Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 1891

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 2 September, 1891.

Question Without Notice — Railway Commissioners' report. — Supply — resumption of committee.— Message from the Legislative Council—Treasury Bills Bill.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS' REPORT.

Mr. GLASSEY said: Mr. Speaker,—I would like to ask the Secretary for Railways a question without notice—When may we expect the report of the Railway Commissioners to be laid on the table of the House?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. T. O. Unmack) said: Mr. Speaker,—I expect to have the report ready within a few days, certainly next week, as it is now in the hands of the Government Printer.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On this Order of the Day being read,

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that you do now leave the chair.

Question put and passed.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

The CHIEF SECRETARY moved that there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1891-2, a sum not exceeding £1,660, salaries and contingencies in connection with His Excellency the Governor. The vote was the same as last year.

Mr. NELSON said before they went on with Supply there were one or two things which required a little explanation. The first matter he wished to bring before the Committee was the continued absence of the annual statement of the Auditor-General. No one seemed to know when it would be ready; but it must be apparent to the Committee that they ought to have it before them at that stage, as they ought to know exactly what the expenditure had been during the preceding year, in order to be able to compare it with the proposed expenditure for the current year. That was particularly required in order to give them some idea of the expenditure from the loan fund last year, because hon. members would notice that in the Financial Statement, although the Colonial Treasurer gave them a retrospect of the expenditure from revenue, he did not say one word or make the slightest allusion to the expenditure from the loan fund during last year. On that subject they were, up to the present, deprived of all information. In the next place, it was not quite apparent yet what the full scheme of the Government was for putting the finances of the colony into a sound condition. The Committee knew that the actual deficit to the end of the last financial year was £1,303,000, and they further knew that the Government had been making attempts to provide ways and means for meeting that deficit. The ways and means provided, so far, was the issue of Treasury bills. They had £500,000 in Treasury bills falling due in January, 1896, and they had renewed some other Treasury bills for the same amount, £500,000. As for the balance of £300,000, he did not see that any provision had yet been made.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is made in the Treasury Bills Bill.

Mr. NELSON said the Treasury Bills Bill did not include that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It includes the total deficit and the Victoria Bridge debentures.

Mr. NELSON said there was nothing in the Bill that he could see to show that. Hon. members knew that it was a fundamental principle of government that the appropriation for the service of one year must be kept distinct from the appropriation for the service of any other year. If he was not mistaken, that was provided for in the Constitution Act. At any rate, it was the practice which had always been observed, and a very proper one it was too. The Treasury Bills Bill made no reference whatever to the £300,000 deficit that had accrued for the financial year ending on the 30th June last.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The copy I had before me did.

Mr. NELSON said the copy he had did not refer to it. The appropriation clause—clause 7—provided that all moneys raised under the Bill should be devoted to "any service authorised to to be defrayed out of the consolidated revenue fund." That must refer to the service of some particular year. And the preamble stated that certain sums were granted to Her Majesty "towards the services for the year ending on the last day of June, 1892," so that really that £300,000 was provided for the current year, and not for last year. As he understood from the Financial Statement, the Treasurer expected to have a deficit of £100,000 at the end of the year, and the hon. gentleman proposed to make up that amount by the sale of land under the Special Sales of Land Bill. He (Mr. Nelson) was a little out of order in referring to that Bill, but he asked the indulgence of the Committee to do so. It was not his fault that he was out of order; it was due to the way in which the Government had brought their financial policy before the Committee. The Committee ought to have had the whole of the policy put before them at the end of the Financial Speech. They ought to have been asked to affirm then the principle of selling land to wipe out the deficit, and also to affirm the policy of issuing Treasury bills. All that might have been done at one time. The first part of the Special Sales of Land Bill provided how the money was to get into the Treasury, and the second part, beginning at clause 6, provided how the money was to go out of the Treasury again; those were very proper things to provide for, and represented the two functions of the Committee. The Bill was ostensibly a Bill to sell land for the purpose of retiring Treasury bills, but the retirement of Treasury bills was made quite a secondary matter as far as the Bill was concerned. The 1st subsection of clause 6 provided that—

> "In each of the years ending on the thirtieth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-two, and the thirtieth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-three, respectively, the Governor in Council may direct any part of such moneys to be applied in payment of any sums appropriated by Parliament for the services of those years respectively."

Surely the leader of the Government never expected the Committee to pass a provision of that sort. He (Mr. Nelson) looked upon it as an insult to the Committee that they should be asked to give the Government power to take that money which was to be raised by the sale of land and apply it to the payment of any sums they chose to apply it to. As soon as he read that provision he was reminded of the old style which was carried on by the Government not so very long ago. At that time, when the Government wanted to get authority to spend money under the system known as that of unforeseen

expenditure, they simply filled up a minute with the words similar to those of the apothecary's formula—*quantum sufficit.*

The CHIEF SECRETARY : When was that ?

Mr. NELSON said it was only a few years ago ; and the proposal in the clause was very much the same thing. The Government were asking the Committee to give them authority to take whatever sums of money they chose out of that fund without specifying any amount. Whenever they thought it was convenient they were to be allowed to take the money out of the Treasury. Of course the appropriations were to be made by Parliament. That was understood, but the amount the Government might take was left entirely to their own discretion. If their revenue from other sources turned out to be deficient, and they had no call to exercise economy, they would have that fund to go back upon to make up their balance. He objected entirely to such a system. When money once got into the Treasury the proper authority to take it out was Parliament, and if the Government, would alter the clause in such a way as to provide that Parliament and not the Government should decide what money should be taken out of that fund, then hon. members might be able to entertain the proposal ; He was certain the House would never allow such a provision to pass. Then, again, it appeared that after getting authority to issue Treasury bills to the extent of £1,300,000 they had authority to sell the whole of them. They were also going to ask for authority to sell land to meet those bills, but in the meantime they would have raised the whole of the money by the sale of the bills, and there was no guarantee that the money which had accrued from the sale of land would go to redeem the Treasury bills. They might use the money that was ostensibly to be raised for the purpose of retiring the Treasury bills for ordinary revenue, and when they matured they would have to be otherwise provided for. They were really not making any provision for them at the present time, because in the 1st subsection of clause 6 the Government asked for authority to use any part of that money for ordinary purposes. That was the position they were in at present, and he would like to hear some explanation by the Chief Secretary with regard to it. He was not at all satisfied with the mode in which the Government intended to manipulate the finances of the country, and he was under the impression that the manner in which the proposals were laid before them was not the ordinary constitutional method to be adopted.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he would endeavour to answer the hon. gentleman's criticisms as far as he understood them. The hon. gentleman complained again that the Auditor-General's report was not before the House. The reasons for that had been explained by the Treasurer. It was of no use repeating them. The Treasurer was not prepared with his accounts for the Auditor-General in consequence of unanticipated press of work in the department, and there was consequently some delay. That was the fact, and no amount of explanation would alter it. But in that respect the Committee was no worse off than it was on previous occasions.

Mr. NELSON : We expected it would be in a better position.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said so did he, and he was very much disappointed ; that was all, but as far as that went the hon. member had as much information as usual, and in the meantime the fullest information could be given as to the balances of any one vote.

Mr. NELSON : Has the Auditor-General got the accounts ?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he could not answer that question. It was simply a matter of printing. As to the comments of the hon. gentleman on the financial policy of the Government, the hon. gentleman seemed to have lost sight of one important fact that was the foundation really, in one sense, of their system ; that was that all the money they got went into one consolidated fund. From whatever source it came, whether from money borrowed on debentures, or sale of stock, or Customs revenue, or sale of land, or sale of Treasury bills, all the money went into one fund ; and out of that fund all liabilities had to be paid, whether they accrued under an Act of Parliament passed during the present year or twenty years ago, or to be passed. That was the cash part of the business. The hon. gentleman mixed up that with the bookkeeping part of the business, which kept the accounts apart, and properly so. Although the accounts for one year might show a deficit or a surplus, the money that was spent in the year was all paid from the money to the credit of the consolidated revenue fund. The hon. gentleman had referred to a Bill before the House. He (the Chief Secretary) did not call him to order, for the same reason probably that the Chairman did not do so, and that was that, under the circumstances, he thought it might be as well to say a few words on the general question of finance on the first vote on the Estimates, because it might save time hereafter. The hon. gentleman seemed not to have carefully read the Treasury Bills Bill. There was at present a deficit of £1,300,000 on the transactions of successive years, but there was no deficit in the consolidated revenue fund. There was a surplus there. Notwithstanding that, unless they intended to apply permanently the money they had borrowed from foreign creditors to paying off that deficit, they must raise it by some other means. The Government proposed to raise it and pay it into the consolidated revenue fund, which would then show, as it ought to show, a surplus equal to the amount they had borrowed from outside creditors and had not spent for the purposes for which it was borrowed. The money to the credit of the consolidated revenue ought to be at least equal to the amount borrowed from outside creditors and not so spent. Now, at present there was money to the credit of the loan account, but the money to the credit of it was borrowed for specific purposes, and a great deal of it which had been applied in aid of the revenue account must be recouped. That was proposed to be done in the first instance, if necessary, by the sale of Treasury bills. The House had already assented to that course. Provision must then be made for redeeming those Treasury bills, and it was proposed to provide for redeeming them by the sale of land. The hon. gentleman said, who could tell that when the land was sold the money would be really applied to that purpose ? Who could tell ? No one could tell. All Parliament could do was to pass a law saying that a certain thing should be done with certain money, and the consequences of breaking the law must rest upon those who broke it. There might be a corrupt Government, who would divide the money among themselves, but they would have to get the sanction of the Governor to that course. They might have an Auditor-General who declined to do his duty. They might have a rebellion or be invaded by a foreign force, and have to pay the money away as an indemnity. All Parliament could do was to provide that certain things should be done with the money, and that was what the Government proposed to invite Parliament to do. If the measures proposed by the Government were defective in any respect,

he should be very glad to amend them. The Government had made it distinct and clear that the money should be raised for a special purpose, and should be applied to that special purpose. As to providing for the application of the money to meet a possible deficit during the next two years, that was a matter of detail. It might be provided, as the hon. gentleman suggested, that the money should be specifically earmarked, and put aside to pay off Treasury bills and nothing else. That was one way of doing it. On the other hand, the deficit, if there was a deficit, would still be there, and the money must be found in some way. The deficit would only be created by the expenditure of money out of the consolidated revenue fund in excess of the revenue for the year. The money would have been spent all the same, and all money raised, no matter in what way, would have to go into the consolidated revenue fund, whether the Bill said so expressly or not. As a matter of fact, it was all one sum. They might keep it apart in the books, but it was all one sum. It might be said that there should be a special Bill passed next year, in the event of there being a deficit, saying that they should withdraw a certain sum and use it for the purpose of wiping out the deficit. That would be one way of doing it, but whether it would be the best way or not was a matter for argument. He did not think the time had arrived for arguing it. That seemed to be entirely a matter of detail. The hon. gentleman referred to the action of the Government as being unconstitutional. He (the Chief Secretary) confessed he was unable to follow him. As far as he was aware, the course followed by the Government was strictly constitutional, and every step that had been taken by them had been in compliance with the Constitution. He had failed to follow the hon. gentleman on that point; but if there was anything else he had not made clear, or if any further information was required, he should be glad to supplement what he had already said.

Mr. NELSON said there were two or three things he did not yet understand, and it was as well they should get a grasp of the subject. He did not know why in the Treasury Bills Bill it should be specified that they were for the services of the year ending on the last day of June, 1892.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I forgot that point.

Mr. NELSON said the other point was this: It was contrary to all parliamentary practice to grant the Government power to spend indefinite sums.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Hear, hear!

Mr. NELSON said that was what the Government were asking for, because they asked for power to take, at their discretion, as much money out of the fund to be raised by the sales of land as would be sufficient to meet any deficit, without stating what the deficit might be. When the Treasurer made his Financial Statement he did not make that mistake, because he told the House distinctly that he wanted £100,000 to make his accounts balance for the current year. He was sure there would be no objection on the part of the Committee to grant him the power to take that sum out of the fund from the special sales of land; but to put it in the way in which it was now put, and leave it to the Government to take any amount they chose, certainly could not be constitutional. The form usually employed in English Acts was to the effect that they would vote, say, £100,000 for the present year, and the proceeds might be appropriated as Parliament might hereafter direct in an Act passed during that session. That was a proper constitutional way; but to leave it to the Government, or the Government in a following session, whoever they might be, to take out of the fund whatever sums they chose, was certainly an unusual and unconstitutional practice, and one, he was sure, the Committee would never allow.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman asked why the Treasury Bills Bill recited that the money should be applied to services of the current year. There were two reasons for that. One was that Bills of that sort were introduced in Committee of Ways and Means, and founded on a previous resolution of the Committee of Supply. They had already, in Committee of Supply during the present year, authorised the expenditure of £250,000. Besides that reason they knew that there was no money actually available from the current year's revenue, because all that had been received up to the present time had been more than absorbed by the deficit. The deficit was £1,300,000; the current year's revenue went to pay off that, and of course it had to be recouped from some other source. Those were the reasons for that course, and it was strictly correct in substance and also in form.

Mr. NELSON: I can't see it. No deficit has yet accrued for the year ending 30th June, 1892.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Exactly; he had been trying to make the hon. gentleman understand there was only one consolidated revenue fund.

Mr. NELSON: I know that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman did not seem to comprehend it. Actually, in round figures, there was £1,500,000 to the credit of the fund, but there ought to be £2,800,000 to the credit of it. The nominal amount to the credit of what was called the loan fund account was diminished by the deficit. That was to say, so much had been expended and paid out of the consolidated revenue fund.

Mr. DONALDSON: Only a portion of it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said it was one cash account; but when they divided it into two—the revenue and loan accounts, then as a matter of fact the revenue for the year was already pledged to the extent of £1,300,000, money borrowed from the other fund. That had to be recouped. If the hon. member would think for a moment he would see that was strictly correct, and the only possible way of doing it. As to the other point he did not yet quite comprehend the hon. gentleman. The hon. gentleman said there was an indefinite power given to the Government to spend money as they chose.

Mr. NELSON: To apply it as they chose.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman was quite wrong. The only authority the Government would have to spend or apply the money in any way would be by an Appropriation Act. The Appropriation Acts gave the Government authority to spend money, those Bills did not. If they spent money without the sanction of Parliament certain consequences would ensue. If they did not get the subsequent sanction of Parliament they must take the consequences, and they might be made liable to refund the money so spent. Suppose during the current year the authorised expenditure exceeded the revenue by £100,000. That £100,000 would in fact be paid out of the consolidated revenue fund, that is out of the money to the credit of the fund. Whether they authorised the Government to make the book transfer from one account to the other account at once as was proposed, or whether they would ask Parliament in a subsequent year to direct that transfer, it practically came to the same thing.

It gave no powers to the Government; it was simply a matter of bookkeeping, and it would be better to discuss that question when the Treasurer was present.

Mr. NELSON said the Committee was being led astray. The Treasury bills had been authorised for the purpose of wiping off the deficit.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: So they were.

Mr. NELSON said the hon. gentleman said just now they were to meet certain services they authorised a few weeks ago for the year ending on the 30th June, 1892.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The consolidated revenue fund runs on from the beginning of the colony.

Mr. NELSON said he knew it ran on, but that had nothing to do with the subject, and it was only mixing things up and confusing them when they wanted to know definitely what it was they were doing. They had authorised the Treasury bills for the specific purpose of paying off the deficit; and now they were told the money was to go into one fund and the Government could do whatever they liked with it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I said nothing of that kind.

Mr. NELSON said he was quite sure that was not constitutional.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I never said that, and the hon. gentleman should not impute it to me.

Mr. NELSON said the Special Sales of Land Bill did not provide for any specific appropriation, but simply allowed the Government to draw upon the fund created by the sales of land at their own free will.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is not in the copy of the Bill I saw.

Mr. NELSON said he would read the clause. The clause to which he referred said—

"In each of the years ending on the thirtieth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-two, and the thirtieth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-three, respectively, the Governor in Council may direct any part of such moneys to be applied in payment of any sums appropriated by Parliament for the services of those years respectively."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Of course.

Mr. NELSON said that was allowing the Government to draw upon the fund as they liked. If the Treasurer found the revenue did not come in from other sources as he required, he could draw upon that fund, and there was nothing to check extravagant expenditure, because the Treasurer would have that fund at his back to draw upon at any moment. The proposal seemed to him a mischievous one.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman seemed to lose sight of the words he had just read. The Government could only apply the fund to the payment of sums appropriated and authorised by Parliament. The Bill did not allow the Government to spend the fund at their own sweet will. He had not a copy of the Bill before him; in any case a discussion upon the details of the clauses of that Bill would be very inconvenient then, as well as contrary to their practice.

