forward in the House. On the last occasion, when he (the Premier) moved the adjournment of the House at the wish of a majority of hon. members he withdrew the motion to give the hon. member an opportunity of going on with his motion, and he was defeated on the voices, and did not call for a division. The hon. member had a special opportunity given to him, and was fairly beaten. Now he threatened to obstruct all business, and the hon. member for Barcoo, who ought to know better, threatened to help him, unless an opportunity was given to the hon. member to do something for which he must be ruled out of order. Such a thing was monstrous. As a matter of practical expediency, however, when a member wanted to make a speech, and was prevented by a formal objection, it was better to let him make it, only it would be entirely irregular for the hon. member to do so. That member wanted the hon. member for Bundamba to withdraw a motion regularly before the Committee for the purpose of discussing a matter that could only be brought before the Committee irregularly. In fact, he wanted to do what he could not do according to the rules, and if he insisted on doing what he wanted to do it would be the duty of the Chairman to rule him out of order. He was not surprised at the hon. member, but he was surprised at the hon. member for Barcoo helping him.

Mr. NELSON said there was an item in the vote called "compensation for injuries." That was the item to which the hon. member for Lockyer wished to refer.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: He does not want to refer to that. The footnote says that item is an allowance to the widow of the late driver Griffith.

Mr. NELSON said that any hon. member was perfectly justified in talking about any compensation that might be required to be given in the railway service under that vote. The hon. member for Ipswich was correct in saying that the Committee took no notice of what took place in the House.

The PREMIER: The House takes no notice of what occurs in committee; but the Committee takes notice of what takes place in the House.

Mr. NELSON said there was a motion for the House to go into committee to consider a certain matter, and the House did not go into committee. That was all that happened.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The House refused to go into committee.

Mr. NELSON said that was so, and the hon. member for Lockyer had a perfect right to refer to the matter now.

The PREMIER: It will be the duty of the Chairman to rule him out of order if he does.

Mr. NELSON said the question was whether the amount put down for compensation for injuries was sufficient or not. He agreed with the hon. member for Lockyer that it was not. He thought it was a matter of reputation on the part of the Government. There was a man—

The PREMIER said he must call the attention of the Chairman to the fact that the hon. member was departing from the question before the Committee.

Mr. NELSON: In what way?

The PREMIER: In referring to Welch's case.

Mr. NELSON said he was speaking to the question of compensation for injuries.

The PREMIER said he would ask the Chairman to state the question before the Committee, for the benefit of the hon. member.

The CHAIRMAN said the question was that the item of £700, traffic manager's salary, be reduced by £100.

Mr. HAMILTON said he was sorry that the Estimates should be delayed, because the Minister for Railways was not one when in opposition to delay the Estimates of his opponents; at the same time, it must be seen that the delay was caused by the other side, because the hon. member for Warwick refused to allow the hon. member for Bundamba to withdraw his amendment in order that the hon. member for Lockyer might bring forward a matter on which he wanted some information. It was well known that the hon. member for Lockyer lost his motion the other day through a pure misconception, and it would be only fair play for the Minister for Railways to cease blocking his own estimates, and give the hon. member for Lockyer the information he wanted.

Mr. SAYERS said the Mines estimates were hurried through last night, but now business was delayed because some hon. members who were not present last night considered that an injury had been done to a certain person. The hon. member for Barcoo had been to see the Melbourne Cup, and it was easy for him to come back after being away for two or three weeks and say he was going to do this, that, and the other thing. The hon. member said he was going to block all business unless the Committee allowed the member for Lockyer to bring forward a certain matter. The hon. gentleman meant to block the business and prevent a vote being taken, simply because he thought the hon. member for Lockyer had some cause for complaint. If the hon. member had been present at the time, he would have seen how the business was carried on, and the hon. member for Lockyer could bring on the matter at any time by moving the adjournment of the House. He was not a bit surprised at the hon. member for Barcoo, who was of very little use except to obstruct business.

Mr. LUYA said he hoped the hon. member for Warwick would withdraw his objection to the withdrawal of the amendment. It was the wish of every member of the Committee that he should do so, and if the hon. gentleman did so they would get on with the business.

Mr. MORGAN said he would withdraw his objection, but he would point out at the same time that the Standing Orders were distinctly against the hon. member for Lockyer introducing the subject he wished to.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. NELSON said that, speaking on the vote for compensation for injuries, he would state the facts of the case.

The PREMIER said he must object to any reference to the facts of the case of Stephen Welch. It was not possible to increase any vote on the Estimates.

