

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 9 AUGUST 1894**

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THURSDAY, 9 AUGUST, 1894.

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

NEW MEMBER.

The SPEAKER announced that having issued his writ for the election of a member to serve for the electoral district of Aubigny, the said writ had been returned to him with a certificate duly endorsed thereon of the election of William Thorn.

MEMBER SWORN.

Mr. WILLIAM THORN, having been sworn, took his seat for the electoral district of Aubigny.

QUESTIONS.

TRAVELLING ALLOWANCES.

Mr. KERR asked the Secretary for Railways—

What amount of travelling allowances has been paid from 30th June, 1893, to 30th June, 1894, to each of the following officers, viz.:—John Mathieson, Chief Commissioner for Railways; Robert John Gray, Commissioner for Railways; Andrew Johnston, Commissioner for Railways; Henry Charles Stanley, Chief Engineer; Richard Thomas Darker, Locomotive Superintendent; W. F. P. Mansfield, Locomotive Inspector?

The PREMIER (Hon. H. M. Nelson) replied—

J. Mathieson, £178 4s. 9d.; R. J. Gray, £19 19s. 3d.; A. Johnston, £89 7s. 6d.; H. C. Stanley, £147 3s. 9d.; R. T. Darker, £53 8s. 3d.; W. F. P. Mansfield, £55 0s. 6d.

REQUIEM MASS—PRESIDENT CARNOT.

Mr. GRIMES asked the Colonial Treasurer—

1. What was the amount of expense connected with the visit of Messrs. D. O'Donovan and W. E. Parry-Okeden to represent the colony of Queensland at the Requiem High Mass for the soul of the late President Carnot, performed in St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, on the 20th July last?

2. From what vote was it paid?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. H. M. Nelson) replied—

1. £3 17s.
2. Contingencies, Colonial Secretary's Department.

“HANSARD” TYPE.

Mr. REID asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. Was the *Hansard* type loaned to any newspapers to print the Financial Statement from?

2. If so, why, and to what newspapers?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. Tozer) replied—

1. Yes.
2. The *Telegraph*, in accordance with custom, to enable an impression to be taken of the Treasurer's Financial Statement with the object of it appearing in full in that paper early next day.

GRANTS FOR PROSPECTING.

On the motion of Mr. BROWNE, it was resolved—

That there be laid on the table of this House a return showing,—

1. The amount of money granted as assistance to prospecting for gold and minerals during the years 1892, 1893, and till 30th June, 1894.

2. The persons who received such aid, and the locality prospected.

3. The amounts granted in each case.

## PAYMENT OF MEMBERS.

## COMMITTEE.

Mr. HAMILTON, in moving—

1. That it is desirable to amend the Payment of Members Act of 1830, so as to provide for the payment of the actual cost of passage incurred by any member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland in travelling to and fro once each session between the electorate he represents and the place where Parliament is appointed to sit.

2. That it is desirable to amend the Payment of Members Act of 1892, so as to increase the sum of £150 per annum, now paid to members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, to £300 per annum.

3. That it is desirable to introduce a Bill to give effect to the foregoing resolutions.

4. That an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to recommend to this House the necessary appropriation to give effect to such Bill—

said he had noticed in the English telegrams in that morning's paper that Sir William Harcourt had promised to introduce into the House of Commons next session a Bill to provide for the payment of members—showing that the principle was being adopted in all English-speaking countries. His proposition dealt with two subjects—first, cost of passage to and from Parliament; secondly, increasing the amount at present paid to members. According to the existing regulations any member representing, say, a constituency in or near Brisbane, and residing in a country house 400 or 500 miles away from Brisbane, had his expenses paid from that country house to Parliament once a year and back again. Whereas another member, representing a district 1,000 miles from the capital, and who had, in consequence of his parliamentary duties, to break up his home and live in Brisbane—and they all knew that no member could satisfactorily perform those duties for a far-distant constituency unless he resided near the capital—was only allowed one passage to his constituency and back again during the existing Parliament; and if he wished to see his constituents each recess and consult with them on matters appertaining to their interests, he had to pay his passage out of his £150 a year. His own return passage to see his constituents cost about £24, and other hon. members had to pay even more than that amount. It was decidedly wrong that a member who wanted to see and consult with his constituents should be mulct in a sum of from £20 to £30, while another member residing in a distant part of the colony, but representing a constituency in or near Brisbane, should get his expenses paid there and back each year. With regard to increasing the payment of members to £300 a year, that matter was discussed very lengthily last year, and a vote of hon. members was taken upon it on more than one occasion. It would, therefore, be inadvisable to take up time by referring to the arguments for and against which were brought forward last session. From his knowledge of men he was perfectly aware that when once a man had formed his opinion on a subject not all the eloquence of Demosthenes, or Cicero, or even Dr. Talmage could change it one iota. It might possibly convert an outsider; but he was certain that no man could convert a politician when he took an idea into his head. When he recollected that private members' day on Thursday only lasted until 6 o'clock, and that those in favour of his proposal would only talk it out if they tried to adduce the numberless arguments in favour of it, he requested them to follow his example and say little or nothing on the subject, since they had expressed their opinions on it already. The Premier or any other member had it in his power to talk the matter out by means of amendments, but that kind of conduct always brought its own Nemesis, and it was neither a fair nor a manly thing to