Mr. POWERS said that although they had passed the Treasury Bills Bill, they had not passed the Special Sales of Land Bill, and it would really turn out as the leader of the Opposition had said. The estimated revenue for the current year was £3,675,000. Last year the receipts were only £3,350,223. As a matter of fact, they expected to receive during the current year £325,000 more than was received last year. But if that amount was not received, it would of course be made up and appropriated out of the land sales. Hon. members must see that they had to face that question. They were now stopping works and throwing men out of employment, and yet they expected not only the revenue they had last year, but a revenue increased by £350,000. When the Treasurer made his Financial Statement, he spoke of making up £100,000 out of sales of land. It was clear that instead of coming before the House for taxation, or for any other means of meeting any deficit, the Government could, under the Treasury Bills Bill, appropriate not merely £100,000, but £300,000 or £500,000, or whatever amount might be needed. In previous years, when a deficit had occurred, the Treasurer had to come to the House and ask for a land tax, or a property tax, or a beer duty. The present Government would not have to do anything of the sort. They were provided for for the next two years; they could simply go to the land and get everything they wanted. However extravagant they might be, or whatever might happen in the shape of unforeseen expenditure, the Government had placed themselves outside the position of any other Ministry by being able to sell land in any part of the colony and appropriate the proceeds as they thought proper. Previously special appropriations had been required, and any Government had had to come to the House to propose how to make both ends meet. The present Government were not going to do that either during the present or next year if the Special Sales of Land Bill was passed. Hon. members did not know clearly what they were agreeing to; and although the Treasury Bills Bill gave the authority to do what he had mentioned, they ought to know from the Government whether they intended to act in that way, or whether the proceeds from land sales would be appropriated in the usual way. In fact the Land Bills ought to be passed before any very great progress was made with the Estimates. Those Bills formed the financial policy of the Government, and until that policy was approved of or rejected by the House, hon. members were bothering themselves unnecessarily. In any case they ought to have a declaration from the Government on the point raised by the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. BARLOW said he could not understand the meaning of the expression "appropriating money to pay off a deficit." He had followed the hon. member for Murilla very carefully, and it appeared to him that the only way the Government could lay their fingers on the proceeds of land sales would be either by exceeding an appropriation of the money by Parliament, or by expending money without the authority of Parliament in the shape of Supplementary Estimates, or by neglecting to collect the revenue they ought to do, as, for instance, by shutting up the Custom-house for a fortnight. A deficit was a perpetually fluctuating quantity. With reference to the remark of the Chief Secretary about the consolidated revenue, table G explained the matter very clearly. It showed the cash balance at the commencement of last year to be £2,727,000; that the receipts during the year from various sources had amounted to £6,000,000, and that after all payments had been accounted for, there was a balance left at the commencement of the current year of £1,236,459. He could not see in what way the Government could intercept the proceeds of land sales, unless, as he had said, they neglected to collect revenue, spent sums in excess of the amount authorised by Parliament, or wasted money in unforeseen expenses on Supplementary Estimates. Whatever land was sold must be placed to the credit of the consolidated

revenue. If there was any objection to the Bill it would lie in the Government having an unlimited commission to sell land and pay the proceeds into the Treasury. If that was the case, it was a fair subject for discussion whether the Government should have power to sell, under the conditions mentioned in the Bill, an unlimited quantity of land, and pay it into the account represented by table G. The deficit—£1,303,000—represented the amount by which the consolidated revenue was now short—the encroachment upon what ought to have been the balance to credit of the loan account. That amount was unrepresented by anything; and the Treasurer said last year, when moving a Treasury Bills Bill, that he was moving for authority to get paper to fill up the deficit. The only point he (Mr. Barlow) saw in the Bill authorising the issue of Treasury bills was the point about the payment of interest. As those Treasury bills would not, he presumed, be issued to the general public unless very unforeseen contingencies should arise, the payment of the interest would, he supposed, go to the credit of the consolidated revenue fund; it would go somewhat in the shape of the payment of interest on Government deposits; and otherwise that provision of the Bill appeared to be a nullity. The question whether the Government should have a roving commission to sell land was a totally different one. He did not think the position of the Treasurer's Financial Statement, as reconstructed under the table to which he had referred, was thoroughly understood. It might be understood by some hon. members, but he did not think it was thoroughly understood outside. The balance which the Treasurer would have at his disposal was, as he had said, £631,771. The hon. gentleman could not get money in the ordinary way to wipe out the deficit, and he must get it somehow. Until he did make it up, so much of his loan money was locked up from profitable employment. There were other features in the matter to which he (Mr. Barlow) would not draw public attention.

Mr. POWERS said he would like to know from the Chief Secretary when the Government intended going on with their Land Bills; whether it would be when they got through that day's Estimates, or when?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he was not at present in a position to state the precise order in which the Government would carry on their business. He had announced some time ago that the Government proposed to proceed with the Estimates on Wednesday in each week. The Land Bills would be proceeded with at a very early date.

Mr. DRAKE said he would like to ask the Chief Secretary whether it was not possible to make any saving in that vote? From all that had been stated, it was clear that the finances of the colony were not in a satisfactory condition. They had been borrowing recklessly. Their financing had not been of the most brilliant description, and, as far as he could understand the question boiled down, it meant that all the money that had been raised or borrowed went into one bag and came out of that bag. At the present time they had borrowed money for public works, and that money had been spent to a great extent in meeting the ordinary expenses of the Government. The cash had all gone to meet those expenses, but there was a credit balance in the Treasury ledger representing the money that had been raised for carrying on certain public works. That seemed to be very unsatisfactory. Now, to meet the deficit the Government were going to have power given to them to sell land, and, for all they knew, the money they would be asked to vote that night would have to be raised by selling land. Under those circumstances he would ask if it was possible to make any saving in that vote?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he did not think any saving could be made in the vote. The amount asked for was the same that had been voted for many years, and was the smallest amount for which the services could be performed.

Mr. HOOLAN said the present was the proper time to carefully consider expenditure and income. It was no use hiding the fact that the colony was bankrupt; that a very short time ago it took its goods—that was the whole estate—to the big pawnshop of the world, placed it in pawn, and made a very bad bargain. Of course if they could pawn the goods of the colony and make a good bargain, there would not be so much reason for those not well versed in finance to interfere. He would be one of the last to interfere, but under present conditions it was not only necessary, but an imperative duty on the part of hon. members to look clearly and as definitely as they could into financial matters. They were about to vote money to carry on the administration of the colony, and it was, therefore, just as well to inquire into their enormous Civil Service list, which far outnumbered, according to population, the Civil Service of any other colony in the Australasian group, and had now become so burdensome that the colony was sinking under it; and were it not that they were going to fall back on the wholesale confiscation of the public estate, it would have already sunk into the mud and mire of financial disaster, a broken-backed wreck. The number of Civil servants who drew salaries from £300 to £400 was 570, the average being about £330 each. That included the sixty-six members of Parliament who received £300 a year each, but excluded those sitting on the Treasury bench. The persons who enjoyed salaries from £400 to £500, numbered 270, averaging about £445 each. Those drawing from £500 to £600 numbered 140; from £600 to £700, 64; from £700 to £800, 40; from £900 to £1,000, including Ministers of the Crown, 30; from £1,000 to £2,000, 12; and there were 5 at £2,000, 2 at £2,500, 1 at £3,000, and 1 at £5,000. Those salaries might have been perfectly correct and just under the old order of things, when everything was prosperous; but under the new order of things—general insolvency and all round bankruptcy—they were manifestly unjust. The time had arrived when every individual in the colony, unless he was overburdened with wealth and his position was perfectly secure, was compelled to economise and restrict his tastes and habits; and he contended that the salaries of those highly-pampered officials of the State should be reduced, so that they should help to carry the burdens of the State. Those salaries were fixed when times were prosperous, when capital was flowing into the colony, and they could borrow money whenever they wanted it; and it was eminently unjust that those officers should continue to fatten on those tremendous salaries in the present depressed state of the country, when they were up to their necks in debt. If the Committee first commenced reductions in their own household it could then run through the whole colony, and everyone would cheerfully join in the system of economy thus initiated. As it was, the working people of the colony were discontented; their earnings were reduced to probably half what they were formerly; yet they had to provide the salaries of those officers just the same as when there was unbounded prosperity. They might almost call it a blind prosperity. Certainly it was time that something should be done, and those few remarks would pave the way

for whatever hostility might be shown to certain votes. There was the pension list, for instance, which was yearly increasing. No doubt those people were quite right in enjoying their pensions as long as they could after they had secured them. Without wishing them to die speedily, he considered that it was wonderful how they seemed to be blessed with wonderfully long lives. They seemed to gain a renewal of life as soon as they got on to the pension list. There was also the war expenditure for arms, warships, the officers of the land and marine forces, the encampments and trappings, whilst there was a general state of insolvency to face. He did not know how statesmen could reconcile themselves to the expenditure, considering the state of the finances. Surely the Government did not expect to continue the sale of the public estate at sacrificing prices, in order to carry on the administration of the affairs of the country? If that was their idea they would soon wind themselves up. The total revenue last year was £3,350,223, whilst the cost of administration was £3,684,654; and, in view of that, it was time some decisive steps should be taken. It did not require a very logical mind to see that, as it must be apparent to the most ignorant who would give it a moment's serious reflection, apart from any labour business, or any of the wrangles that took place in that Committee. When an hon. member came to that House he pledged himself to do his duty, but he soon allowed the impressions made upon his mind to slip; it was, however, now time to consider what should be done to place the finances in a proper state, and make their income meet their expenditure. They would go on until the country got into the hands of the bailiff. He hoped that those who were better acquainted with the internal affairs of the colony than he was, would take them in hand and try to initiate a system of economy. Notwithstanding what had been said of the economy of the last year, they had not economised at all; and they were continuing the same extravagance that they had gone in for when Queensland had been at the height of its prosperity. They were told that they were to fall back on their lands; but even if they had millions of acres of land, only a limited portion of it was worth selling. A lot of their land was worthless, and if they only expected to get 10s. per acre for the best of the land, the worst must be of no value whatever, so that it could not be considered as an asset. It was a very poor way to carry on to sell their lands, and that was the last financial resource. Some more serious efforts should be made to try and reduce the expenditure, and bring the colony into a better financial position; and if the Parliament could not undertake the business it was only right that the country should have a try.

Mr. GANNON said he would ask the Chief Secretary whether the sum of £500 set down to meet the travelling expenses of His Excellency and staff on tours of inspection was inclusive or exclusive of the cost of the "Lucinda" on the various trips?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he was not aware that any part of that money was appropriated to pay the expenses of the "Lucinda." The travelling expenses while on shore were numerous.

Mr. GANNON said there was another item he wished to refer to. Was the £300 for rent of a country residence for the Governor expended last year?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that part of that money had been expended by the Administrator of the Government during the absence of His Excellency.

Mr. SALKELD said that they had been told during the last twelve months, on every occasion when money had been spoken of, that the finances were so disordered that economy of the strictest kind must be practised in every direction. That argument was used particularly when something was wanted for the country districts. He had understood that the Government were going to economise in every possible way; and if they had been sincere, and if the finances were really in such a bad condition as was said—although he did not think they were quite as bad as some people tried to make out—the Government should have shown their intention to economise by starting at the top of the tree and going the whole way through. Ever since he had had a seat in Parliament, with the exception of the first session, on every occasion when the Estimates had come on he had pointed out that it cost far too much to govern the country. Sometimes a few members—sometimes six, sometimes eight, and sometimes ten—had tried to reduce various items, but invariably without success. He did not think it was any good making isolated attempts of that kind. It could not be done unless they had a Government with their heart and soul in their work, who would really act impartially, and not use the cry of the state of the finances as a buffer to ward off demands for expenditure in certain directions whilst they allowed it to go on in others. His experience was that if anything was to be done—no matter how much it might be wanted—they were met with the plea of economy. If he could see the slightest prospect of a sufficient number of hon. members uniting to really carry out economy, he would join in starting at the very top of the tree and sticking to it right through the Estimates, reducing the expenditure in every direction, even if it caused the Government to go to the country. He believed that if the country had the true facts placed before them they would be opposed to that extravagance; but there had been no real attempt made to economise right through the Estimates. He knew that when they made a start on any one item it appeared invidious, and as if an hon. member had a dislike to the individual in whose case the reduction was proposed. He had no personal dislike of that kind in any action he took, but he believed in going into the matter systematically and making reductions right through the list. He did not see why highly-paid officers in Government departments, when living was so much cheaper, should continue to draw large salaries when everybody else was so badly off, and the services of some lower-paid servants were dispensed with or their salaries reduced. The boards which had been appointed had never, so far as he knew, reduced the salaries of men receiving £200 a year and upwards, but they had reduced the wages of men getting 10s. and 12s. a day. If an officer receiving £500, or £600, or £800 a year had his services dispensed with, or his office abolished, he got compensation; but it was not so with the lower-paid officials; and to say that there was one law for rich and poor was absolutely untrue. In the Lands Department they were exercising economy, and selectors who required roads to get to their selections had to pay for the land for those roads, because the department could not afford the money—£30, £40, or £50, or whatever it might be. With regard to the Post Office Department, one could not get 2s. 6d. a week expended in order to provide a receiving bag for forty or fifty people. At any rate, that was his experience. If he could see a sufficient number of hon. members intent upon economy, he would lend a hand to make reductions right through the list.

Mr. GANNON: Start away; I will help you

Mr. SALKELD said he had tried to make reductions again and again, but it was no use for a few hon. members to make any attempt in that direction. Other hon. members had cried out for economy, but they would not go right through the list. He believed they spent 25 per cent. more for government than they ought to do, and, as he had already stated, he would support a reduction in the Estimates if a sufficient number of hon. members would join in the effort to effect reasonable reductions.

Mr. POWERS said there was great encouragement to hon. members to make reductions, as any reductions they could make would mean a saving of the lands of the colony—that was, agricultural lands—because they knew that no land except agricultural land could be sold which would realise 10s. an acre. Not long ago, in New Zealand, a large party in the House were desirous of greatly reducing the expenses of the government of that country; but, instead of making invidious distinctions by objecting to certain votes, which might be put down to ill-feeling or other motives, they referred the Estimates back to the Government, and said, "Bring in revised Estimates of expenditure to the extent of £75,000," and left it to the Government to decide what reductions should be made. The Government there did not adopt a high tone, but brought in reduced Estimates as requested. The only persons who could economise were the Government, and he did not see why the Government in this colony should not do as the Government of New Zealand did, and revise their Estimates. The Estimates now before the Committee showed that the Government, who posed as determined economists, asked for £30,573 more for the current year than was voted for 1890-91. The Estimates of probable expenditure for 1890-91 was £2,460,843, and the amount required for 1891-2 was £2,491,416, or an increase of £30,573 on the amount voted for last year.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Which can be explained in about two items.

Mr. POWERS said whatever the explanation might be, there was an increase. Of course there was the item of £12,600 for the Australian Squadron.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And the fortnightly mail service.

Mr. POWERS: Yes; and the fortnightly mail service.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Both passed by Parliament.

Mr. POWERS said it was quite true that both those items were passed by Parliament, and that Government had no control over them; but even omitting them, the Government, determined economists as they claimed to be, had increased the expenditure instead of reducing it. Every £1 saved in the expenditure would mean that two acres of land were saved to the country, and as the leader of the Government had stated again and again that he wished to save the land for the people, why should he not reconsider and revise the Estimates? He (Mr. Powers) did not wish to single out any particular item for the purpose of voting against it, as he wished to avoid any personal or improper motives being attributed to him; but holding the views he did with regard to the alienation of land in large areas, wherever he saw that a saving could be properly effected he would vote for a reduction in the Estimates. Still he thought the Government were the only persons who could properly reduce the Estimates, and he would like to know whether it was possible that the Government would reconsider the matter, and bring in revised Estimates? Nearly every hon. member sitting on the Ministerial benches had, when in opposition, stated that they could reduce the expenditure, and that therefore there was no necessity for the property tax proposed by the late Treasurer, Mr. Donaldson. They said, "We do not want this lavish expenditure;" and it was that policy which landed them on the Treasury benches; but the lavish expenditure against which they protested was in the Estimates now before them, and the total amount asked for was more than was voted in previous years. He felt that it was almost hopeless to try to get them reduced unless the Government would take the matter in hand; and he believed that if they did so, they would really have very much reduced Estimates submitted to the Committee.

Mr. SAYERS said he thought they were taking up a lot of time uselessly. The question had been thrashed out time after time when the Estimates were before hon. members. When he first came to the House he thought he could do a great deal in the way of assisting to cut down expenditure, but he found, as others had found, that he could do nothing at all. Now, if any hon. member would move a reduction in any item he would support him if he thought the reduction necessary, and they would then see at once if there was a chance of making any reductions. He saw items further on in which he would move reductions, but he was, unfortunately, in the position that he did not know whether they would be carried or not. Last year he believed the money voted was not enough for the public expenditure. Under the vote for Public Instruction there was an increase. Of course as long as they had the present system of free education that expenditure must increase. The vote now amounted to £258,000. That was increased, no doubt, by hon. members going to the Minister and asking for increases to the schoolmasters in their districts. Members tried to get increases to the salaries of public servants in their own constituencies, and then if the Estimates were increased they cried out about it. The first thing they should do was not to ask for those increases. He had never troubled any Minister for increases, because he believed the public service was fairly well paid, but he had been frequently asked to do so, and had known many hon. members who had asked for increases. He had tried to get new schools opened where required, but that was for the public good. He had never asked the present or the late Government for anything but additional public schools. Of course when new schools were opened that increased the vote to a certain extent, and he could not complain; but he did complain of items that really were not necessary. He had never been the means of getting many sums on the Estimates, and therefore in good faith he could ask for their reduction. He thought they ought now to get on with business, unless some hon. member intended to move a reduction on the vote before them. The Chief Secretary had said that a portion of the sum for the Governor's country residence had been spent by the Administrator. He thought as long as they had a Governor appointed under the present system, it would be penny wise and pound foolish to reduce his allowances. Distant parts of the colony were always asking for visits from the Governor, and if the people wanted him he could not be expected to pay his own travelling expenses.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: He does not carry his residence with him.

Mr. SAYERS said he was referring to the vote of £500 for travelling expenses. Of course that must be paid, but there were other items of

travelling expenses on the Estimates which amounted to a much larger sum. He knew of some, and had tried to have them reduced, but had been left with six or seven supporters. He did not see why the sum of £300 should be on that vote for a country residence, and if anyone would move a reduction he would support him.

Mr. HOOLAN said he did not think it was wasted time to discuss the general subject of reductions. It would give the Civil servants warning of what was coming. The colony had never been in such a bad state before, and it was as well that the Civil Service should know that those outside the walls of that Chamber, who had to bear the burden, were in earnest. No doubt members would be returned at the next general election pledged to reduce the expenditure on the service, and a sufficiently strong and determined party would have to be formed to carry out the wishes of the people. It was just as well to give a warning note. The Civil servants were a very extravagant set of people. There was no necessity to particularise them, because it might be considered that he had a special ill-feeling against someone. He had, on the contrary, the greatest respect for any of those Civil servants with whom he was acquainted. The Queensland officials were careful and attentive to their work, but it seemed to him there was extravagance in every department of the State. The extravagance was initiated by the State, and spread like an epidemic. People outside at the present time had to economise, and it was necessary that the State should do the same. It would be very unfair to pick out any individual items on the Estimates, such as the vote for the Governor's country residence, or for the steamer "Lucinda," and move that they be reduced. Someone should move a reduction of so much per cent. on the whole expenditure, including the salaries of members of Parliament. Then they would see who were sincere, and who were not ; who were actuated by shallow motives, and who were actuated by real motives of economy. No doubt there were many items of expenditure that could be abolished, such as the vote for the Governor's residence and the "Lucinda ;" and if the Government really looked upon their position from the point of stern duty, they would set themselves to consider where it would be possible to save even small items. When a man met with reverses he had to forego many wants that he thought it impossible to do without during his time of wealth and extravagance, and so it should be with the State. The country was reduced to a state of penury, and many thousand pounds' worth of expenditure could be done without. He hoped some hon. member who was better acquainted with the forms of the Committee than he was would move a reduction on the Estimates all round—a reduction on all salaried individuals from £300 and upwards.