Mr. NELSON said he must ask for the Chairman's ruling upon that, because that was certainly a direct attack upon the privileges and the rights of the representatives of the people. He thought they were discussing a money vote, and on those occasions particularly they had rights, and it was for them to assert those rights against any despotic Premier that ever existed.

The PREMIER: It will be less trouble to let you be disorderly and go on.

Mr. NELSON said he would like to know if the Premier were in order in saying that he would allow him to be disorderly in order to have less trouble?

The PREMIER: This is what the Opposition call keeping their promise to help the Government in getting on with the business.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that the Premier has withdrawn the remark he made.

Mr. NELSON said he declined to accept it on those terms. He could not accept the position of being disorderly. Was he to accept the privilege from the Premier of being disorderly because the hon. gentleman permitted him to be disorderly?

The PREMIER: You are insisting on your right to be disorderly.

Mr. NELSON said the thing was perfectly absurd. He was not going to be disorderly because the Premier allowed him to be so.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Where is your speech? You rose to make a speech, but you have said nothing.

Mr. NELSON: Well, there is a point of order.

The PREMIER: There is no point of order.

Mr. NELSON: Well, I am in order, and the Premier was wrong.

The PREMIER: This is the promise of the Opposition to get through the business.

Mr. NELSON said that it was the Government who were obstructing business, because they would not allow a question to be fairly discussed. He would proceed with the case of Stephen Welch. In the year 1876, when there were heavy floods during the month of July, that man was sent along the line as a pilot to discover where the line was defective. He would ask the Premier what he had just said?

The PREMIER said he had only observed to his colleague that the hon. gentleman's conduct was perfectly monstrous, and that it was a perfect disgrace; but the remark had not been intended for the hon. gentleman's ears.

Mr. NELSON said he would ask the Chairman if those words were in order? They would appear in *Hansard*.

The PREMIER: I don't care where they appear.

Mr. NELSON said he would appeal to the Chairman to decide whether the Premier was in order in saying that his conduct was monstrous.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman had asked what he had said to his colleague, and he had repeated his remark at the hon. gentleman's own request.

Mr. NELSON said he would ask the Chairman if the remark was in order?

The CHAIRMAN: The expression was used by the Premier to his colleague and is not out of order.

Mr. PAUL said that considering the career of the hon. member for Murilla it was disgraceful for the Premier or anyone to make such a remark, and he certainly ought to withdraw the remark, which had been heard by everyone.

Mr. NELSON said he raised a point of order as to whether it was in order for the Premier to address him and say that his conduct was monstrous.

The PREMIER said he certainly did not contend for a moment that it was in order to address an hon. member and say that his conduct was monstrous; but he had made a remark to his colleague sitting at his side, which was not intended to be heard, and in which he had characterised the hon. gentleman's conduct as monstrous. The hon. member insisted upon his repeating aloud what he had said, and he did so. He admitted that it was out of order for him to have repeated the remark aloud, and he begged to withdraw it—that was to say, he desired to withdraw what he had said aloud, but he did not withdraw what he had said to his colleague.

Mr. NELSON said he accepted the explanation of the Premier. He had begun to state the facts of the case of Stephen Welch. In the execution of his duty in July, 1876, he had met with a very severe accident, and the following year his case was taken into consideration, and a certain sum of money was voted by Parliament. Every year since then some compensation had been voted, although not the same amount as he had received the first year or two. For a good many years past he had been allowed £100 per annum, and there had been no alteration in the circumstances of the case to warrant the discontinuance of the vote. In 1887 the late Mr. Miles had struck out the item, thinking that it was not justifiable to continue it; but on further consideration the man was paid the amount, and it was put on the Supplementary Estimates. In the following year it was omitted by accident, and in the following year it was restored. Now it had been knocked off deliberately, and the general feeling was that that had been done because the person concerned was a political opponent of the Premier.

Mr. NORTH said he wished to speak in explanation of what the Premier said about the previous time when the motion was considered. The motion was carried by 17-11, and when it came on again to go into committee Mr. Annear called "Divide!" at the same time as he did, and he heard Sir Samuel Griffith say, "What did you call divide for?"

The PREMIER: I did not speak to him.

Mr. NORTH said the hon. gentleman did.

The PREMIER: Somebody else.

Mr. NORTH said Mr. Annear was asked why he called "Divide!" And when he (Mr. North) was getting his papers ready to go on with the case, the question was decided against him on the voices. The hon. members Mr. Barlow and Mr. Little both heard him call "Divide!" He would not say he had been cheated, but he was unfairly dealt with, and he meant to have it out now. He would read the papers connected with the case.