do. He was sure the Premier would not countenance any such conduct, and he could rely upon the hon. gentleman to approach the matter with reasonableness. It had been said that the present time was inopportune for proposing such resolutions; but it was never inopportune to rectify a wrong, and a wrong had been inflicted, not only upon hon. members, but upon the people, by the reduction of members' salary to £150 a year. The constituencies had year after year demanded payment of members, and in consequence of the demand members previously opposed to the measure had granted it. They decided that £300 a year was fair remuneration for the services of members, and if it was, half that amount was manifestly unfair. The reduction of the amount simply meant that the constituencies were not getting what they demanded as payment of members; it was payment in name, and not in fact; and when it was remembered that a third of the amount paid went in postage stamps and telegrams, it left members with £100 a year, or a smaller wage than was obtained by their hall porter. The principle had been opposed by men of wealth in the House. But, as a rule, the man who had accumulated wealth was not the kind of man who would choose to give his services to the State or to anyone gratuitously; if they were they would probably never have become wealthy. When men of that kind were prepared to spend hundreds of pounds to get into the House, and to leave their homes and places of business for months in interesting themselves in the affairs of the State, and they said they were prepared to do that for nothing, it was not unreasonable to find that individuals were not inclined to accept the statement that all that was done simply through philanthropic motives. It was the general opinion of the country, from years of experience of gentlemen of that description, that they could not afford to receive the services of such men gratuitously, and they preferred paying their members a fixed amount, and selecting whom they chose. It had also been stated that the amount had been reduced to £150 to secure economy, but that statement was not correct. When Sir Samuel Griffith proposed the reduction to £150, an hon. member ventured to suggest that it was done to secure economy, and the hon. gentleman denied that statement, and gave as his reason for the proposal that it was done for the purpose of preventing the entry of an undesirable class into the House. It was not for them to dictate as to who were undesirable, that was for the constituencies to decide, and they had sufficient intelligence to decide who was best fitted to represent them. The Premier had great reverence for two things—the Constitution and precedents. He could give the hon. gentleman the precedent of a reduction proposed by Sir Arthur Palmer many years ago. In 1870 that gentleman, considering retrenchment desirable, said to Ministers, "Since retrenchment is desirable, it will only be honourable for Ministers to start by retrenching themselves." They agreed with the hon. gentleman, and retrenched themselves by 20 per cent., reducing their salaries from £1,000 to £800 a year.

Mr. GROOM: I think the hon. member is in error.

Mr. HAMILTON said he thought he was not, as he had that morning seen the Bill to that effect, and there was a further proposition to reduce the salaries of certain Civil servants by 5 per cent.

Mr. GROOM: The Bill was submitted, but the House would not consent to it.