Mr. O'CONNELL said the Queensland Civil Service got a great deal of abuse in that Committee which it did not deserve. No doubt every Government they had had studied their Estimates with a great deal of care, and had no wish to give any man in the service more money than they considered his services were worth ; and it did seem to him unfair that members of the Committee should get up and state that their Civil servants were overpaid. Taking them right through he did not believe they were overpaid. He believed that many of the men drawing salaries from the State were not getting as much as they could earn if they were engaged in commercial pursuits. The Civil servants of Queensland, he was sure, recognised the fact that at the present time the colony was in a very bad position, and they were prepared to wait until things were better for increases to which they believed they were now entitled. They recognised the fact that everybody was having bad times just now, and that if they were not doing as well as they would like, others were in the same position. He believed they thoroughly recognised that fact, and he thought the legislature should recognise the fact that men who worked from year's end to year's end for the same salary, and never received any recognition of their services, got disheartened. If they wanted to get thoroughly good servants of the State, they must give them something to work for, some idea that their services would be recognised, and that what they were doing was going to lead to something better. If they did not do that they would never get servants worth anything.

Mr. GRIMES said it seemed to be the usual thing to commence the discussion upon the Estimates each year with a good deal of talk about the necessity for economy. If those who talked about economy and the necessity for reducing salaries were sincere, they should have begun on page 5 of the Estimates, on the item for payment of members. By the Act introduced by the hon. member for Balonne, that payment had been increased from £2 2s. for each day on which an hon. member was present, to £300 a year ; and hon. members going in for economy should, to be sincere, support a reduction in that item, so as to bring it back to the amount paid as the reimbursement of expenses. The hon. member for Fassifern voted for the present Act and supported it, and to be consistent that hon. member should now support the cutting down of the £300 a year to £100, which was about the amount paid on the average under the system introduced by the Chief Secretary. He would be quite prepared to support a motion of that sort ; and if they carried such a resolution they could then with a good grace ask for a reduction in the salaries of Civil servants right through.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon gentleman knew perfectly well under what circumstances the present Act had been introduced, and that he (Mr. Morehead) had always been opposed to payment of members. The principle had been accepted by the House, and it was only to put the payment of members on a proper system that the present Act had been introduced. If the hon. member would move the repeal of the Act, and deprive members of all emoluments of the kind, he would follow the hon. member if he was alone with him in the division.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: You would not be alone.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not think the hon. member's suggestion was at all likely to be carried out ; but if the hon. member would move the repeal of the Act he would give his word of honour to support the motion, and to give strong reasons for supporting it. The question of economy was brought up year after year, and for extravagance one Government was put out, and upon a promise to stop extravagance another Government was put in. Reductions were always proposed by the Opposition, but they were never carried out when the Opposition became the Government. He thought himself that it would be a very bad thing if they were. He did not hold, and never had held, that their Civil servants were an overpaid body of men. His experience of them, both in and out of office, extended over a good many years, and he said the country got full value for the salaries paid to them. He said further, though it might seem an anomaly, that the present was the very worst time to reduce the salaries of those men. In his own office he never reduced his staff or their wages in bad times, because at those times it

woul harm them most. Speaking individually, he would be no party to any cutting down of the salaries of the Civil servants. They had to deal with a big question in the deficit they had, and it was to his mind a very mean way to attempt to deal with it by reducing the salaries of men who had served them well in the past, and who would no doubt serve them well in the future.

Mr. SALKELD said the hon. member for Oxley was quite correct in saying that he had voted for payment of members. He was in favour of payment of members, but he denied that that made him inconsistent in any way. He held that the labourer was worthy of his hire, whether he was a member of the Committee or a Civil servant; and if a man devoted his time and his best energies to the service of the country in Parliament and was not worth £300 a year he should not have a seat in the House at all. He did not believe in the old system and had never voted for it. He held that it was not in keeping with the dignity of hon. members of the House, if they had any dignity, to have a timekeeper appointed to note if an hon. member came in and stayed five minutes in the House in order that he might draw his £2 2s. An employer of labour might employ a timekeeper to check the time worked by his men, but he had a manager whose time was not checked in that way. If an hon. member could not be trusted by his constituents to be present in the House when his services were required, he was not fit to be trusted with the suffrages of the people. When it was mooted that a Payment of Members Bill was to be introduced by the late Government he had a conversation on the subject with the hon. member for Bulloo. The hon. member asked him what he thought a fair amount, and he had said he thought £200 or £250 would be a good thing, but he admitted that a member of Parliament ought to be worth more than that.

Mr. ARCHER: They are not. I am not.

Mr. SALKELD said that if the hon. member felt he was not worth the £300, and did not deserve it, he hoped the hon. gentleman did not draw it. He had told the hon. member for Bulloo, at the time to which he referred, that he thought £200 or £250 would be as high as they could go. Some, amongst others the hon. member for Balonne, went as high as £300.

Mr. MOREHEAD: We thought we should get a better article for the higher price.

Mr. SALKELD said the hon. member's party never got a chance of getting their money's worth. If the hon. member would attack the Government on a question on which he (Mr. Salkeld) disagreed from the Government he would vote with him.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it was a doubtful question whether the hon. member for Fassifern would disagree with the Government. However, if the hon. member would promise to vote against the Government on a motion of want of confidence they might, perhaps, be able to oblige him.

Mr. SALKELD said he did not throw away dirty water until he got something cleaner to put into its place; and he fancied he should find more faults in a Government of which the hon. member for Balonne was a member. The hon. member for Oxley wanted to go back to the two guineas a day system. He was entirely opposed to that, although he had no objection, in view of the finances of the country, to reduce the payment of hon. members to £250 or even to £200 a year.

Mr. MURPHY: £100 a year is more than some of them are worth.

Mr. SALKELD said he dared say it was, if they were all like the hon. member for Barcoo. In fact, it would pay the country to give some of them £300 a year to keep them out of the House. He quite agreed that the question of general economy could only be carried out properly and fairly by the Government of the day. The hon. member for Balonne said that whatever party was in opposition they cried out for economy, and that the moment they assumed the reins of power they went the other way. If that were so, all he could say was, the more shame to them for advocating views and measures when in opposition which they shirked when they got into office. He did not understand public life in that way. He could understand that a Government might not be able to carry the measures they would like to do, or that any individual member of a Government could not do what he wished without the consent of his colleagues; but any Government ought either to be true to their opinions expressed while in opposition, or else give some very good reasons to the House and the country why they were not. As it would be invidious to start with any particular individual, he had so worded his remarks as to ascertain whether there was a general consensus of opinion in the Committee in favour of getting a general reduction all round. He did not intend to carry on a guerilla warfare. If the hon. member for Oxley, or the Government, would bring in a Bill to reduce the amount paid to hon. members during the financial troubles of the country by £50 or £100, he would support it; but he would not support a motion to pay them two guineas a day, and put a timekeeper over them. Hon. members ought to give a general expression of opinion on the subject, and if they either adopted his own view or the suggestion of the hon. member for Burrum, referring the Estimates back to the Government with a request that they be reduced by a certain amount, it would have his support. It would not necessarily be a vote of want of confidence; and if it was, he was more concerned to have economical government than to keep the present or any other Government in power.

Mr. DONALDSON said they were having the usual discussion that took place every year as to the general economy that ought to be practised by Government. Although on the Opposition side of the House, he did not wish to act inconsistently. As far as the Civil servants were concerned, he held, when in office, that the majority of them were not too well paid, and he had not altered his opinion because he had gone over there. Last year, when preparing his Financial Statement, he looked into the expenditure on the Civil Service, and he then gave an epitome of that expenditure. He did not think he could do better than read that paragraph of his Statement to the Committee, as hon. members might not remember it; and there was certainly a great deal of information in it that was worth bearing in mind. Looking into the Civil Service of the colony it would be seen what a very large number of persons in it received very small salaries. Then, again, those who received the larger salaries were men who had served a very long time; they were very competent men, and men who, if in some other walk of life, would be receiving a much higher reward than they were getting at the present time. For those reasons he did not think it desirable, in the interests of the good government of the colony, that the Civil servants should be interfered with to any large extent. If any of the offices were overmanned, it was their duty to see to it; but to cut down the salaries of people who were receiving barely sufficient wages to live upon, would be both cruel and

unjust. He would read the paragraph to which he had alluded, not only for the information of the Committee, but also because he thought it was useful information that should be again repeated to the country. He said on that occasion—

"To cut down the present salaries and attempt to make a saving by such a course would be cruel and unjust. In order that hon. members may better understand the position, I may state that, excluding the railway employees and police, there are 3,653 persons in the service, drawing salaries amounting to £539,971. Of this number 906 receive under £100 per annum, 815 receive between £100 and £200, 387 between £200 and £300, 148 from £300 to £400, 109 from £400 to £500, 43 from £500 to £600, 17 from £600 to £700, 17 from £700 to £800, 9 from £800 to £900, and 4, £1,000. In addition to the above there are 1,198 others not classified whose average salaries do not exceed £100 per annum. Surely no one would advocate reducing the salaries of the great majority of these people, who, I contend, are not overpaid, and when the higher branches of the service are taken into consideration it must be borne in mind that long training was necessary to fit them for their positions; promotion comes slowly, and the better paid offices are only a fair reward for the meritorious. I should also mention that Civil servants are not allowed to earn fees outside of the service."

Taking the Civil Service on the whole, he repeated that they were not overpaid. In fact, it had been a source of regret to the late Government that they were not in a position to give increases to a large number of persons who deserved them. He was sure the Postmaster-General would agree with him that there were a number of officers in the Post Office who had been there for several years, and who were receiving only starvation wages. The condition of the finances had prevented many meritorious officers from receiving the increases they were fairly entitled to. Anyone acquainted with the public offices would know that the number of officers receiving large salaries was comparatively small, and supposing they took 10 per cent. off the £600,000 paid in salaries, it would only effect a saving of between £50,000 and £60,000. That was a very small sum indeed as far as the finances of the colony were concerned; but it would be very harsh treatment, so far as many of the Civil servants were concerned. Economy in that direction was a matter that anyone who seriously considered the question would abandon at once. He contended that, as a rule, the offices were not overmanned; if some of them were, the best thing to do would be not to make any additions to those offices until the work absolutely demanded it. The hon. member for Charters Towers had stated that he was not in the habit of trying to get increases for Civil servants, referring to school teachers; and it was evident that the hon. member had not done so, or he would have known that it was no use asking for increases in that department, because the salaries were fixed according to classification. When the members of the present Government were in opposition, no doubt some of them cried out a good deal about economy; and some of them went out of their way outside that Chamber to make speeches condemning the late Government—he thought unfairly—with regard to increased expenditure. But they themselves now came down with Estimates, in which increased expenditure was still going on much quicker than last year.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon. T. O. Unmack): No.

Mr. DONALDSON said it was so, notwithstanding the hon. gentleman's "No." In saying that he did not refer to revenue. Anyone who studied the revenue would know that the Estimates had been made up in the most slipshod manner; they were most unreliable with regard to the amounts to be received. But the Treasurer need not be at all careful about matters of that kind under the new order of things, because any deficiency that might exist in revenue was to be made up by sales of land. Parliament was now asked to hand over to the Government unlimited power of selling land, and unlimited power in the disposal of the money.

Mr. POWERS: The Bill is not passed yet.

Mr. DONALDSON said it might be passed. He knew he was out of order in anticipating a discussion that was to come on later, but the question had been raised by other hon. members. He thought it would be much wiser if the Government had brought forward the whole of their financial proposals before proceeding with the Estimates, because they had no guarantee that the Committee would accept those proposals. Only last night a new Bill was laid upon the table which they had been assured would not be a tax upon the Treasury, but after looking at it that morning he was not at all clear that it was not going to be a tax upon the Treasury; and he should certainly listen with very great interest to the hon. gentleman who moved the second reading of the measure, to see how it was going to be worked. In fact, it seemed that hopefulness was the only thing the Government had to rely upon to save the country. What guarantee had they that land was going to be taken up immediately?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is not fair.

Mr. DONALDSON said it might not be fair, and he admitted that he was out of order in referring to the Bill. It was not often he transgressed in that way, but if the Government chose to present their measures and to conduct their business in such a way that hon. members were not able to discuss the finances of the colony, the Committee were placed in a false position. He believed that if all those Bills had been passed, the discussion on the Estimates would take a very short time. They had already had a long discussion on the matter, and they would continue to have long discussions until those measures were disposed of. It was all very well for the Government to come down with schemes which commended themselves to their minds, but they certainly did not commend themselves to his mind. When the late Government proposed additional taxation they did not fear to bring forward a tax to which they would have been large contributors themselves, had it met with the approval of Parliament; but he could not say as much for the present Government, who were shirking all kinds of responsibility, and all sorts of taxation that would fall upon themselves.

Mr. DRAKE said the hon. member for Bulloo was quite right in contending that the Civil servants, on the average, were fairly well paid, but the difficulty was that there were two extremes. When the hon. gentleman spoke of "the average," it put him in mind of the boarding-house-keeper's tea. She said if the tea was weak the butter was strong, and it was so with the extremes in the service. A great number of workers were insufficiently paid, while a great number of others were paid beyond their deserts. He knew cases where married men with families had salaries of only £100 a year.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: And less.

Mr. DRAKE said that was absolutely insufficient to keep anybody in the ordinary necessaries of life. On the other hand, there were some very highly paid officers, and the reason why no saving could be made was because the poorly paid were screwed down as tightly as they could be, whilst the Tite Barnacles were so strongly entrenched that they could not be got at. He hoped they should be able to make some saving in the Civil Service. With regard to payment of members, he did not think any

legislation on the subject was advisable. If hon. members were not satisfied with the law as it stood all that was necessary was to pass a resolution providing that any hon. member who did not consider his services worth £300 a year might contribute that amount towards the deficit.

Mr. GRIMES said he quite agreed that some members of the Civil Service were not paid enough, and that if economy was to be exercised, they should have to discriminate between those who were receiving large salaries and those who were underpaid. He was not prepared to accept the challenge of the hon. member for Bulloo to withdraw payment of members altogether. Members of Parliament were put to considerable expense; a great many calls were made upon them by virtue of their position, and it was only right that they should be paid a small amount to recoup that expenditure. Neither did he think that payment of members should be cut down all round, because that would place Northern members and others who came long distances at a disadvantage. It did not take up much of the time of hon. members who resided in the metropolis to attend Parliament in the afternoon. They could attend to their business in town as well, but hon. members who came from distant parts of the colony had to leave their business, and were put to considerable expense in attending Parliament. He was prepared to go back to the system introduced by the present Chief Secretary some years ago, that was to take into account the attendance; and the distance that hon. members had to travel would be taken into account. He would not be a partaker to any great extent himself if the distance a member had to travel were taken into consideration, but there were others who came very great distances, and he thought they were entitled to receive payment for their extra expenses.

Mr. GANNON said he would like to go with the hon. member for Bulloo with regard to the Civil Service up to a certain extent, but with regard to reductions they always started with the men who received small salaries. They never heard of a highly paid official being reduced. They always started with the men receiving £100 or £120 a year, although they could save more by reducing one highly paid officer then they would by reducing ten or twelve men receiving such small salaries. With regard to the payment of members, he held a decided opinion on that question, and he thought they might very well be paid according to attendance. Hon. members should attend in order to transact the business of the country. He thought £300 a year was not too much for hon. members who came long distances, but possibly hon. members residing close to Brisbane could afford to attend the House for a much smaller amount; but they were getting away from the vote. He thought reductions could be made in several of the items. The Estimates would take a long time to pass, and the remarks made by the hon. member for Bulloo and also by the leader of the Opposition with regard to the financial policy of the Government and their land policy were very true. The sooner they got all the information they asked for, the sooner the Estimates would get through. In fact, they were now working piecemeal. They had several Land Bills before them, and now they were to have the Estimates every Wednesday; judging by the progress they had made in the last two hours, and having in view the fact that some of the votes would take a long time to get through, it would be Christmas before the session closed.