The PREMIER said he must rise to order if the hon. gentleman was going to read the papers. In doing so, he took the opportunity of appealing to the leaders of the Opposition, if there were any, to keep the pledge they had given to the Government to assist in the conduct of business.

Mr. NORTH: Give us fair play.

The PREMIER said only that evening they had had assurances of assistance, and what did the Government find?—the leading members of the Opposition aiding and abetting obstruction. He did not appeal to the hon. member for Lockyer. He knew it was idle to appeal to him, although after the way in which the hon. member for Warwick had behaved to him even he might be expected to behave otherwise than in the way he was behaving. He appealed to the leaders of the Opposition, if there were any, to exercise the control which they were supposed to be able to exercise over their friends. He did not see anything to laugh at in the obstruction of business. Very important business had to come on to-morrow, and he was not in a position to consult with the leader of the Opposition about it. The Opposition seemed to have got into a state of chaos, and the Government could not carry on the business in consequence of their obstruction. He asked hon. gentlemen to fulfil the pledges which had been given many times during the session.

Mr. BLACK said although the leader of the Opposition was not present, he could say that the Opposition had fulfilled every pledge given to the Government to assist them in bringing the business to a close, and if obstruction had taken place it had emanated chiefly from the followers of the hon. gentleman. He might say that he had never seen Estimates so badly carried through the House as those of the present Government had been, and they had a great deal to thank the Opposition for in having made so much progress. He did not consider it at all fair for the hon. gentleman to make the charges he had made. The Opposition were quite prepared to assist the hon. gentleman; but at the same time they claimed the right to get the fullest explanation of any matter which any hon. member might consider of importance to himself, the country, or his constituents.

Mr. NORTH said he meant to put the whole case before the public, and by way of commencement he would read an account of the accident.

The PREMIER said he must insist on the Chairman's ruling, and if he did not agree with him he must appeal to the Speaker. It was intolerable that they should be kept there all night in clear contravention of the rules of the House.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What is the point of order?

The PREMIER said the point of order was that the hon. gentleman was not justified in reading an account of the accident to Stephen Welch upon the motion before the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not know what remarks the hon. gentleman is going to make. There is one item of £100 for compensation for injuries, and I think the hon. member is in order in referring to the case.

The PREMIER said he would wait until the hon. member began to read, and would then raise the point of order again, and would have the question referred to the Speaker.

Mr. NORTH said he would show how the man sustained his injuries. He would read a few notes from the evidence.

The PREMIER said: Does the hon. gentleman propose to read evidence relating to the case of Stephen Welch?

Mr. NORTH said it was a case in connection with compensation for injuries. "After returning from Highfields yesterday, received information"—

The PREMIER said he rose to a point of order, and asked if the hon. gentleman was in order in reading the notes of evidence in a case that was not before the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: As far as the hon. gentleman has gone he is in order.

The PREMIER said he would move that the Chairman leave the chair and report the question to Mr. Speaker.

Question—That the Chairman leave the chair and report the matter to the Speaker—put, and the Committee divided.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no tellers for the "Noes," the question is resolved in the affirmative.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I have to report that a point of order has been raised as to whether the hon. member for Lockyer can discuss, in committee, the matter in reference to Stephen Welch.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—Before you give your ruling, I think I may as well state the question more definitely. The motion was that there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the current year the sum of £14,436 for railways, in which sum is included £100 for compensation for injuries, not being compensation for injuries received by Stephen Welch. The hon. member for Lockyer proceeded to read what he said was a statement of the evidence taken at the inquiry relating to the case of Stephen Welch, and objection was taken that he was not in order in referring to an item not before the Committee.

Mr. NORTH: I did not intend to read the report of the evidence taken before the committee.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: You said you intended to read the whole of it.

Mr. NORTH said: Mr. Speaker,—It is not the evidence taken before the committee. It relates to this vote in regard to the matter of compensation. The vote is reduced by £100, and I wish to know why it is reduced?

Mr. NELSON said: Mr. Speaker,—The question appears to be this: One item in this vote consists of an amount for compensation for injuries, and the discussion before the Committee was simply whether this vote was sufficient or not. Of course we know the Committee had not power to enlarge the vote; but still I think it was within the privilege of the Committee to discuss the matter, and the case of Stephen Welch being distinctly within the category of compensation for injuries, it appeared to me that it was quite in order to discuss the matter.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—The question was complicated in this way: that an amendment was moved upon the question and it was ruled by the Chairman that that amendment precluded the hon. member for Lockyer from discussing any previous item in the vote. That is what it practically meant. Therefore any member who wishes to burke discussion upon any item can do so by moving an amendment later on.

The PREMIER: That has nothing to do with the matter.