Mr. HAMILTON: Even if the House would not consent to it, they must admit the high principle which actuated Sir Arthur Palmer in making such a proposition. He had heard it said that

Ministers at present were proposing to follow the Victorian example. Last year Ministers in Victoria voluntarily reduced themselves by 20 per cent., and hon. members by 10 per cent., and they proposed this year to reduce themselves by 25 per cent. If it were true that Ministers here were going to reduce their own salaries by 25 per cent., he would be only too glad to withdraw his proposals, and he was sure no member of the Committee would object to that. What members did object to was that they should be singled out as martyrs, and to be the only martyrs. People always liked companions in adversity, and hon. members had none at present. They were told that at the present time the colony could not afford to give them what was admitted to be a fair thing at other times; but the Civil servants had only been reduced by 10 per cent., and he could not see why it should be considered fair to reduce Civil servants by 10 per cent. and hon. members by half their salary. Members should recollect that at present they were only at the committee stage of the resolutions, and members who were opposed to the details of a measure often allowed it to pass even its second reading, leaving it to the Committee on the Bill to raise a discussion upon the details which they desired to see altered. It was generally considered not to be courteous to knock a Bill out even on the second reading; and he felt sure that, although some hon. members might not go quite as far as he had gone, still they must realise that the present conditions under which they were paid were not fair. He did not want to talk the matter out, and he felt perfectly confident that the Premier would not countenance that being done by his side.

The PREMIER said that he began to have an inkling now as to the reason for the complaint that Parliament had not been summoned to meet earlier. It was not so much to get on with public business, as in order that hon. members might the sooner propose to increase their own emoluments. It was very obvious that they were not going to make much speed on the present occasion. He was opposed to the present resolutions, and to payment of members altogether. He thought the colony would get on much better if members received no payment at all, and he had always voted on that principle. The hon. member brought forward, as an argument, Sir William Harcourt's promise to introduce a Bill in the House of Commons with regard to payment of members; but that proved nothing, as Ministries were mushrooms, and the Bill might not be passed. Besides, resolutions to that effect had been introduced in the House of Commons times without number. There had been one not longer ago than two years, and they had not even affirmed the principle, the resolution having been completely shelved by a very large majority. At the same time there were members of the House of Commons who were paid, and they had members in that Committee who were also paid by their constituents, altogether independently of the payment they received from the Treasury. Yet not content with that double payment, they wanted to add a little more to their emoluments. The thing seemed to be most unreasonable. The hon. member had not improved his case very much by telling them what Sir S. W. Griffith's motives were for introducing the Bill reducing the payment.

Mr. HAMILTON: I did not say anything about his motives. I quoted his exact words in *Hansard*.

The PREMIER: The hon. member had brought forward as an argument that Sir S. W. Griffith's motives for introducing the Bill were

to effect a certain object. Of course he must accept the hon. member's denial. He did not know what Sir S. W. Griffith's motives were, but the Bill was passed by Parliament, and Parliament was responsible for what had been done. The first resolution, too, providing for the payment of members' travelling expenses to and from their constituencies, broke down the whole idea of payment of members, because the principal argument in favour of payment of members was that it supplied constituencies with members who resided in the constituencies, and who were well acquainted with the requirements of the different districts. What the hon. member now said was that residents of Brisbane should be eligible to be elected for Croydon or Burke, or elsewhere, and to have their expenses paid to their constituencies—not from the constituencies to Brisbane. That undermined one of the main excuses for introducing such a measure at all.

Mr. HAMILTON: Every Northern member has to break up his home and come down here in order to do his duty.

The PREMIER: That did not affect the argument. The first resolution would entirely reverse the order of things. But, apart from that, the motion was a most injudicious one. Hon. members ought to have some regard for the good name, the honour, and the reputation of Parliament. They had been elected to receive a remuneration of £150 per annum, and it did not seem to be right for men, as soon as they had got the power in their own hands, to double their emoluments. It struck a blow at the good character of the whole colony, and hon. members might take that into consideration, and sink their own personal advantage in order to conserve the reputation of the colony. He was not going to talk the motion out. He hoped the Committee would carefully consider what they were doing. He did not believe that it was the opinion of the country that members should take the opportunity, that they apparently wished to take, of doubling their emoluments. On the contrary, the present members had been elected for three years on a certain understanding set forth in an Act of Parliament.

Mr. DUNSFORD: We advocated an increase.

The PREMIER: Who says so?

Mr. OGDEN: All the members on this side.

The PREMIER said he had nothing to show him that the constituencies had given any such mandate, and he did not think hon. members could justify themselves on that understanding, because members were not elected merely because they advocated one principal thing; they were elected because they were in sympathy with their constituents on a great variety of subjects.

Mr. DRAKE: How did you come to vote for the Bill of 1889?