Mr. BARLOW said he would like in course of the debate to hear the opinion of the Government about the Civil Service Board. He had a lively recollection when he was sitting on the other side, of the opposition there was to the Civil Service Act, and on one occasion after he had been a short time in the House he was left alone to lead the Opposition to it. He must give the Government credit for having endeavoured to introduce departmental economy, but certain things had came to his knowledge—they might be mere reports—that sometimes the Civil Service Board had not seconded the efforts of the Government. He might be mistaken in the matter, but he would like to hear more about it by-and-by. As to a fixed percentage being deducted from the salaries of the Civil servants all round, that would be a most unkind and cruel proceeding. It was utterly impossible to carry out such a scheme, and he for one would never consent to it. He was quite willing at a moment's notice to vote for the reduction of payment of members to £200 per annum. That was the amount that he had voted for before, and he was quite willing to do so again. He did not think that the reduction to £200 a year would keep anyone out of the House. He did not know that much more could be said in that all-round discussion which generally took place on the Estimates. Since he had been a member he had voted for measures of reasonable economy. As to sending the Estimates back to the Government, in many cases the increases were unavoidable or special, and some of them were statutory charges. Those votes accounted for a great deal of the increase. He knew that the Colonial Secretary had endeavoured to prune down the expenses in his department, and if reductions had to be made they should begin and reduce the payment of members to £200 a year.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he had generally been one of the grumblers over the Estimates, but for the last year or two he had given up grumbling as he had found that he could do nothing. The first two or three years he had been in Parliament he had been continually fighting—not so much against salaries, as he had never complained of the salaries paid to Civil servants, but against the very large increases that were given when he thought they ought to get less. He did not even refuse to pay large salaries to Civil servants who were worth the amount they received. What he complained of most was that the large-salaried men were never dismissed the service, even when there was no further use for them. As he had said before, there were men of that class in the service who could be done without. He did not want those men dismissed, as there were always more men required in the Civil Service as the population grew, and those men could be transferred to places where they were required, and where there was work for them to do. There was no need to dismiss them. It was well known, and it had been admitted to him by a Minister, that there were men in the departments whom there was no need of. He had no desire to reduce their salaries, but simply wished to give them something to do, as it was a very bad thing for the man himself to only work half-time whilst he got full pay. His mind ought to be in his work, and he ought to be doing something for himself if he was not working for the State. The argument had been used about reducing the salaries of members of Parliament; but if the Government reduced the payment by one-third they would only save £7,000 a year, and they would spend that in a single visit of the fleet. It would only give the Government more money to spend in other ways. If members of Parliament were not worth £300 a year, it would be far better if they were not in the House at all; if Ministers were thoroughly desirous to economise in all departments, he was certain it could be done. No doubt there was a

desire not to appear to be oppressive, and to go in for too many changes, but he could see in the present Government at least two hon. gentlemen whose desire it was to economise and rearrange their departments in such a way as to be a saving to the colony. If every department were worked in the same manner, a considerable saving would be effected—not by paying off Civil servants or reducing their salaries, but simply by seeing that every man in each of the departments had sufficient work to do, and that he did it. It all depended upon the Ministry, and if the Ministry did not wish to economise, hon. members might fight until doomsday without ever reducing the expenditure. What they should do, if the Government would not economise, was to turn them out and put another Government in their place.

Mr. SMITH said hon. members had said a great deal about the Civil Service being overpaid, considering the present state of the country. If the Civil servants were too numerous, and the service was overmanned, that was just the same as if they were overpaid. Well, as far as his experience went, if they required good men, and men who could do the work, they must pay them well, and he thought the Government had done as much in the way of reduction as it was possible for them to do. They could not make those reductions all at once. The Civil Service was being reduced to a very great extent. In his district several offices had been completely abolished, and he thought that was the case all over the country. When offices which might be supposed to be unnecessary became vacant no appointments were made. Therefore, he thought that as much as it was possible to do under the circumstances was being done by the Government and the Civil Service Board. With regard to payment of members, he was of opinion that the suggestion that, in the present depressed condition of the colony, members of Parliament should suffer as well as Civil servants, and contribute something towards the reduction of the deficit, was a suggestion in the right direction. As to the statement made by some hon. members that officers receiving high salaries suffered least when the pruning knife was applied, it should not be forgotten that, generally speaking, the men who received high salaries had spent the most part of their life in the service of the country, and it would be very hard that they should suffer reductions where in the natural course of things, they might reasonably expect an increase in their salaries. There were very few officers receiving high salaries who, if employed in commercial pursuits, would not obtain higher remuneration for their services. It was admitted that they were competent for the positions they occupied, and that the positions they occupied were positions of trust, and carried with them very great responsibilities; therefore it would be very bad policy indeed for the Government to reduce the salaries of such men.

Mr. LUYA said it was a strange piece of economy that was advocated that afternoon, and he really believed that hon. members were not sincere in their advocacy of it. If they were sincere they would certainly have adopted a very different line of action from that which they had adopted, and when the vote for the Australian Squadron was before the Committee they would have opposed it. They did not do that, however, but because the vote happened to be the salary of some poor working man, they regarded it as fair game, and said, "Let us reduce the Civil Service by all means." Had they not misery enough in the colony already that they should want to dismiss more men from the Civil Service? The dismissals which had so far taken place, had brought a great deal of misery on many people undeservedly, and he would not countenance any proposal for further dismissals from the service, because the reductions as a rule took place at the wrong end, and when Civil servants were dismissed they were thrown on their beam ends and had, so to speak, to trust to Providence to sustain them. He did not know exactly how to do it, but if the Chief Secretary would tell him how it could be done he would be very glad to move the omission of the £20,000 set down for salaries to members of the Assembly. If it was necessary to give notice of motion he would give notice the following day, and would also propose that they should repeal the Act providing for the subsidy to the Australian Squadron. By that means they would save £32,000; and if they took 10 per cent. off the salaries of Civil servants they would not save much more. Economy of that kind would only affect seventy-two members of Parliament and the Australian Squadron, and it would not hurt them very much. But he would not sit there and silently consent to the proposals of amateur reformers of the Civil Service. Surely hon. members knew the difficulties which Civil servants only receiving from £100 to £250 a year had to contend with when thrown out of employment and compelled to battle with the world! There were many men outside used to battling with the world who could obtain employment when Civil servants could not, and the consequence was that the latter swelled the ranks of the unemployed. That was a state of affairs he did not want to encourage.

Mr. POWERS said he had heard a great many hon. members speak about reducing the payment to members of Parliament, but when the hon. member for Logan some time ago brought forward a resolution to effect that, it was scouted. Of course hon. members knew the Government would not agree to such a proposal. A vote could not be taken on that question on the present occasion, but he would like to see a proper division on it, so that the country might know who were the hon. members who were opposed to payment of members. The country had declared twice over that they believed in payment of members, and it was for the country to say whether it should be continued or not. If any hon. members did not believe in it, he thought they would find that their services would not be required by the country. At any rate they could not deal with the subject at the present time. With regard to reducing the salaries of Civil servants all round, he did not think anyone would make such a suggestion. Certainly the majority of Civil servants were not overpaid; and as far as the Post Office and Education Departments were concerned, every Minister who had been in charge of those departments knew that the officers were not overpaid, and instead of reducing the salaries he had tried to raise the salaries of those in the lower branches of the service. As to the Government reconsidering the Estimates, he would mention two or three items that might very well be reconsidered. One was the vote for immigration. Another was the vote for the Defence Force, the members of which had had a great deal more experience lately than they would ordinarily get in a couple of years.

Mr. DRAKE: Some of them.

Mr. POWERS said a good many of the had. The vote for the Marine Force was reduced. Then there was the vote for the "Lucinda," to which he had referred before. Those were three matters which might receive the serious consideration of the Committee. As far as singling out any one little item was concerned, and hon. members recording their vote

against it, he thought it would be of very little use, because it would be carried. It was no satisfaction to hon. members to record their votes against any particular items, because, notwithstanding anything that might be done, the higher salary was still paid. What the country wanted was some Ministry to take the matter in hand, and not to lower small salaries, but to deal with the large ones. No amendment had been moved on the vote, and the discussion had been confined a good deal to the item of £300 for the Governor's country residence. He thought, as far as the Governor was concerned, it was only fair that he should be well paid; it would not be well to begin by reducing any amount paid to him, and not reduce other high salaries.

Question put and passed.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

The CHIEF SECRETARY moved that a sum not exceeding £1,039 be granted for the Executive Council. The vote was exactly the same as it had been for several years.

Question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The CHIEF SECRETARY moved that the sum of £3,385 be granted for the Legislative Council. There was an apparent reduction of £15. There was an assistant groom who was the servant of both Houses of Parliament, and whose salary was £30 for the session. That was now charged to the joint establishment.

Question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

The CHIEF SECRETARY moved that the sum of £3,747 be granted for the Legislative Assembly. There were one or two minor changes. There was provision for two messengers, which appeared to be an increase, but it was not really so, they having been previously paid from contingencies. The contingent vote was now reduced accordingly by £18 and £12, and also by £15 for the half salary for the groom; and it was increased by a sum of £50, salary of a dictation clerk to assist the *Hansard* staff during the evenings. That had been going on for several years, but had previously been charged to an unused vote for a *Hansard* reporter.

Question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

The CHIEF SECRETARY moved that the sum of £7,621 be granted for the Legislative Council and Assembly. There was the increase of £30 that he had already referred to, and a decrease in the item of allowance to the old groom, which was paid for one year only.

Mr. BARLOW said £1,074 seemed a large sum to vote for the refreshment-room. It might be necessitated by the building of the new wing, against which he raised his voice in the first session during which he sat in the House, but it seemed an enormous sum.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said hon. members were aware that the control of the refreshment-rooms was in the hands of the joint committee of both Houses. He had no reason to suppose that they had neglected their duty.

Mr. BARLOW said he was sure the Chief Secretary would not think he was making any attack upon him, but he was the official representative of the Government, and hon. members were obliged to address him, as they could not address anyone else. Personally, he believed the hon. gentleman tried all he could to administer the affairs of the country with economy, skill, and zeal; but that was an enormous expense, and he hoped the Committee might be able to take it into consideration.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he might tell the Committee of a little conversation he had with a person in reference to that vote. They were talking about hon. members getting their meals and drinks in the refreshment-rooms, and his friend said, "You members are a jolly lot, you get your food and drink in the House;" and when he (Mr. Macfarlane) informed him that hon. members paid for both their food and drink, he said, "Then what do you do with the large vote for the refreshment-rooms?" He could not tell him, and he really did not know why the expense was incurred. He thought the caterer and five waiters were very well paid for six months' work. The salary of the caterer might not be too much, because he had to be on the premises all the year; but why was £824 required for five waiters for six months? They must be very well paid. He should like to know what they were really paid, so that the Committee might have some idea how the money was wasted. He thought it would be a good thing for the country if that item for the refreshment-room were left out altogether, and the refreshment room dispensed with. It was a very nice building certainly, but it might be used to more advantage, and hon. members could look after their own refreshments. It seemed to him they were paying a great deal for their whistle.

Mr. GANNON: Move a reduction in the vote.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he would if he thought hon. members would support him.

Mr. GLASSEY said he noticed an item for two messengers for day and night, for five months, £28. In the event of their being required for six months would they only get the £28? Of course he knew those messengers were boys, but he thought the remuneration set down was not by any means sufficient to compensate them for the services they rendered during the session. He had always found those lads very active and attentive, and also very kind and courteous. He thought their appointment rested with the officers of the House, and if so, he would remark that there was room for improvement in the matter.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Those are the *Hansard* messengers.

Mr. GLASSEY asked who engaged them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They are run boys engaged to attend on the *Hansard* staff.

Mr. GLASSEY said the matter he was more particularly concerned about was the item in connection with the refreshment-rooms for waiters during the session and incidentals. He found there were five waiters employed in the refreshment rooms. He found no fault with the salaries paid them, as if they were employed they should be properly paid. He found the item was £824 for waiters and incidentals, and he would like to know how much was paid for the waiters and how much for incidentals. Then there was another matter in connection with the assistants employed in the library to which he wished to call attention. He had not mentioned the matter last year, though he had it in his mind to do so. He had often business in the library, and on several occasions, and more particularly in the upper library, he had been kept waiting for the assistants because they were actually doing the work of waiters, and he had met them with trays in their hands.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: At what time of day?

Mr. GLASSEY said it was about dinner time—about 1 o'clock, or from 12 o'clock to 1 o'clock. That had happened several times, and he would like to know whether those persons had to do waiting work as well as their other work. It was unfair to expect hon. members to wait, sometimes when they had other business to attend to,

while those persons who were supposed to be there to look up any book any hon. member might require, had to do other work elsewhere. Neither the first nor the second time that he was thus inconvenienced did he make any complaint, but on the third occasion he felt rather annoyed, as he had other business to look after. He hoped the Committee would insist upon the waiters in the refreshment-room doing their own work, and upon the assistant librarians not being called upon to help them. They might be called messengers; but he had always found them extremely attentive, and quite capable of giving any information that might be asked for with regard to the books in the library. It was unfair that they should be called upon to do waiting work. He did not know who they waited on, but they ought to be kept to their own work, and not have to act as assistant waiters elsewhere.

Mr. NORTON said that if the hon. member had made his complaint to the Library Committee, his grievance, if he had any, would have been remedied long ago, without appealing to the present Committee at all. There was no assistant librarian. There were messengers both in the upper and the lower library, whose duties were confined to the library. The only instance he knew of a library messenger carrying food or drink from the refreshment-room to that part of the building was that of one messenger, who generally assisted in the upper library, and who sometimes —he did not know whether he did it always—took Mr. O'Donovan, the librarian, his meal from the refreshment-room to his own room downstairs. He did not think any serious complaint could be made on that ground, or that any hon. member who desired the assistance of the library messenger would be very much delayed thereby. But the hon. member said the delays generally occurred between 12 and 1 o'clock. At about that time the messengers usually got their own meals, and sufficient allowance should be made to them at that time to get their meals outside the library. They could not all be in attendance at all times. Under the circumstances, he did not think the hon. member had shown any really serious grievance ; and he was sure that if at any time he had mentioned the matter to him (Mr. Norton) or the Library Committee, it would have been attended to in a way which would, he hoped, prevent any recurrence of anything that would lead to unnecessary delay.

Mr. HOOLAN said he believed that *Hansard* might be made a commercial institution, which would be not only self-supporting, but would also contribute largely to the State. It could also be conducted as a Government paper during the recess and made a very good speculation indeed. He merely threw out the suggestion for the consideration of the Committee. With regard to the refreshment-rooms, it would be very selfish to ask them to be closed, as they were a parliamentary privilege from which hon. members received considerable convenience. If thrown open to the public he believed they would be largely availed of.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the messengers referred to by the hon. member for Bundanba as receiving £28 were two boys, who were paid 10s. a week each for doing the work necessary between the *Hansard* staff and the printing office during the session.

Mr. GANNON said he would like to know if the shorthand writers on the reporting staff were paid extra for reporting commissions?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said it had always been the practice to allow some additional pay for extra work done during the recess—not full reporting fees, but whatever was considered fair and reasonable remuneration for the work done.

Mr. SMITH said he could bear out what the hon. member for Bundanba had said with regard to the attention shown to members by the messengers in the library, and he thought it would be more satisfactory if the waiters in the refreshment-rooms did all the work for which they were especially appointed, and leave the library messengers to do their proper work.

Mr. GLASSEY said with regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Port Curtis, he should be very sorry to ask any attention from the library messengers while they were getting their meals, and had never done so. But he had frequently seen them carrying trays from the refreshment-rooms, and he did not think it was work they should be called upon to perform. He had always thought those young men were underpaid.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They got an increase last year.

Mr. GLASSEY said they well deserved that increase, and he thought they should not be called upon to do work connected with the refreshment-rooms.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the hon. member must be mistaken about the messengers in the library carrying trays from the refreshment-rooms. The only instance of the kind that he knew of was that one of them occasionally took the librarian his meals to his room. He knew that one of the waiters in the refreshment-rooms took the President whatever he required in his room, because he was under the President's orders. Of course the waiters in the refreshment-rooms were not under the orders of the librarian, and if the Committee thought it desirable that the messengers in the library should not be employed in any way in connection with the refreshment-rooms, it would be as well to let it be understood.

Mr. POWERS said he would like to know if the *Hansard* reporters were at liberty to do private work during the recess, or were they compelled to be idle during about six months of the year? They had very hard work to do during the session, and did it wonderfully correctly, and his question was whether they should not be allowed to do work during the six months the House was not sitting ?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he was not very conversant with the arrangements of the *Hansard* staff, but he believed he was correct in saying that they received their remuneration for the work done during the session—a period of varying duration. During the rest of the year they were their own masters ; but he understood that they did not do any professional work in the colony except for the Government. They were at liberty to go to the other colonies if they liked; and he knew one member of the staff who had done very good work at the Federal Council in Hobart, some members of which were very glad to get his services.

Mr. GLASSEY said he was sorry to trouble the Chief Secretary, but he would like to know how much of the £824 set down for "waiters during the session, and incidentals" was for waiters, and how much for incidentals. He believed a very small portion of it was for waiters.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that was a matter entirely in the hands of the Refreshment Rooms Committee, and did not come in any way under the notice of the Government. Some information had, however, been supplied to him, which he would give to the Committee. Three waiters were employed permanently during the session, at £9, £7, and £4 a month. That was not very excessive. Three extra waiters were employed each

night the House sat, and they were paid 4s. a night. Then there were the cook and his wife, two kitchenmaids, a housemaid, a man employed in the yard, and incidental expenses for keeping up the establishment, such as fuel, linen, washing, and all sorts of things. The actual amount spent during the last financial year was £1,100 and a few shillings. That showed that the amount was pretty accurately calculated.

Mr. MURPHY said that nearly all the £824 would be paid away in the shape of wages to the men employed. The incidentals were only small trifles, such as the renewing of linen and repairs that might be wanted or the replacing of anything which was broken. They did not amount to very much. Practically the whole of the money was paid away in wages. The expenditure last year was £1,104.

Mr. GANNON said the reason why notice had been taken of the matter was because there was no information with regard to the number of men employed. There was nothing said in the Estimates at all about the others who were employed, with the exception of the waiters.

Mr. MURPHY said the information just given by the Chief Secretary was quite accurate, and included the whole of the persons employed about the refreshment-rooms. That sum was entirely devoted to paying those servants, with the exception of a very small sum for incidentals.

Mr. NORTON said that perhaps the Committee had a right to expect some information from him on that matter, as he was connected with the Refreshment Room Committee. He must apologise for not having the details with him, but the sum now asked for had been voted for so many years that he had not thought the details would be asked for. The sum now asked for—£1,074—had been voted every year since 1886, when there was an increase of £30 put on the Estimates. Before that, £1,044 had been voted; but there had been no change for many years, and so he had not thought any question would be raised.

Question put and passed.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT—SALARIES AND CONTINGENCIES.