Mr. MURPHY: I think it has a great deal to do with it, and it was only because there was an apparent attempt to burke discussion that this point has been raised.

Mr. PAUL said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Barcoo has omitted one very important part of the proceedings, and that was that when the hon. member for Bundamba found out that by his action he had precluded the hon. member for Lockyer from speaking—

The PREMIER: That is not the point referred to the Speaker.

Mr. PAUL: I am stating the whole circumstances of the case—

The SPEAKER: The remarks of the hon. member have nothing to do with the point of order referred to me. The only question which may be permitted to be discussed is the point of order which has been referred to me. Matters that are not referred to in that point of order the House can take no notice of. The remarks made by the hon. member for Barcoo, of course, may be perfectly in accord with what has taken place; but as the point he has raised has not been referred to me, I cannot take any notice of it. As I understand the point of order which has been raised and referred to the House, it is this: That an item including compensation for injuries having been under discussion in committee, the hon. member for Lockyer proceeded to reopen a case which has been before the House on a recent occasion—the case of Stephen Welch. When it was proposed that the House should go into committee in order to consider the granting of a sum of money to Stephen Welch in compensation for injuries he received, the House decided not to go into committee on the subject. I understand that that is the case.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. NORTH: No!

The SPEAKER: I must understand what is the point of order.

The PREMIER: That is the point of order.

The SPEAKER: That is the point of order that has been reported by the Chairman. The matter having been decided in the House at that time, the hon. member now wishes to reopen the case in committee and discuss the evidence thereupon.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—After the amendment referred to by the hon. member for Barcoo was proposed, it was agreed that it should be withdrawn, in order to allow the hon. member for Lockyer to discuss this matter. But after the amendment was withdrawn for that special purpose, and the hon. member for Lockyer in discussing the question commenced to read some notes upon the subject, the question was raised whether he should be allowed to read those notes, not whether he should be allowed to discuss the question.

Mr. NORTH said: Mr. Speaker—

The SPEAKER said: The hon. member has already spoken.

The CHAIRMAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to state more fully the facts of the case before you give your ruling on the question which has been raised. When I stated the point of order just now I was suffering from a cough, and was unable to speak very distinctly. The question before the Committee was that there be granted for the service of the year 1890-91, a sum not exceeding £14,436 for railways. There had been some discussion in reference to an amendment which was then withdrawn, and the Committee went back to the original question. The hon. member for Lockyer said he would read some notes which he had, and the Premier then rose to a point of order. That is how the difficulty arose.

The PREMIER: The Chairman of Committees distinctly reported before that it was the case of Stephen Welch the hon. member for Lockyer was going to discuss.

The CHAIRMAN: I was about to refer to that. The matter the hon. member for Lockyer was discussing was the case of Stephen Welch. The name of Stephen Welch was mentioned several times.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Lockyer expressed, in his strongest and most trenchant language, his intention of reading the whole of the case of Stephen Welch.

The SPEAKER said: My statement of the case as I understood it was, I think, pretty accurate. As I understand the matter, the Chairman's ruling was to the effect that the hon. member for Lockyer was in order in proceeding with the discussion of that particular case. I am not prepared to endorse the ruling of the Chairman. The House has already had the case of Stephen Welch before it, and has declined to go into committee to further consider the case. The House having come to that decision, there is only one other means by which the case can be reopened, and that ought to be within the knowledge of hon. members who are acquainted with the forms of the House. So far as the discussion goes, on this particular item, I must express the opinion that the hon. member is not justified in reopening the case in Committee of Supply upon the vote which was before the Committee at the time the point of order was raised. I must therefore state to the House that I am unable to agree with the Chairman in his ruling on the matter.

The Committee resumed.

Question—That there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1890-1, a sum not exceeding £14,436 for railways, general establishment—put.

Mr. GLASSEY said he would now move again that the item of £700 for the General Traffic Manager be reduced by £100.

Mr. NORTH said he would like the Minister for Railways to answer his question as to why the £100 for Stephen Welch had been left off that vote.

The PREMIER said it was left off because it was found that it ought to be no longer on.

Mr. NORTH: For what reasons?

The PREMIER said it had been left off for reasons which had already been fully stated in the House—reasons so strong that even if a majority of the Committee had presented an address to the Governor asking for the money to be placed on the Estimates, the Government would have thought fit, on their own responsibility, to recommend the Governor not to accede to the address.

Mr. MURPHY said he did not think the question should be allowed to go without discussion. He did not know what was the feeling of the Committee, but his own feeling was that the salary of the traffic manager should not be reduced.

The PREMIER: I do not think it is going to be. The hon. member need not be alarmed.