The CHIEF SECRETARY moved that £5,410 be voted for salaries and contingencies in connection with the Colonial Secretary's Department. The Colonial Secretary's Department was a department of which he had the honour to be a Minister, as well as his hon. colleague, the Colonial Secretary. There was only one department, although under the present arrangement there were two Ministers who divided the work of the department between them. Hon. members would observe in the item "Contingencies"—which he would take first—that the vote for advertising had been omitted, because there was now one vote put down for all the advertising, instead of a sum being proposed under each department. A lump sum was now proposed to be expended to defray the cost of advertising in all the departments. Hon. members would find that on page 38, under the heading of "Miscellaneous services," advertising generally for all departments in the service was included. It was all put under one head, because the advertising was now controlled by an Advertising Board, of whom the Government Printer, the Under Colonial Secretary, and other officers were members. There were some changes in the salaries paid to officers of the department. Under the heading—"Correspondence clerks"—it would be found that there were two clerks, one receiving £400 per annum and the other £375. The one set down at £400 was the correspondence clerk whose talents were well known, not only in Queensland, but in other parts of Australia and the world. It was proposed to raise him, on the recommendation of the Civil Service Board, to a higher class in the Civil Service, increasing his salary from £350 to £400 He thought no hon. member who was acquainted with the manner in which that gentleman did his work in the department or out of it, would think his remuneration excessive if it were increased to £400 a year. That was what the Government proposed to give him on the recommendation of the Civil Service Board. Under the heading of "Clerks," there was an increase in number of one clerk at £60 a year, who had formerly been a messenger at £48 per annum, and there were some smaller increases. He might mention specially one clerk, whom hon. members on both sides knew. It was proposed that he should be promoted from the fourth class in the Civil Service to the third class. The work he had to do was work pretty nearly as difficult, he was almost going to say as that done by an Under Secretary; but certainly his work was as important and as responsible as the work ordinarily done by the chief clerk in a department; and the minimum salary of the third class—£300—was considered certainly not by any means excessive remuneration for the work he had to do. The recommendation was made by the Civil Service Board, and acted upon by the Government. Three other clerks got the statutory increase of £20 a year—one from £225 to £245, another from £120 to £140, and the third from £60 to £80. The salary of the messenger was reduced by £40. Being a new officer it was thought that his salary should be put at that which was paid in the other departments. He should also mention another new officer, a Government shorthand writer. Shorthand was now very much used everywhere, and it was found convenient to have a shorthand writer at the disposal of the Government for the various departments; and as that officer had to be attached to some department he had been attached to that of the Colonial Secretary, although his services were available for the whole of the Government departments. It was proposed to give him £200 a year. That was a very small salary for a shorthand writer, but that was only given for a beginning. It was a very small salary, but the Civil Service Board had recommended that that should be paid to start with.

Mr. GLASSEY: He is a very excellent man.

Mr. DONALDSON said he would like to have some further information with regard to the advertising vote. The hon. gentleman said that the vote for advertising was now controlled by a board; he would ask if all the advertisements had to be submitted to the board before they could be inserted in any paper? Had each department to submit its advertisements first of all to the board to decide whether they should be inserted or not? If that were so, a considerable time would elapse in some cases before the advertisements could be inserted. He hoped to get further information as to how the board proceeded.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he thought the board met once a week. Of course each department decided what advertisements it wanted to insert; that was not controlled by the board at all. The advertisements were sent to the board, of which the Government Printer and the Under Colonial Secretary were members, and they determined in which newspapers they should be inserted. It was thought that that arrangement would be far better, and results had shown that it was better to act on one system. Hon. members who had been in office would know what trouble there used to be through canvassers of newspapers going round to each department and asking for

advertisements. They had had debates in that Committee on that subject, and it had been shown how those canvassers had sometimes been successful in getting advertisements that they ought never to have got.

Mr. DONALDSON: They got at your Under Colonial Secretary once.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he remembered they had got at the Colonial Secretary's Department once. Matters like that should be under one control, and worked on a uniform system. He believed the system was working well.

Mr. BLACK said he wished to know if the system prevailed in all the departments?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said it did not include the Railway Department. Hon. members would find a separate vote of £750 for that department, which was under the control of the Commissioners, and they were allowed to run it on their own lines.

Mr. BLACK said if the principle were a good one in regard to other departments, it should certainly be applied to the Railway Department. If Ministerial departments were not to be trusted with their own advertising, why should the Railway Commissioners be entrusted with theirs?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he did not think the reason was that they could not be trusted, but because it was better that the advertising should be worked on uniform lines.

Mr. DONALDSON said he did not know how long the system had been in force, but he had heard no complaints. He presumed it was an experiment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It has been in force during the last eight or nine months.

Mr. DONALDSON said he had heard no complaints, and the only fear he had was that it might lead to delays in some cases. It might also lead to friction between two departments.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the board only selected the newspapers.

Mr. DONALDSON said the system might turn out to be a good one, and he was quite prepared to give it a trial.

Mr. GLASSEY said he would ask if the hon. gentleman could give the Committee any information in regard to the amount of money expended last year in advertising? He saw there was £6,500 down altogether for the present year. Would that include advertisements in country newspapers?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In all newspapers.

Mr. GLASSEY said he saw there was a reduction in the salary of the messenger and office keeper from £150 to £110.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I explained that. He is a new man appointed at a reduced salary, and also has a house to live in.

Mr. GLASSEY said whenever a strange person came into the service, whatever duties or work he had to perform, he came in at a reduced salary. He did not see the slightest justice in that system at all. If the same work had to be done as was done by his predecessor, he should receive the same salary. Was the man paid for the work he did, or for the length of time he had been in the service? If it was for the work he did, the salary should not be reduced. That system prevailed more particularly in the Colonial Secretary's Department; and since the offices had been grouped together in one building the work was very considerably increased, and there was no doubt the messenger there earned his money well. He presumed the reduction was made in the interests of economy, but he did not think it was fair.

Mr. GROOM said he wished to ask the Chief Secretary if the shorthand writer had accepted the salary proposed to be given to him?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. GROOM said the hon. gentleman had said the salary was very low, and he thought also that it was decidedly too low for a competent shorthand writer. If the shorthand writer had to attend all the Government departments and take notes of inquiries, and so on, the salary was altogether inadequate for the services he would be called upon to perform. He knew something about shorthand writers, and knew the skill and training necessary to qualify an officer to discharge that work efficiently. £200 was totally inadequate, and he trusted when the next Estimates came down they should see a very substantial increase.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he thought officers who were appointed for the first time ought not to be appointed at the maximum salary. If they were, there would be no room for increases for length of service and good work. The particular person the hon. member for Bundanba championed certainly could not complain. The hon. member complained that somebody who was appointed for the first time did not receive the same salary as the man who had held the office for some time. He maintained that good service and length of service ought to be considered, and he believed men ought not to be appointed at the maximum salary at once.

Mr. HOOLAN said it was all very well to talk about faithful service and so on; there was too much of the old English style of business about that. If a man was appointed to do certain services for the State, the State being a young State should pay them what they were worth, whether they were shorthand writers or anybody else. They should receive the standard rate of wages, and not be decoyed into the Government service under the impression that they were to remain there all their lives. Although the Government service offered very few chances, there seemed to be some attraction in it. They could not expect high salaried officers to leave it, but some of the others would earn much more in the commercial world if they were not afraid to enter into the competition. The system upheld by the Chief Secretary was in keeping with the old English style of faithful janitors and faithful domestics entering a service and remaining there all their lives in white caps, or buttons, or liveries; and when the old gentleman or the old lady died they were pensioned off as they ought to be. That might do very well with noble lords and titled dukes, and big people generally, but it was out of keeping with the democratic spirit of Queensland.

Mr. GLASSEY said that if the information he had was correct, the man who now received £110 a year was a married man with a family.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He was getting £1 10s. a week without a house before he got this billet.

Mr. GLASSEY said that the principle followed in that case was the one followed by the Secretary for Railways all through his department. When he found that a person getting a very small salary could fill another place, he put that person into another place with an increase on what he was previously getting, but a reduction so far as the salary previously paid for the work was

concerned. He was not positive—he was never positive on anything—but the information he had was that the officer in question was a married man with a family. If a person was getting a reasonable sum to support him he (Mr. Glassey) would not object; but in the present case the reduction was not justifiable.

Mr. HOOLAN said he could understand the principle if it was carried out among the bigger fishes; but the Government were simply carrying the blackleg business into the Government departments, so far as the inferior positions were concerned. If they wanted to do the business properly, they could get any amount of men from the southern colonies to fill up the service at considerable reductions.

Mr. DALRYMPLE said that what astonished him was that the hon. member for Bundanba generally considered that a man's remuneration should depend entirely on the number of children he had begotten.

Mr. GLASSEY: That is a sound principle.

Mr. DALRYMPLE said he believed the hon. member had a very numerous family; but he had yet to learn that it was a very difficult thing to become possessed of a numerous family. All that people had to do was to get married at an early age, and the family followed. He did not see why the State should reward a man for getting married. If getting married was a difficult operation there might be some reason for doing so, but as a rule people found no obstacle that could not be surmounted. He believed that with the population of the United Kingdom it would be far more advisable in that country to pay people for not getting married than for getting married. A great deal of the poverty existing in London might be attributed to the fact of young women about seventeen getting married to young men not more than twenty-one, with only half-a-crown between themselves and starvation. Yet they blamed other people for the consequences. He could not see how any State was going to conduct its business if it rewarded its servants, not for good and faithful service, but for the amount of success which attended them in another sphere. Whatever the services of the hon. member for Bundanba might be worth to the State, he would not be worth any less though he had begotten fewer children; and even if the hon. member's better half were to present him with twins or triplets he would be worth no more to the State.

Mr. GLASSEY said he understood that the Malthusian doctrine was pretty well exploded, but after what the hon. member had said he found that it was not yet quite exploded. He maintained that it was a thoroughly sound principle that a person's income should at all times correspond with the number of persons he had to maintain. In Russia, a country that was sometimes described as barbarous, provision was made for that many years ago.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: And they have a famine.

Mr. GLASSEY said that according to the old communal law of Russia, a single person held land sufficient to feed him. If he took a wife he held a larger proportion; and he held more as his family increased. There was not much barbarism about that. Returning to the Estimate, he contended that a person who did the same work should not be paid a lower salary than his predecessor. If his predecessor was underpaid he should get more; if he was overpaid that was another consideration. But the person who succeeded the former occupant of the office was certainly entitled to the pay drawn by his predecessor, and in every case a man should be paid sufficient to maintain him in decent comfort; and if he had got a family he should be paid a higher rate.

Mr. POWERS said he expected to hear the Chief Secretary defend the argument advanced by the hon. member for Bundanba, that the wages or remuneration which a man received should be sufficient to maintain himself and family in decent comfort, because that was a principle laid down in a Bill introduced by the hon. gentleman last session, and held by him in his examination before a commission in Sydney. He (Mr. Powers) could not agree that a man should get more than his services were worth. As far as the argument used by the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Dalrymple, was concerned, he should think that the hon. member, after that, would support a motion for the reduction of the immigration vote.

Mr. HOOLAN said that people who were paying a high price for bringing people into the colony should be all the more ready to assist those who produced children in the colony. Those persons who arrived here from other countries might object to stay, as they did in many cases, and find a better home elsewhere. Anything said in a sneering, sarcastic, or laughing manner with regard to men with large families came with a very bad grace from men who wished to people the colony with inferior races—with black or piebald races. Servants of the State who were married and had families certainly deserved more consideration at the hands of the State than single men. There should be great indulgence granted to men who were in the service of the State and had families to support. It was the duty of everyone to try to get more salary for those who had children. While there was so much immorality, and such a strict observance with regard to social laws and customs, children would come, and every attention should be given to them; and those who were fathers of families, particularly creditable families, deserved the respect of the Committee, if not the assistance of every member of it.

Question put and passed.

AGENT-GENERAL FOR THE COLONY.

The CHIEF SECRETARY moved that the sum of £3,350 be granted for salaries in connection with the office of the Agent-General in England.

Mr. HYNE said he would like to know who constituted the Board of Advice in London, and what were their duties?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said at present there was only one member of the Board of Advice—Mr. R. M. Stewart. The hon. member for Clermont, Mr. Stevenson, was, he thought also a member of the board, and also Mr. John Ferguson; but they were now in the colony, and no other appointment had been made.

Mr. BLACK said he would like to know whether it was the intention of the Government to appoint more members on the Board of Advice in London? The hon. member for Clermont it was well known could not possibly act on the board. Was the board required at all? Did Mr. Stewart draw the whole of the £200 for fees?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No.

Mr. BLACK said if the board was necessary let it be a practical Board of Advice composed of two or three gentlemen of well-known ability, who would be able to give advice to the Agent-General should he require it; but it was absurd to have one gentleman only and call him a Board of Advice.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said a Board of Advice was a very good thing to have in England, especially at times when large contracts were going on. There had not been so many of late, very little work of that kind having been done; consequently the matter of appointing other members had not arisen, or had not been considered since the Government came into office.

Mr. GANNON said that was a very large vote, and he thought it might be reduced. The Agent-General received £1,500 a year, and the secretary to the Agent-General £800, which was as much as was paid to high officials in the colony. The work of the office must have been very much reduced lately, and he would like to see the vote postponed until they had considered the vote for immigration and knew whether it was to be passed. There was no use voting salaries for gentlemen who had nothing to do, and he believed there would be strong opposition to the immigration vote when it came before the Committee. He noticed that the same amount had been voted for the Agent-General's office for years. He was perfectly willing to see an Agent-General in England, and he thought they had a particularly good one in Sir James Garrick.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said they must have an Agent-General whether they carried on immigration or not, and he did not think they could afford to pay him less than £1,500 a year; nor did he think they could afford to give him a smaller staff for the work which had to be done.

Mr. HYNE said he wanted some further information about the Board of Advice, because it might be advisable to move the omission of the sum of £200. While on that vote he would also like to know something about the item of £250 for "inspector of stores and military adviser." It seemed to him that £450 might easily be saved by the omission of those two items.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the hon. member was aware, no doubt, that the Government imported arms and ammunition from England which could not be procured here, there being no manufactories where they were procurable. It was very necessary that such stores should be inspected before leaving England. It was the practice of all countries that obtained such stores to see that they were inspected. At one time the Government used to pay the ordinary commission upon the value of the things ordered, but it was found to be a somewhat expensive arrangement, and an arrangement was afterwards made with General Harding Steward to give him a lump sum of £250 a year, which was a great deal less than the commission amounted to. A proposal had lately been made by the committee of commanding officers of the Australian colonies to adopt a different system. That was under the consideration of the Government, but he did not know whether it would be practicable. A great deal had been saved by the adoption of the present system.

Mr. BLACK said he thought it would be readily admitted that the colony had an Agent-General at home whom they could be proud of. That gentleman had upheld the dignity of the colony in every possible way, and any attempt at reducing his remuneration, which was a very small one, would be very ill-timed. The secretary, Mr. Dicken, was also a gentleman who thoroughly understood the affairs of the colony, and in whom he believed the colonists of Queensland had entire confidence. But when they came to the fees to the Board of Advice—£200—and when they found that only one gentleman had acted on that board, that two other gentlemen had either never acted or were not required, and that entire confidence could be placed in the Agent-General and his secretary, they might well dispense with the vote altogether. Unless the Government could show good reason for keeping the vote on the Estimates, the Committee, if they desired to economise, could strike it out without injury to anyone. If the time should arise—and he hoped it would not arise—when any Agent-General should be appointed who was new to the work, and in whose advice the Government had not full confidence, then they might again appoint a Board of Advice to assist him in carrying on the affairs of the colony. But at present when they had such a very able Agent-General, supported by such an able secretary, he did not think they wanted a Board of Advice.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the Committee must understand that the fees were only paid when the board met. If there was no board, or the board never met, the money was not spent. It would make no difference, therefore, to vote the money, as it was only spent when required. He knew that Sir James Garrick attached great importance to the board.

Mr. BLACK: Then why does not he insist upon having a board?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the Agent-General had expressed a wish that the board should be reappointed, but, probably through inadvertence, it had been overlooked. If the Committee struck the amount off it would be impossible to appoint a board; but in commercial matters, when it was a question of deciding between different firms or different tenders, the assistance of the board might be of very great benefit to the Agent-General. The Agent-General thought so himself, and he (the Chief Secretary) should think so if he had to do such work. Hon. gentlemen who had the duty of accepting tenders cast upon them would know that they were very glad of the advice of people who knew something about the subject. Sir James Garrick himself had considerable mercantile experience, but it lay not so much in the purchase and sale of goods as in dealing with money matters.

Mr. DONALDSON said that no doubt it was desirable there should be a Board of Advice, but he did not exactly know what their functions were with regard to financial matters. Did the Agent-General call them together and consult them at the time of floating a loan? He was quite certain they would have given very valuable advice during the floating of the late loan. There was some serious blunder connected with that loan that they had not got to the bottom of yet.

Mr. HYNE said he understood they were commercial men.

Mr. DONALDSON said commercial men could give very good advice on financial matters.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Agent-General had the advantage of the assistance of Mr. Stewart.

Mr. DONALDSON said Mr. Stewart would be a very good man to consult with regard to the floating of a loan.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He was consulted.

Mr. DONALDSON said the year before he was consulted to his knowledge.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He was only consulted in the capacity of a director of the Queensland National Bank.

Mr. DONALDSON said he did not know whether he was consulted in that capacity or not; at all events he thought it was desirable to have a Board of Advice.

Mr. BLACK said he would ask if the Chief Secretary could give any information as to the amount spent last year out of that £200?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he could not give the information, but he could say probably not more than £20, because Mr. Stewart was the only member of the board, and he did not remember receiving copies of the minutes of proceedings. He remembered receiving a private letter from Sir James Garrick mentioning that the board had met, and that Mr. Stewart was the only member present, and that that was the first meeting in two years.

Mr. DONALDSON: How many does it take to make a board?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the vote on the Estimates was the only sanction given by Parliament to there being a board.