Mr. MURPHY said he was alarmed. He did not think a capable man such as the present traffic manager was overpaid at the salary he was paid; in fact, he was a great deal underpaid. If there was any danger of his salary being reduced, it would be well for the Committee not to go to a division upon the question at that late hour.

The PREMIER: There is no danger.

Mr. MURPHY said if there was no danger he would not detain the Committee any longer; but he would rather vote for an increase of £200 to the salary of the traffic manager than for a reduction of it by £100.

Mr. LITTLE said that, as the Government were going in for retrenchment, he did not think they should increase the salary of the traffic manager. It was unnecessary, as the traffic manager was very well paid at present.

Mr. NORTH said that before the matter went to a vote he would like to say a word in favour of the traffic manager. He had seen a good deal of what that officer had done in different districts, and could testify that he was a very hard-worked officer. He (Mr. North) would not like to see the vote reduced, and would vote against the amendment. He could only say that, although he generally spoke very little, henceforth he should speak on every vote and occupy as much of the time of the Committee as he could, because the Government would not let him have a chance when he did want to speak.

Mr. SMYTH said he understood that the increase referred to had been put on the Estimates by the late Government, and was endorsed by the present Government. It must be remembered that the traffic manager, having control of the whole railway traffic of the colony, had great responsibilities thrown on his shoulders, and that even with the proposed increase his salary would be less than one-third of that of the Chief Commissioner. He was a good man, and ought to be well paid. He (Mr. Smyth) therefore hoped the hon. member for Bundamba would withdraw his amendment.

Question—That the item £700 be reduced by £100—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 5.

Messrs. Glassey, Barlow, Wimble, Little, and Annear.

NOES, 1.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Cowley, Hodgkinson, Nelson, Black, Unmack, Paul, Drake, Allan, Morgan, Isambert, Corfield, Murphy, Luya, Dunsmore, Grimes, Smyth, North, Tozer, and Callan.

Question resolved in the negative.

Question—That £14,436 be granted—put and passed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again at the next sitting of the House.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. I intimated last evening that if reasonable progress were made with the Estimates to-day we should be able to-morrow evening to go on with my motion respecting the federation and division of the colony; but this evening the Government have been met with so much obstruction on the Estimates that the condition to which I referred, and which I hoped would have been complied with, has certainly not been fulfilled. I have received no communication whatever from the leaders of the separation party on the other side of the House. I do not know whether, if I address the House on the subject to-morrow evening, I shall be addressing bitter enemies, or gentlemen who are disposed to reason the matter out in a friendly spirit. Under these circumstances I do not feel that I am in a position to go on with my motion to-morrow evening. I am quite prepared to go on with it then; but there is a great deal of business to be done, and at the present rate of progress with the Estimates we shall hardly get finished by Christmas time. Under those circumstances I can only say that Supply will stand on the top of the paper for to-morrow.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—It was understood that the resolutions in connection with the separation movement would be brought forward to-morrow night.

The PREMIER: I said if we made reasonable progress in Supply to-day.

Mr. BLACK: I think very reasonable progress has been made to-day. Some very important items have been discussed. Of course, if the hon. gentleman desires some excuse for not going on with the separation debate to-morrow, the matter is entirely in his own hands, and he must accept the consequences. I did not suppose there was any necessity for the leaders of the separation party to interview the hon. gentleman on the subject. We understood the arrangement to be that the question should be discussed to-morrow. If the hon. gentleman desires to recede from that position he has the power to do so entirely in his own hands.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member's suggestion—I will not say what his suggestion is, but his sneering speech—is not worthy of any hon. member who aspires to hold any respectable position in the House, and is certainly unworthy of an answer. I said last night what the Government proposed to do, and I was quite ready to go on with the separation debate to-morrow evening. But it is necessary to get through the business of the session, and we must go on with Supply in preference to any other business. The Government still hope to go on with the resolutions to-morrow evening. I cannot say more than that.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—I am sorry to see the Premier losing his temper in this way. Speaking for myself as a Central member, I have been looking forward to the separation debate coming on to-morrow night. There has been no intention to obstruct business. So far as I am personally concerned, my object to-night has simply been to assist an hon. member to bring forward a matter which he wished to have discussed, and I felt it was my bounden duty to do so. But the Premier seems to be getting quite beside himself; he is losing control, not only of himself, but of the House. There has been no factious opposition whatever, and I, personally, am as anxious as anyone that the business of the session should be brought to a close as speedily as possible. The least the leader of the Government can do is to keep his temper, and not cast unworthy aspersions on members on this side. I hope the Government will go on with the separation question to-morrow night.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at fifteen minutes past 12 o'clock.