Mr. GANNON said that vote was only a part of the Agent-General's vote, as hon. members would find, on reference to page 100 of the Estimates, that there were other officials in London paid out of loan. There was an executive engineer at £800, an accountant at £350, a correspondence clerk at £200, and inspecting officers and clerical assistance put down at £750.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is in connection with immigration and contracts for railway material.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that on the Board of Advice such a man as Mr. Stewart would be invaluable if the Government imported soft goods direct. He understood they did not, and that most of their tenders for soft goods were called in the colony. If the Government brought out soft goods direct, Mr. Stewart might save the colony two or three times £200 from his experience as a soft-goodsman, but as they did not do so he would support a vote for the omission of the £200 for fees to the Board of Advice.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said a man's commercial knowledge might extend beyond the particular line of goods in which his firm dealt. Mr. Stewart was a business man in London, and was well known there, and he knew the firms that were likely to be suitable to be asked to tender for the supply of goods for the Government. There was also said to be a feeling of satisfaction amongst tenderers if they knew their tenders would be opened by a board. In some of the colonies they had what they called a Government Tender Board, all the members of which were supposed to be present when tenders sent in were being opened. That was looked upon by tenderers as a sort of guarantee of good faith. There was no suspicion of anything being wrong in the London office, but a tender board was looked upon with great satisfaction by many people.

Mr. BLACK said the Chief Secretary had not been able to make out a good case for not vetoing the item. At present they had a Board of Advice, two of the members of which had been in the colony for the last twelve months, and the third had been out of London—where they should all be to be of any use—for six months out of the twelve. The hon. gentleman had practically admitted that there was no work for a Board of Advice to do, because he said he believed that only £10 out of the £200 voted for the purpose had been spent last year. If the hon. gentleman himself had thought such a board necessary, he would have taken measures to fill up the vacancies which had existed in the board for the last twelve months. He would test the feeling of the Committee on the subject by moving the omission of the item, "Fees to Board of Advice, London, £200."

Mr. PHILP said it would be penny wise and pound foolish to strike out that item. The Agent-General was not a business man, and the secretary, though a capable man, was not a commercial man; and they should have some commercial men in London who would advise the Agent-General on such matters when necessary. If the board was not called together the fees were not paid. They might be sending home indents for thousands of pounds worth of railway material, and there ought to be somebody to advise the Agent-General in accepting such contracts.

Mr. BLACK: They are provided for on another page.

Mr. PHILP said those officers were only to inspect it. They did not make the contracts.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They see that the contracts are carried out after they are made.

Mr. PHILP said he would oppose the omission of that item, as it was the most essential item in the vote.

Mr. LUYA said they had heard that there had been no meeting of the board for two years, and what was the use of a board that did not meet? They had better strike out the item.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that before the present Government came into office the Board of Advice had fallen into desuetude. The late Agent-General, Mr. Archer, had not been accustomed to act with a Board of Advice for some time, at any rate, and no immediate action had been taken to replace the members of it. If the members of the Committee thought a Board of Advice was not a good thing to have, they could vote for the motion of the hon. member for Mackay; but if they agreed with the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Philp, thinking as he (the Chief Secretary) thought, that the Board of Advice might save in one contract more than ten times the amount of their fees, he hoped they would leave the item on the Estimates. If the board did not meet the fees were not paid. The fees were not perquisites given to certain individuals, but very small remuneration for work that was actually required.

Mr. BLACK said he would ask if the hon. gentleman would inform the Committee how the fees were paid.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: So much a sitting. Two or three guineas a sitting.

Mr DONALDSON said he thought it very desirable to have a Board of Advice in connection with railway contracts and stores sent out, and he would support the item.

Mr. SMITH said the Agent-General should be able to consult with a Board of Advice if he considered it necessary. He would support the item, as if it was not required, the money would not be spent.

Mr. SAYERS said he would support the amendment if the fees were to be paid whether the members of the Board of Advice met or not; but as the money would not be spent unless the services of the gentlemen forming the board were required, no harm could be done by leaving the vote there. No matter how good an Agent-General might be, he might be glad to consult commercial men upon a contract when they knew more of that particular line of business than he did. But as the money was not to be spent unless the services of those gentlemen were actually required, there would be no harm, but a certain amount of good, in allowing the item to remain as it stood. It might happen that for want of a Board of Advice the colony might lose thousands of pounds, and the excuse of the Agent-General would be that he had no one to consult with. The existence of the board would leave no such loophole for escape.

Mr. GLASSEY said that if the money voted last year had not been expended, what was the use of voting it over again?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Last year's vote has lapsed.

Mr. GLASSEY said he was under the impression that it was still in the hands of the Agent-General. He intended to support the amendment. Even if there were no Board of Advice the Agent-General had enough tact and judgment to call in the aid of properly qualified persons. There would be plenty of money available for the purpose. If the advice was given the money would be paid whether the present vote was passed or not. They had never heard of any high public servant being in such straits as not to be able to pay a fee such as the Agent-General would be called upon to pay if the vote was struck out.

Mr. SALKELD said he did not think the hon. member, Mr. Black, had chosen a fair opening for economy. If the Board of Advice was not required the colony would lose nothing by allowing the vote to remain, whereas if it was required, and the vote struck out, the colony might lose a great deal. It was necessary to have a Board of Advice. No one man could be expected to be well up in every line. Sir James Garrick might be a very good lawyer and politician, but he was not acquainted with the details of business, and no doubt he felt the necessity for having advice in matters of business.

Mr. HYNE said he did not think a good case had been made out for the retention of the Board of Advice. A footnote to the vote said, "For remainder of staff, see salaries paid from loan vote, page 100." On turning to page 100 he found the following:—"Executive engineer, £800; accountant, £350; correspondence clerk, £200; inspecting officers and clerical assistance, £750." It was evident that the Agent-General was being over advised, and he therefore felt perfectly justified in supporting the amendment of the hon. member for Mackay.

Mr. BLACK said he would like to know what the Board of Advice really did—on what subjects they advised the Agent-General. Had they advised him on any subject during the last two years? As far as he could understand there had been only one gentleman on the Board of Advice during the last twelve months, and he had been absent from England during a great part of that time. He did not object to voting a sum of money for a Board of Advice if there was a Board of Advice, but there had been practically none for the last two years. The hon. member, Mr. Hyne, had pointed out very correctly that the cost of the Agent-General's office in London was not confined to the vote they were discussing, but that there was another sum of £2,100 on page 100, making the total cost of the office £5,450. He was not cavilling against any other item, but he would like the Committee to clearly understand what the Board of Advice really did.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the principal function of the Board of Advice was to advise the Agent-General in commercial matters. One was to select the persons to be invited to tender. Tenders were not called for in London, as in the colony, by advertisements in newspapers. The Board of Advice first advised the Agent-General as to who should be invited to tender, then they advised him as to the acceptance of tenders. That was a most important matter, and one in which, as he had said, good advice on one contract might save ten times over the fees paid to the members of the board in a year.

Mr. POWERS said that in a vote like that, if it was not spent on one item it could be spent on another in the same division.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: How can that be?

Mr. POWERS said that if the money was not spent on that particular item, it could be transferred to another.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he was not aware how it could be done.

Mr. POWERS said the hon. gentleman knew as well as himself what had been done.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Hear, hear! That has not been done.

Mr. POWERS said the Chief Secretary could correct him if he was wrong, but what he knew had been done was that if the money voted was not spent on the particular item mentioned in passing the estimate, it had been spent on another item in the same division.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: There is no subdivision here.

Mr. POWERS said he knew that in the Post Office Estimates there were a great many subdivisions, and that if the money voted for one particular matter was not spent upon it, it could be spent for some other purpose in the same subdivision.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman asked to be corrected if he were wrong. The Audit Act provided that a parliamentary vote in a subdivision if not applied to the specific item for which it was voted, might be appropriated to some other item under the same general heading. Parliament voted the money under those conditions, and the hon. gentleman would find an illustration of it in page 19 of the Estimates, where a number of votes were grouped together under the heading "subdivision." The Audit Act provided that in a case like that one vote might be applied in aid of another. The vote now before the Committee was not a subdivision, therefore the money could not be appropriated to any other purpose. Further than that, the items in question were to be voted from revenue, while the others were to be voted from loan, which was a distinct account.

Mr. GANNON said he should like to know what was the amount of the purchases made by the London office last year?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman would find the amount stated in the Agent-General's report, which he (the Chief Secretary) had not before him at that moment.

Mr. LUYA said the two matters the Chief Secretary had mentioned, upon which the advice of the board was taken, were inviting people to tender and the acceptance of tenders afterwards. For the last two years the Board of Advice had been dispensed with. The only time it was called together was in connection with the late loan.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No; I did not say that.

Mr. LUYA said Sir James Garrick had been some years in the position of Agent-General, and had, no doubt, a very good idea of the best firms to ask to tender, and what tenders to accept. The reason given by the Chief Secretary for retaining the Board of Advice was a very poor one indeed. It was not worth £200 at all events.

Question — That the item proposed to be omitted be so omitted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 9.

Messrs. Black, Glassey, Hoolan, Macfarlane, Powers, Gannon, Luya, Palmer, and Hyne.

NOES, 37.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Unmack, Hodgkinson, Smith, Lissner, Morry, Cowley, McMaster, Allan, Dalrymple, Philp, Crombie, Isambert, Battersby, Barlow, Cadell, Salkeld, Murphy, Sayers, Corfield, Adams, O'Connell, Grimes, Groom, Stephens, Buckland, Mellor, Little, Plunkett, Annear, Callan, Foxton, Dunsmure, Tozer, Rutledge, and Watson.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. BLACK said it was not his intention, after the division that had just taken place, to press the matter any further; but it was very significant, as showing hon. gentlemen's intentions, notwithstanding their assertions as to their determination to economise as far as possible and to reduce unnecessary expenditure as much as possible, that when a legitimate attempt at reducing expenditure—and that, too, in a vote which was not going to affect any individual particularly—they should divide as they just had. He now knew the effect of that discussion and the division, and that would be this—that the Government would at once take steps to appoint a Board of Advice in London, and that £200 more would be spent than would otherwise have been spent. The Government, by their own showing, had clearly proved that there had been no necessity for a Board of Advice during the last two years; but the loyalty of hon. gentlemen to the Government was so great, and so anxious were they not to reduce expenditure, but to perpetuate a system of unnecessary expenditure, that no matter what the Government chose to propose in the Estimates it would undoubtedly be carried. It was a thankless task for anyone to attempt to reduce any of the Estimates. Whilst no one would deprecate more than he would any obstructive tactics, he would like to know whether hon. members really did mean to endeavour to economise as far as possible, or whether they were going to swallow the Estimates. They might just as well swallow them *in globo* as they were laid on the table of the House without further discussion.

Mr. SAYERS said the leader of the Opposition and the late leader of the Opposition had spoken in favour of leaving the vote on, and they and the members of the Government knew more about the vote and the necessity of the Board of Advice being retained than any other hon. member. Those hon. gentlemen had said it was a good thing to leave it as it was. Possibly the Agent-General would require advice, and after the expression of opinion by those who best knew how the money should be expended, he did not think hon. members could have done otherwise than vote as they had done, no matter on what side they might sit. He did not think the Government were going to throw away that £200 merely because it had been voted, as the hon. member for Mackay had suggested. If the hon. gentleman were himself on the Government bench, no one would accuse him of throwing the money away merely for the sake of throwing it away. Before the Estimates were through, several hon. members would work hard to reduce certain votes, and he did not think they should be twitted because of the division that had just taken place, when they did not see their way to injure the colony by striking out the item for fees to the Board of Advice. If the members of that Board were going to receive the money whether they had done any work for it or not he should have voted against it; but on the assurance that the money would not be spent unless it was required, he had voted for its retention in the Estimates.

Mr. BARLOW said that having voted on the opposite side to his colleague, he might be allowed to say that any endeavours of the hon. member for Mackay to reduce expenditure which he could see his way to support he would support; but in that case he could give the hon. gentleman good reasons why he had voted as he had done. It was quite possible that Sir James Garrick not being immortal, the colony might sustain a loss through his death, and it was quite possible that the hon. member for Mackay himself might be appointed to take his place; but if there were no funds available for a Board of Advice in case of a sudden emergency it would be unfortunate for the colony. He did not think the Government would simply waste the money because it had been voted. Had he thought so he would not have voted as he had done; in the case of any unnecessary expenditure which did not involve approximate danger he should be only too happy to vote for a reduction.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he had voted for the amendment because, in reply to the hon. member for Mackay, the Chief Secretary had admitted that none of that money had been spent last year; and if none had been spent last year there was no need for any to be spent during the present year. If it was not required last year when they had a considerable sum of money in London, and goods coming out, what was the use of it now when there was no money in London, and no chance of getting any? No goods would be coming out. There were several other votes which might be dispensed with as well as that for the Board of Advice. For instance, there was the indent clerk. There would be no railway material coming out. He supposed they would be getting new guns, but they would be the only things required, and the vote for the indent clerk might very well be omitted.

Question put and passed.

IMMIGRATION.

The CHIEF SECRETARY moved that £6,160 be granted for salaries and contingencies in connection with immigration. The salaries were paid in the colony to officers to see after the housing of immigrants, and also after quarantine stations. He believed it was known to hon. members that, in addition to the work of the Immigration Department—which was responsible for the care of the immigrants on their arrival in the colony—there was a labour bureau in connection with which they had to supply returns from the different parts of the colony every week, showing the demand for labour and the supply available. It might be a surprise to some hon. members to be informed that in every one of those weekly returns there was always a larger demand for agricultural labour than there was a supply; that had been so for many months past. In connection with the vote for quarantine stations, he might say that it was proposed to shift the leper station in Torres Straits. The present station was out of the way of observation, and amongst the blacks, and in the interests of humanity it should be removed. It was proposed to remove it to Friday Island, where it would be in view of Thursday Island, and the lepers could be attended by a medical officer, and still kept from contact with other people. It was also proposed to connect Friday Island with Thursday Island by telegraph.

Mr. SAYERS said he had endeavoured every year to reduce the vote for immigration. There were some items he had no wish to oppose. Just to test the feeling of the Committee in regard to the question of immigration, he would move that

the vote be reduced by £500. If they did away with immigration they would not require an Immigration Agent in Brisbane. The Chief Secretary had stated that the labour bureau was connected with the vote, so that he supposed there would be some clerks required; but there was not the slightest doubt they would not require the Immigration Agent at Brisbane. There were agents also at Bundaberg, Mackay, Maryborough, and Townsville, and he saw by a footnote that they were also paid as inspectors of Pacific islanders. With all due deference to the Chief Secretary, there was no doubt that there was any amount of labour in the colony at present. It had been stated over and over again that the labour they required was farm labour, and they had been bringing out agricultural labourers for a great many years. There were supposed to be a lot of farm labourers on board the ship he came out in, but he could safely say that not one in ten was a farm labourer, or knew anything at all about it. A great number were from some of the largest towns in England, and had never seen a farm in their lives. He had been given an assurance by a very good authority, that men were working on farms in Queensland at from 10s. to 15s. per week, and he had been told by a gentleman from the Bundaberg district the other day, that there was sufficient labour to be obtained there at from 12s. to 15s. per week; he did not therefore think under those circumstances they were justified in spending large sums of money in bringing more people from England. He had always maintained that a large number of immigrants left Queensland for the southern colonies, and he had known cases where they had done so within eight or nine months of their arrival. Taking into consideration the large area of the country, and the fact that they had to sell large areas of land to pay off the deficit, it was not right that the Government should assist employers of labour at the expense of the general taxpayer. If a man wanted a farm labourer, he had a right to pay for getting him; the Government had no more right to spend money in obtaining farm labourers than they had to spend money to bring out miners to work in gold-mines, or tin-mines, or any other mines. All the industries in the colony should procure their own labour, and he had always been opposed to the Government spending the money of the general taxpayer on behalf of people who could afford to procure their own labour. As regarded servant girls, who were they brought out to assist? Not the general taxpayers, but the people who could afford to employ them, and they were in a minority in the colony. If a man employed two or three of them he could afford to get them himself, but they had no right to tax people who could barely obtain their own living to assist others to obtain servant girls at half-a-crown a week less. When an immigrant ship arrived at Townsville, in his district, people dismissed their servant girls all round the place because they could get a new arrival at 10s. instead of 15s. It was not the duty of the Government to allow them to do that. That was a well-known fact, and the cry for labour was simply raised to obtain cheap labour. He could tell the Committee the name of his informant at Bundaberg; he was in Brisbane at the present time, and was well known to many hon. members. There were a great many labourers in that district ready to work for from 12s. to 15s. per week, and nobody would cavil at that. If they looked at the English papers they would see that at the time of the London omnibus strike the men were receiving 7s. a day, which was as much as men in the same position were receiving in Queensland, if not more.

[Mr. SAYERS.

During the last twenty-five or thirty years wages had gone up 50 per cent. or more in England, and now they could not get a good man as a farm labourer at 10s. per week. He could get that without coming to the colony. They could find men in Brisbane ready to work from 12s. to 15s. per week and rations, and be glad to get it. The hon. member for Rosewood came from a farming district, and ought to be a good judge as to whether farm labourers were required. They would have to stop the present system sooner or later, and considering the position of the colony, hon. members would be doing only their duty if they stopped it at once. On page 100 of the Estimates he found there was a sum of £43,000 down for immigration for the present year, as against £38,000 last year; but of course they could not deal with that till they came to it. At page 94, under the head of "European immigration," there was another sum of £20,000. Those two sums amounted to £63,000; and the country might very safely save that amount. If they did that, they would also save a lot of other money that was paid away in connection with immigration. There were at home a number of officers in connection with the department, and their duties were very light. There was only one ship a month to inspect, so that the officer who performed that duty had not much to do. He calculated that the saving altogether, if they knocked off the vote for immigration, would be about £70,000 or £75,000 a year. It was of no use taking up any more time. He was satisfied that if a little higher wages were offered there would be plenty of labour available in the colony, and he therefore moved that the vote be reduced by £500.

Mr. LITTLE said it was past his comprehension why it was that the men who came from the old country were the ones to oppose the vote for immigration. He had always supported it, and he always would do so, because the prosperity of the colony depended on population. The people in the colony wanted men of their own race to come among them, and the Australians were the first to welcome the people from the British islands and introduce them to the institutions in existence in the colony. Australians did not poke fun at the immigrants who arrived in the colony, but he noticed with regret that people who had only been twelve months in the colony pointed the finger of scorn at them. He sincerely hoped that the reduction would not be made. He believed that the Government intended to sell land; and if land was sold more labour would be required, because they should not take the people from the other colonies—people who robbed the men of their birthright during the last strike. The hon. member for Mackay had done more than anyone in that Chamber for the farmers, and his name would be remembered for years on that account. He (Mr. Little) was not an advocate of black labour, but he was in favour of introducing the labour necessary for the farming industry, including the sugar industry, and he hoped that the hon. member for Charters Towers would withdraw his amendment.

Mr. MACFARLANE said there would never be prosperity in the colony until there was an increased population, but the question was whether the immigrants brought out to the colony remained there. He thought it could be shown that New South Wales was getting the benefit of the Queensland immigration system, so far as servant girls were concerned, at any rate. No sooner had servant girls been six months in the colony, and secured as much money as would take them to New South Wales or Victoria, than they went there in the great majority of cases. He had known them to go away in batches of fours and fives; and he did not think

they came back. If the persons brought out could be kept in the colony, he would be willing to agree to the vote, but he thought it would be unjust to bring out more people under present circumstances. If employers could offer better wages, or even if they could provide work at moderate rates, people would come from the other colonies without any immigration vote at all. He intended to support the amendment.

Mr. ADAMS said he could not see his way to support the amendment. He liked to economise as much as possible, but he did not see any economy there. The hon. member for Charters Towers said he had been told that labour could be got in Bundaberg for 12s. and 15s. a week. He (Mr. Adams) had known Bundaberg ever since it was Bundaberg, but he had never known wages to be so low as that in the district. There was certainly a superabundance of labour there at the present time, and the reason was easily explained. The railway had been completed; the men had been discharged; and there was no more money in the Government coffers to provide employment for them elsewhere. For that reason there was more labour available in the Bundaberg district than there had been for the last twenty years. It used to be a common thing, when a farmer asked a man to work for him, for the man to turn round and say he was not going to work for a "cocky" when he could get 7s. or 9s. a day on the railway, even if the farmer offered him £1 a week. That had been the state of affairs for years, but he did not say that there might not be at the present time a superabundance of labour in the district. But how long would that last? Only until such time as the men could get better employment. Hon. members desired to settle people on the land; but they would never do that as long as the Government borrowed money with which to pay high wages. He would like to know where the economy came in in reducing that vote. At Bundaberg—and he spoke of Bundaberg because he knew more about Bundaberg than Brisbane—there was an immigration agent at a salary of £130 per annum. The gentleman who held that position was a good man, and the pay was not enough for an educated man having great responsibilities. But there was also a Polynesian inspector there, and that Polynesian inspector was the same man as the immigration agent, and if they knocked off the vote for the immigration agent they would have to put it on somewhere else in order to give that officer adequate remuneration for his services. With regard to the immigrants who came to the colony, no doubt some were sent out who were really not farm labourers. He had found that out himself, and he dared say that people in other parts of the world had a similar experience. When people wished to leave the old country and settle in a new land, they would not hesitate to stretch a point in order to attain their object. They had been told that there were some persons in the colony who, as soon as an immigrant ship arrived, discharged their old servants simply because they could get new arrivals for a few shillings a week less, but during his long experience in the colony he had never known that to be done. Any persons who had been in the country any length of time would rather keep a servant whom they had employed for some time and knew her work, than take a girl who had just come into the colony and whom they would have to teach. The hon. member for Bundanba had stated that a man who was married and had a family was a much better colonist than a single man, and there was a good deal of truth in the argument. At home girls got 2s. or 3s. or up to 4s. a week, but when they came to the colony they got 10s., 12s., 15s., and even as much as £1 a week. If hon. members looked at the Brisbane papers they would find that £1 per week was paid to some servant girls in the colony. Therefore he maintained that they wanted more population; and if people came out here and married and settled on the land, he contended that the money spent in their introduction was a good investment. Before the immigration lecturer went home he visited the Bundaberg district, and wanted to see some of the immigrants who had recently arrived in the colony. He (Mr. Adams) went round with him, and in one of the agricultural districts they saw four or five of those immigrants. He asked one of them whether he liked his employment, and the man replied that he liked it very well. He then asked him did he like the pay, and he said "Yes." He then remarked that the man had never been in a strike. The man said he had, that he had been in a strike somewhere about Cairns, where he was getting 8s. a day, and struck for 9s. He inquired whether he had acquainted his friends at home that he was getting 8s. a day, and had struck for 9s., and he replied, "Oh no, I did not do that." The man was then getting £1 per week, whilst in the old country he received 8s. or 9s. a week without rations; so that really a labourer coming to the colony and getting only 15s. a week and his rations got more than double what he received at home, and was able to save double as much as he could in the old country. He was positive that if men came to the colony, and the lands were thrown open in such a way as to encourage settlement, the money spent on immigration would prove a very good bargain for the colony.

Mr. DRAKE said, before the vote was passed, he thought it was desirable that they should get some information from the Government as to what prospect there was of having Italian labour substituted for kanakas on sugar plantations. The vote included assistant immigration agents at four places in the colony—namely, Bundaberg, Mackay, Maryborough, and Townsville; and he presumed that if Italian labour was employed instead of kanakas, Italians being more intelligent, the services of immigration agents would not be required. The amount put down for those four officers came altogether to £590. As far as he understood Italian immigration, the immigrants were not going to be a low class of persons, who would require looking after, but they were to be agricultural and fruit-growing experts, and he presumed they would be quite capable of looking after themselves; so that, as he had said, the services of those assistant immigration agents would not be required.

Mr. BLACK said he understood the hon. member for Charters Towers to move a reduction of the vote by £500, without specifying what particular item he objected to.

Mr. SAYERS: I said we did not require an Immigration Agent in Brisbane. That is one of the items.

Mr. BLACK said the salary put down for the Immigration Agent in Brisbane was £450; but the hon. member had moved a reduction of the whole vote by £500. If he would move that the vote be reduced by £450, and that the services of the Immigration Agent in Brisbane should be dispensed with, they would know what way to take it; but if he moved it in its present form, it would seem as if his object was to throw out the vote altogether.

Mr. SAYERS: I mean the whole vote, as far as immigration is concerned.

Mr. BLACK said he could not support the hon. member in that. If he would move the reduction of some particular item, they would know what they were discussing. He would give the hon. member a little information. For

instance, there was in that vote a sum of £3,000 for contingencies. That was unspecified expenditure, except that it was for provisions, light, fuel, and incidentals. If the hon. member moved that that item be reduced by £500 they could discuss the matter with him, but they would never get on if he moved a reduction of the whole vote by £500 without specifying any particular item that he wished to have reduced.

Mr. LISSNER: He is obstructing.

Mr. BLACK said if the hon. member wanted to obstruct let him say so.

Mr. SAYERS said he did not know why he should be accused of obstructing. He had said that he objected to immigration altogether.

Mr. BLACK: Then strike out the whole vote.

Mr. SAYERS said some items in the vote could not be struck out, and the Committee would not support him. The Chief Secretary had explained what certain sums were for; but if, as he (Mr. Sayers) hoped, they were going to do away with immigration, they would not require so many immigration agents. It was for the Government to find out which officers might be abolished. If they reduced or did away with immigration altogether, many of those officers would not be required.

Mr. BLACK: We are not going to do away with immigration.

Mr. SAYERS said he believed they were. That was where he differed from the hon. member. He hoped so, and with that view he had moved a reduction of £500 in the vote. Some of the money he knew had been spent. Last year when he moved a reduction he was told that if he had moved a smaller reduction he would have got more support. He knew very well that if he moved a larger reduction now, he would be met with the objection that some of the money had been spent. He did not know how much had been paid away, but he expected about half, and he could not therefore move the omission of the whole vote.

Mr. DRAKE said he had asked for some information with regard to the estimate, and the only reply he got was from the hon. member for Mackay. He did not know whether the hon. member for Mackay was leading the Government.

Mr. BLACK: They have deserted.

Mr. DRAKE said it appeared to him that the hon. member was leading the Government, and he would therefore ask the hon. member for Mackay if he could give him any information with regard to the prospects of Italian labour being substituted for kanaka labour?

Mr. BLACK said he did not know whether the Chairman would allow him to reply to the hon. member for Enoggera from that side of the Committee, or whether he would be expected to go on the other side. He quite agreed with the hon. member that the Government ought to be represented either by the Chief Secretary, the Premier, the Prime Minister, or at all events by the Treasurer or some leading member of the Government, to give the hon. gentleman that information which he was craving for. He believed the matter would come on later for discussion, and he did not consider that he was bound to give the hon. gentleman the benefit of the very mature opinion which long experience had taught him on the subject. What he desired the hon. member for Charters Towers to do—and he wished to go on with the business and not obstruct—was to move that some particular item in the vote be reduced by the sum of £500; but to move a reduction of £500 was tantamount to the whole vote being struck out. He was in favour of legitimate immigration so long as work could be found for the immigrants who came to the country. He did not believe it was ever intended that the colony should be a select little labour community for those that were in it at the present time. In the same way as they had opened the lands of the colony, and had offered inducements to people from other parts of the world to come here in the past, so they were bound to do so in the future, and unless they did import immigrants they could never have progress and prosperity. He was very glad to see that the Government had now returned, and would be able to answer the very important question asked by the hon. member for Enoggera.

Mr. DRAKE said the question he asked some time ago, and which was answered, or rather evaded by the hon. member for Mackay, was, what prospect was there of Italian labour being introduced as a substitute for kanaka labour, and whether kanaka labour had ceased to be introduced?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he must express his regret for being absent for a few moments. He was not often absent from the Chamber, and thought he might sometimes crave a few moments' rest, as other hon. members did.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear

Mr. BLACK: Your colleagues might take up the running.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman asked what prospect there was of the introduction of Italian immigrants, and, secondly, whether kanaka immigration had ceased. As far as he knew kanaka immigration had ceased. With respect to Italian immigration, he had already laid upon the table of the House all the information in the possession of the Government. An hon. member some time ago gave notice of motion disapproving of the introduction of Italians, and in order to facilitate the discussion of the matter he (the Chief Secretary) had immediately laid on the table all the information up to date in the possession of the Government. The only further information the Government were in possession of was that the intended immigrants had not yet been got together, but were expected to be ready about the end of the present month. He believed about 350 or 400 were likely to come.

Mr. SAYERS said the hon. member for Mackay objected to his motion by saying he had not specified a particular item. If he had specified an item he should have been told that it had already been expended. He had calculated roughly that about £1,000 of that money had already been expended, and he had therefore moved the reduction of the vote by £500, so that some of those immigration agents would have to go at the end of six months. He did not expect the hon. member for Mackay to support him, and expected him to raise objections; but he wanted hon. members who honestly believed that the time had come when they should temporarily stop immigration to vote for his amendment. He would be prepared to discuss the question of resuming immigration when the circumstances of the colony warranted them in expending money in that direction. He was told part of the money was gone, and in proposing the reduction of the vote by £500 he left it to the Government to decide where the reduction could best be made. He wanted hon. members who were opposed to the principle of State-aided immigration to support him; so far from desiring to obstruct he would be satisfied to go to a division on the question at once.

Mr. GANNON said he was a strong opponent of immigration, but he thought the hon. member was making a mistake in proposing a reduction of £500 on that vote. The hon. member had better go in for striking out the whole vote than that.

Mr. SAYERS : You cannot do that, because two months' requirements from the vote have been spent.

Mr. GANNON said that only showed the absurdity of bringing before the Committee a vote of which part had been spent. At the present time it was a mistake to bring immigrants to the colony, because the people here were at starvation point.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER : Bunkum!

Mr. GANNON said it was not "bunkum," and he could tell hon. members that at the present time the members of various trades were collecting money to send unemployed members of their trades down south. Within the last couple of months 100 members of the building trade had been sent down to Sydney and Melbourne because there was no work for them here. Many of the best of their coachmakers had also gone to Sydney and Melbourne. In that way they were losing the very men they wanted, while they were introducing immigrants at the expense of the taxpayers to lower the rate of wages received by the people already here. That was the greatest possible mistake, and when the principal vote came on, he was prepared to prevent it passing in every way he could.

Mr. DRAKE said the real question was whether by passing that vote for £6,160 they would bind themselves to vote for the whole amount asked for immigration on the Estimates. The hon. member for Charters Towers, and those who thought with him, wanted to make sure that immigration would be eased off at all events, if it was not stopped. There was no doubt that there should at all events be a partial cessation of immigration, because they had here at the present time many persons who could not get work. The vote before the Committee appeared to be the vote for the establishment, and the hon. member for Charters Towers wanted to decide now whether the establishment should or should not remain as it was last year. If there was to be a cessation in immigration there would be a necessary reduction in the staff, and it was on that account the hon. member moved a reduction on that vote. The difficulty the hon. member laboured under was that if he fixed upon a particular item for his reduction it would at once be said that he was actuated by some animus against a particular individual. The hon. member, therefore, proposed to reduce the amount by £500, and leave it to the Government to make the reduction in any way they thought fit.

Mr. POWERS said there was another difficulty in reducing that vote, because if a majority of the Committee agreed to carry out the Government immigration scheme, the whole of that money would be wanted.

Mr. SAYERS : The majority that will reduce one will reduce the other too.

Mr. POWERS said he thought the other vote should come on first, and then if it was reduced they could reduce the vote at present before the Committee to meet it. The immigration agents at Maryborough, Bundaberg, Mackay, and Townsville would have to be kept on as Polynesian inspectors, and so their salaries would have to stand. If the Government carried their real immigration vote the staff would be required. He had promised last year to support the hon. member in the reduction of the immigration vote if he did it in a certain way.

Mr. SAYERS : And you did not do so.

Mr. POWERS said he did not because the hon. member insisted upon doing it in his own way. The Government were reducing the expenditure from loan by £500,000, and that would mean that there would be less employment ; they refused to carry out a protectionist policy until federation was accomplished, and that would keep the people off the lands.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. Tozer): The farmers in your district are crying out for labour now.

Mr. POWERS said the Government were also going in for unconditional selection, and sales of land by auction in large areas; and how people were going to get on to the land under those circumstances he could not see. If they had a protective policy, they would want immigrants, but as they were not going upon that policy there was no necessity for immigration. State immigration had been stopped in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia ; and if the Government here were going to carry out the policy they had enunciated, and until they had some more progressive policy by State immigration, they would only be introducing persons to compete for work against persons who had the greatest difficulty in finding work themselves at the present time. The experience of the past few months had shown that when labour was required they could get plenty of it from the other colonies, and they did not want to go to other countries for labour when they could get it from other parts of Australia. The Colonial Secretary had interjected that farm labourers were wanted in his (Mr. Powers') district, and he had been told that was the case, but the persons who had informed him also said that the immigrants they were getting now were not farm labourers. He might also mention that although he had seen a good many planters recently, he had not met one who said he wanted Italian labour. That was a question that would be fully discussed when the principal vote came on. The hon. member for Charters Towers, he thought, would not be able to carry his vote, because the staff would be wanted if the principal vote was carried. He did not think therefore that the vote now before the Committee was the right one upon which to fight the question.

Mr. PALMER said there had never been a time in the history of the colony, or of New South Wales, when there was not a party who considered that the best interests of the country would be promoted by keeping people out of it. There had always been a class of men whose cry was that there were too many people in the country. He would like to hear the hon. member carry his argument to its logical conclusion by moving that, as there were too many people in the colony, a certain number should be driven out. Even if that were carried, within twenty-four hours it would be discovered that there were still too many people in the colony, and that more wanted to be driven out. There would always be a certain number of people who were unemployed, chiefly men who would not take work when it was offered them, and who were not the good citizens the colony should have. Fifty years ago there was a cry in Sydney that the population was too great for the country, and ever since he had been in Queensland there had always been a party who said, "There are too many people here ; let us get rid of some of them." His own idea was that they could not have too many people of the right sort in the colony. There was plenty for them all to do, and the more that came the more work would they find for those who followed them.

Mr. SMITH said the hon. member for Burrum was under a misapprehension with regard to the inspectors of Polynesians. Although Polynesian immigration was stopped, there were still Polynesians in the colony, and would be for the next three or four years, so that those inspectors were necessary.

Mr. POWERS: I admitted that.

Mr. SMITH said that, with regard to immigration, he thought the money spent upon immigration was well spent, and that the more immigrants of the right class they got into the colony the better it was for the colony. He did not believe in bringing out immigrants who were not of the right class, and just complaints had, no doubt, been made that many had been brought out who were not suited to the colony; but as long as agricultural labourers were brought out, there would be plenty of work for them in every part of the colony, barring the large towns. So long as they were induced to remain in the centres of population, how could they possibly get work to do and become producers, or be of any benefit to the colony? The hon. member for Toombul complained that the trades associations were making subscriptions in order to send some of their craft to other colonies. It was not mechanics they wanted to introduce into the colony. There were too many of them in the colony already—more than could get employment. If the people who wished to settle in the colony would adopt the example of the Alice River settlers and go into the country, instead of remaining in the large centres, they would be of some benefit to the colony, and would advance their own interests. He would suggest that the Government should take seriously into their consideration the advisability of assisting real *bonâ fide* settlers to go on the lands of the colony. He hoped the village settlement scheme they had heard so much about would be initiated by the present Government, and that a portion of the immigration vote would be devoted towards that object. The Government had never indicated that they would assist in a systematic way people who wished to settle on the land, but he believed there was an indication now that the Government had changed their tactics, and that they were inclined to favour the settlement of people on the land, not by making them money advances to spend as they pleased, but by making them advances to spend on substantial improvements which, even if the settler left the land, would remain as an asset to the Government for the money that had been expended. If a portion of the vote was spent in that direction, the colony would be very much more advanced in a few years than it would otherwise be. They had heard a great deal about the immigrants that were brought out going to the other colonies. There were just as many people coming into the colony as were going out of it; and because a certain number were constantly going out, as well as coming in, it did not prove that the former were immigrants whom the colony had brought out. That there were isolated cases of immigrants going to New South Wales he did not dispute, but that they went away in any large number he did not believe. According to the last census returns the population of the colony had increased 80 per cent. in ten years, or at the rate of 14,000 a year; and that, he thought, was a very fair criterion of the prosperity of the colony. There was one great industry in the colony that was perishing for lack of sufficient labourers of the right class, and that was the sugar industry. Why did not hon. members take into consideration the great loss to the colony which would result if the sugar industry was extinguished through the want of proper labour? He believed the Government intended to assist the industry by bringing out Italians. For his own part, he would prefer that labourers from the British Isles were brought out. He did not think Italians were as desirable as colonists as people of their own kith and kin. There were any amount of men of the right stamp in the United Kingdom and in Ireland who would be very glad to come out to the colony and become producers; and as long as they could get the right class of labour from their own people he did not think they should go to Italy or anywhere else for it. However, if they could not get their own people; if the sugar industry could not be advanced in any other way than by the employment of Italians, he should not oppose their introduction. There were about 2,000 people directly employed in the sugar industry; but besides that there were 10,000 or 15,000 indirectly benefited by it, so that it would be a great misfortune if that industry were allowed to die out. He believed the extinction of the vote would be very detrimental to that industry.

Mr. DRAKE said the hon. member who had just sat down was wrong in stating that Queensland received more population, or as much, from the other colonies as it lost. He (Mr. Drake) had not the exact figures before him, but, speaking from memory, they were something like this: According to the last census the population had increased in five years by 71,000; the vital statistics published by the Registrar-General showed that the natural increase during that time had been 40,000, which would leave 31,000. He found also from the report of the Immigration Agent, that during the same five years they had introduced 42,000 immigrants. That would leave about 11,000 to be accounted for, and he was under the impression that the colony was steadily losing population. If he was in error he hoped some hon. member would point it out. In reply to the hon. member for Carpentaria and also to the last speaker, he would point out that there were two ways of populating, or attempting to populate a country. One was to bring people to it under a system of State-aided immigration, and keep them there under a threat of twelve months' imprisonment if they did not stop at least three months. That was the policy they had adopted. The other policy was to make the country so attractive that it would draw population to it. Where the hon. member for Carpentaria was wrong, was this: What the people in Victoria objected to, and what they put a stop to, was State-aided immigration, and they went in for making the country attractive. The result was that they had the cream of the people of Australia down there. That was the true policy to adopt. He thought they had been following the wrong course altogether in Queensland by going in for State-aided immigration, the result of which was to bring out a number of people who were dissatisfied on arrival, and gradually filtered away to other colonies which were more attractive.

Mr. ANNEAR said he could bear out the statement of the hon. member for Carpentaria, for when he (Mr. Annear) came to the colony in 1863 there was a class of people who cried out that there were too many people then in the colony. He was very much surprised to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane. He had the pleasure of meeting that gentleman in 1863, when the population of Queensland was 61,640, and now it was about 400,000. Since that time they had been increasing their debt, and how could they go on increasing it unless they

increased the population to bear a share of the burden? No one could ever accuse him of not speaking his mind. He always said what he thought. Life was too short for him not to live at peace with, at any rate, himself. He knew there was a party who did not agree with his views, and the members of which were prepared to fight him when the time came. He was also prepared to fight them, and he preferred defeat to a questionable victory brought about by trimming his political sails to catch any political breeze that might come along. Who were the greatest number of people who were coming out to the colony at the present time? People who were nominated by friends already in the colony, who had to pay £3 5s. on nominating them. On arrival they were met by those friends, who gave them all the assistance they could, and in a few months they made themselves homes, and were far better off than if they had remained in the country they came from all their lives. Under the system of assisted immigration a person coming from Europe to the colony had to pay £8, and he contended that they must hold out some inducements to people to come here if they intended the colony to be—as he was sure every hon. member hoped it would be—worthy of the name it now bore. Persons could now cross the Atlantic Ocean from Great Britain to America, the wealthiest country in the world, in six days for £4.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: £3.

Mr. ANNEAR: For as low as £3. How had that been brought about? By the introduction of people. When he was in America, two years ago, he and his friends went down to Castle Garden, and in one day they had seen 5,600 immigrants arrive, and in two days not one of those persons remained. They had all gone into the interior of the country. The hon. gentleman said that he did not think that the people in America were as wealthy as they were in Victoria; but he would repeat what he had said before, that two years ago the people of the United States had in their coffers £35,000,000 which they did not know what to do with. The Government of America reckoned that every adult male going into the United States was worth £150 to the revenue. In this colony they were increasing their burdens by going on with public works. The burdens were quite heavy enough to be borne by the people in the colony, and if they were going to have no more people they must stop increasing those burdens. They were going to throw open the lands, and whenever a new railway was asked for the argument was invariably used that it would open up splendid agricultural areas. Now, what was the use of throwing open their lands when they had not people to occupy those lands? Let hon. members take up the statistics of last year and they would see that they had sent £1,600,000 out of the colony for agricultural produce, every bit of which could be grown here. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Bowen that they had too many mechanics in the colony, whilst they had not enough agricultural labourers. He would read the opinion expressed at the Maryborough show by one of the most practical farmers, not only on the Mary River but in the colony. This was what he said—

"Mr. P. O'Kelly was glad of an opportunity of ventilating a grievance—that was, the scarcity of suitable labour for agriculture. They had no immigrants of the sort required, and agriculture was almost paralysed. They could not get ploughmen and horse-drivers, but they could get engine-drivers in shoals. If they had the labour, that hall would have been crowded with the products of the soil. He hoped the legislators would not heed the cry of men being out of work in towns, as there were plenty of idlers, but no men suitable for agricultural work."

Everyone who knew that gentleman knew that he would not make an assertion of that kind unless it was absolutely true. There had been a scarcity of work before to-day. In 1866, good mechanics were working for 3s. and 4s. a day—a state of things that he trusted they would never see again—and at that time there was a party who said that it was impossible to grow any agricultural products in Queensland; everything consumed in the colony had to come from the other colonies. What had been the result since then? They had shown that they could produce agricultural products quite equal to what could be grown in the other colonies. Every hon. member must admit that the old country was over-populated. He believed the thickest populated country in the world for its area was Belgium. In Queensland they had a colony seven times the size of Great Britain and Ireland, and yet they had not half the population of Glasgow, and they had not nearly as many people as there were in Birmingham, Manchester, or Liverpool. And yet they were told they had too many people in the colony.

Mr. DRAKE: No one has said that.

Mr. ANNEAR said the hon. member had stated so that evening. He had said they did not want any more people introduced. But if they did not get more people what were all the barristers and solicitors who had just been admitted at the Supreme Court to do?

Mr. DRAKE: Starve, I suppose.

Mr. ANNEAR said that when he first came to the colony the legal work could have been carried on by half a dozen lawyers, and now there were some hundreds. At any rate they were very thick about Brisbane. One hon. gentleman had said that some of the trades societies in town had to contribute to send tradesmen to the other colonies. He was sure they all knew that when work was slack in one place, tradesmen went where work was to be obtained, but they were not talking about that class at all. They were talking about the settlement of an agricultural population on the lands of colony; and what had they seen in the *Courier* only that morning? He did not like to say much about it, but the working man's true friend was the man who would try to do something to benefit him—who would try to help him. He was indebted to the Secretary for Lands for the assistance he had given to some tradesmen in this city who had met with misfortune in their trades. Some of them had come to him, and he had introduced them to the Secretary for Lands, who had been good enough to give a deputation of three railway passes to go up and have a look at the lands of this colony. The result was that, whilst previous to their going up only three selections had been taken up, in eight months since seventy-six had been taken up, and by that morning's *Courier* he saw that twenty-three more had been added to the number. He referred to the village settlement at Wallumbilla. He agreed with what the hon. member for Bowen and many other hon. members had said. It was a wonder to him that so many people settled on the land, considering the limited means at their disposal. He would be only too happy to support some scheme whereby monetary assistance could be given to men wishing to settle on the land. He was sure they would require much assistance for the first two or three years; but the Government must be careful to give such help to the proper class of men. There was a great danger attached to any such scheme. There was a class of men who would accept the monetary assistance, and who would go on the land and would be like some farmers he knew, who looked at the land, but did no work. That was not the class they wanted

at all; on the other hand he was sure there was a large class of men in Queensland who would gladly avail themselves of monetary assistance, and who would faithfully perform the obligations they entered into. The hon. member for Enoggera had devoted a great deal of time and trouble to devising some scheme of village settlement. He considered that that was a very good scheme. He trusted the hon. member would persevere with it, and, as far as possible, he would render the hon. member every assistance in his power. Every member of the community who was in a position to do so could do a good deal, not by grumbling, but by putting his shoulder to the wheel and giving help, as the old pioneers of Queensland had done before them. He could refer hon. members of the Committee to men whom he had known since the year 1863, and who had done wonders that never would be known in helping people to settle upon the land, and helping the colony to become what it was. He never would be one to say there were enough people in the colony. He himself came here from very humble circumstances, indeed they were so humble that he had to earn his living at twelve years of age. But he came out here, and was very glad of it, and he wanted others to have the same chance. During his recent visit to England he was the means of inducing twenty-three persons to come out from within five miles of where he was born, and they were all doing well in the colony now. Any hon. member who knew anything about Cornwall would know that a man had to earn his breakfast there before he ate it, and those were the style of men who were wanted out here. There was a great future before Queensland, and instead of having 400,000 people here he trusted that in another fifty years there would be as many as there were now in Canada, because with their climate and soil they had a country quite equal to Canada.

Mr. DRAKE: Adopt the Canadian policy.

Mr. GRIMES said he thought the hon. member for Enoggera had made a mistake when he said the departures from the colony were in excess of the arrivals in it. He had taken the census returns, but from the tables supplied by the Colonial Treasurer he found that the arrivals from the other colonies were 25,888, and the departures 23,511.

Mr. DRAKE: I go by the census returns, which are supposed to be accurate.

Mr. GRIMES said of course that table did not include the excess of arrivals over departures by the overland route, but he could not see why the two tables should clash. However, he should certainly take the Treasurer's returns as correct. With reference to the immigration vote, he could not support the hon. member in reducing it, and hon. members had no right to judge of the requirements of the colony for agricultural labourers by the number of people they saw at the street corners. Numbers of those who stood about the street corners could obtain work in the country if they would accept agricultural work and a fair rate of wages. He would give an instance that had occurred within the last three months. A lady connected with a benevolent society, who assisted in dispensing some of the funds placed at their disposal by the Government, wrote to him about a young man who had come out to the colonies some twelve or eighteen months before, and had been unable to obtain work, and was a burden upon the funds. She sent this man to him, and he (Mr. Grimes) offered him wages—he was a married man—equivalent to £78 per annum, a cottage free of rent, and rations. The young man said he would consult his wife, as she was required to assist in some light employment. To his astonishment the man came back and said he could not accept the situation.

Mr. DRAKE: That is an argument against marriage.

Mr. GRIMES said a few days afterwards he saw that same young man playing an organ in the streets of Brisbane, and gathering a few pence in that way. That would give hon. members an idea of the class of people who came out under their immigration system.

Mr. BARLOW: He could make £200 a year playing the organ.

Mr. GRIMES said he wished hon. members to understand that they must not judge of the requirements of agriculturists by what they saw in Queen street.

Mr. DRAKE: There will be plenty of the organ business if we introduce Italians.

Mr. GRIMES said perhaps that would compel others to work. He could not imagine an Englishman descending to earn his living by organ-grinding when he could do so by proper labour. When people were in a position to refuse work, as in the case he had quoted, there seemed to be room for real agricultural labourers and he would not support the reduction of the vote with a view by-and-by of reducing immigration. They should be extremely careful whom they introduced into the colony; but if they could obtain *bonâ fide* agricultural labourers, there was room for them yet.

Mr. PHILP said they had had that debate every time that vote had come before the Committee. It had been the policy of the colony ever since it had been a colony to import people from the old country, and he should be very sorry if that policy had to be changed. The Government had always exercised a discretion in importing people. In times when labour was plentiful, and there was no demand for certain classes of people, immigration had been eased, and that had been done during the past three years. For the present year there was only £20,000 asked for immigration, as against £60,000 last year, and it would be very unwise if they disorganised all their machinery. They had not a very costly staff in the colony, and only £6,000 was required to carry on the department here. He could remember in the years 1863, 1864, and 1865 the colony was in a most prosperous state, and in the years 1883, 1884, and 1885 they had prosperous times again; and it was during those periods that the greatest number of people came here from the old country. In the year 1863 there were only a few sheep in the colony, but there were 20,000 people introduced, and they all went on to the land and cultivated it, and were thriving people to-day. If they could import 20,000 people at a time like that, he contended that now there was room for from 60,000 to 80,000. It was only the other day that a number of immigrants arrived from England, and on the following day they were all engaged except one married couple. They knew very well that after a man had been for some time in the colony he would not work on a farm when he could get £3 or £4 a week on a mine, for instance; and unless there was a steady stream of immigration some of the agricultural operations would cease altogether. A great deal had been said about the population not increasing; and he would refer the hon. member for Enoggera to a speech made by the Premier of New Zealand about a month ago. During the last five years that colony had not only lost its arrivals, but also its excess by births, and there were now fewer people in the colony than there were five years ago. That was a protectionist colony. Victoria was another protectionist colony; but New South Wales had increased its population nearly 50 per cent. over Victoria during the last ten years, and was at the present time attracting far more people

than either Victoria or New Zealand. And the hon. member for Carpentaria showed the other day that, while the population of Victoria had increased 30 per cent. during the last ten years, that of Queensland had increased 80 per cent. in the same time. A great deal had been said with regard to the last census; but he believed that it was very badly taken. He knew one station employing twenty-eight people to which no return was sent.

Mr. DRAKE: I was not taken.

Mr. PHILP said he understood that a great number of the strikers did not return their papers, and he believed that the population of the colony instead of being 390,000 was over 400,000. There was room for ten times that number. Scotland had a population of 4,000,000; yet Queensland was a paradise compared with Scotland. There were too many commercial and professional men in the colony—too many non-producers; but more people were wanted on the land. He hoped the vote would not be reduced.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he should not have risen but for a remark made by the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, to the effect that people ought not to trim their sails to catch the passing breeze. He did not think the hon. gentleman referred to him, but from the way he spoke, hon. members must have thought the hon. member did refer to him.

Mr. ANNEAR: I did not refer to you.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that hon. members knew very well that he always had the courage of his convictions; and he knew very well that the hon. gentleman did not refer to him at the time he spoke. With regard to the remark of the hon. member for Townsville that the colony had room for ten times the present population, he was prepared to admit that it had room for ten times ten hundred times its present population; but the question was whether it would be wise to bring them out under the present circumstances of the colony. It had been shown by the hon. member for Enoggera that the colony had in five years lost 11,000 of the immigrants that had been brought out at £16 a head. That expenditure of £176,000 had been incurred for the benefit of the other colonies.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Those statistics are perfectly absurd.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he was in favour of increasing the population; but if work could not be found for people, it was no use bringing them to the colony. If real agricultural labourers were brought out, he believed there would be no objection; but proper supervision was not exercised by those at home whose duty it was to see that the people who called themselves farm labourers had served their time as farm labourers before they came to the colony.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that if the debate was likely to go on much longer, he would move the Chairman out of the chair. There were still two sitting nights of the present week, and on them he hoped to do important work. He had not taken the trouble to explain previously, because he thought every hon. member knew, that immigration at the present time was being limited, as much as it was possible to limit it, to domestic servants and to farm labourers. He did not know whether hon. members read what appeared in the *Gazette* or in the newspapers, but he might mention that an Order in Council had lately been made governing the nominated system of immigration. It was found to be very much abused. He found that everybody was nominated as a farm labourer, and that there was considerable laxity in the administration in that respect. Under the present system, every application came before the Minister. He had himself that week dealt with fifty, sixty, or 100 nominations, and had rejected half of them. Many were described as farm labourers, but he was perfectly satisfied from the surrounding circumstances that they were not, or that they did not intend to come to the colony to work as farm labourers. The greatest pains were taken in England to get farm labourers, and he believed that those who came out were carefully selected by the agents of the colony. As to the immigration of women, what sort of country would people think this was where two-thirds of the population were males, and hon. members of Parliament objected to the introduction of women? However, he only wished to point out that additional precautions were now taken in the selection of immigrants. Of course, that would have the effect of reducing the number of immigrants. In addition to the precaution he had mentioned, a new form of nomination had been adopted, and when the warrant was issued it was conditional upon the statement of the nominator as to the occupation of the person nominated being verified. He was afraid that sometimes warrants had been transferred and other persons had assumed the names of the nominees, but under the new system a final warrant would only be issued when a certificate was furnished to the Agent-General by his officers that the person applying for it was the person named by the nominator, and was of the occupation named. That was in the case of men. In the case of women, of course, the rule was different. He moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Divide!

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the passing of that vote would not prevent the discussion being renewed, but he moved the adjournment now, because it was getting late, and they had two more nights to sit that week, and there was a good deal of work to be done. He knew perfectly well that there would be two or three more debates on that subject. If hon. members wished to divide now, he was perfectly willing to do so.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Divide!

The CHIEF SECRETARY said, with the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his motion.

Mr. PAUL said he was perfectly willing to go to a division now.

Mr. BARLOW said he objected to take a division on that vote, because it would prove nothing, but of course they could not prevent hon. members calling for a division. He was fully prepared to discuss the immigration vote when it came on, but he failed to see that a division on the proposed reduction would prove anything.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Question—That the sum of £5,660 only be granted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 12.

Messrs. Hyne, Glassey, Hoolan, Campbell, Sayers, Salkeld, Barlow, Macfarlane, Isambert, Drake, Gannon, and Murphy.

NOES, 28.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Nelson, Cowley, Unmack, Hodgkinson, Dunsmure, Foxton, Callan, Plunkett, Buckland, Dalrymple, Annear, Stephens, Corfield, Adams, O'Connell, Lissner, Hamilton, Palmer, Allan, Little, Philp, Grimes, McMaster, Smith, Paul, Tozer, and Cadell.

Question resolved in the negative; and original question put and passed.

On the motion of the CHIEF SECRETARY, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Treasury Bills Bill.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, returning this Bill without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. It is proposed to go on to-morrow with the Land Bill in committee.

Mr. NELSON: Which one?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The first one—the one that has been read a second time.

Question put and passed.

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