The PREMIER said he had explained that often, and he did not see any inconsistency in his action. The House, contrary to the opinions expressed by many Ministers, had affirmed the principle that members should be paid. That was done contrary to his wish, but a man could not be for ever stubborn and say that he was wiser than all the rest of the colony, and as the House had affirmed most emphatically that members should be paid, it would be a piece of downright obstinacy for any Minister to say that he would not accept their decision. He had said, and still held to the opinion, that it was a more honourable thing for members to get a fixed salary than to be paid for the number of days they attended the House, and they might just as well be paid by the yards of *Hansard* they filled; and that was the principle of the 1889 Bill.

Mr. HAMILTON: When that Bill was before the House and some member proposed that the salary should be £200 a year you voted for £300.

The PREMIER: Whether the amount should be £300 or £200 was a very different question from the principle of payment of members. He objected to the principle. He would not oppose the payment of members at all if the payment were made on the principle consistently advocated by the Labour faction, that was by direct taxation. The people were often imposed upon and thought that the Treasury had any amount of money; they either did not know or they forgot that there was not a sixpence in the Treasury which did not come out of their own pockets. If hon. members liked to put the matter to a test and let each elector pay so much by levying a tax upon them for that purpose, he would not offer any objection, as the people would then know exactly what they were paying their member.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Should Ministers be paid in the same way?

The PREMIER: Ministers occupied a different position from that occupied by other members: they belonged to Her Majesty the Queen, and when she gave up the management of the colony to the people she reserved certain rights for her Ministers, which they now enjoyed. That was one of the worst arguments that could be brought forward, because when the colony was first established Ministers were paid but members were not; payment of the members was only a very recent innovation. When he was first elected there was no payment made to members.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It is universal.

The PREMIER: It was not universal, although even the Japanese paid their members £10 a year more than was paid in Queensland. If members were paid by direct taxation, as he had pointed out, it would remove a great deal of his objection to the whole thing.

Mr. POWERS said the only argument advanced by the Premier was that members came into the House pledged to do their duty for £150 a year, and had therefore no right to increase that amount. But as a matter of fact a great many of the members on the Opposition side of the House, if not all, told the electors that they thought £300 a year was a fair remuneration, and in four out of the five elections which had taken place since the successful candidates had expressed the same opinion. And he did not see any more inconsistency in the present Parliament increasing the rate of remuneration than there was in the last Parliament altering the basis of payment, and raising the maximum amount from £200 to £300 a year.

The PREMIER: The Treasury was full then.

Mr. POWERS said the hon. gentleman had told them that he had made ends meet and that the colony was now in a good position. If the salaries of members were increased to £300 they should be subject to the 10 per cent. reduction the same as Civil servants and Ministers; but that was a detail which could be dealt with when the Bill was before them. One hundred and fifty pounds was not enough for a member who devoted all his time to his parliamentary duties. He had to attend to his duties in and out of session. The hon. gentleman could not have been serious in trying to raise a debate as to whether members should be paid, although he had been consistent, except upon one occasion, in opposing it. In all fairness, the matter should be allowed to go into committee. As to the hon. member's remark about the Japanese getting more than hon. members, that was under their new Constitution, and was a reason why we should go back to the scale of remuneration that was agreed to by the electors in 1889. As for the question of a poll-tax, the hon. member could not have been serious in what he said about that. The hon. member

knew that if he once went for direct taxation for anything there would be a great howl made, whether it was a property tax, or an income tax, or a land tax, or anything else, and for that reason, although the hon. gentleman was a great freetrader, he thought the Customs was the best means of raising revenue when he wanted it. The hon. member had one other course open to him which hon. members advocating the increase of salaries would not object to, and that was the referendum. If the hon. member would adopt that means he would find that the electors would rather pay members a reasonable salary than only give them an amount which merely covered expenses. The election of Ministers was advocated by members on the other side as well as on his side; but he knew that if they were elected by the House it would have very little effect. The Premier would say he wanted certain members as his colleagues, and those hon. members who now did what they were told would agree to elect them to hold office for a term of years. If the matter of payment of members were referred to the people by means of the referendum, they would be found to be in favour of the salaries of £300 a year. He had no hesitation in voting for the motion.

Mr. STEVENS had always held one opinion upon this subject, and he saw no cause to alter it. Certainly no argument brought forward that afternoon would cause him to alter it. He had always maintained that if the people in any district had a man amongst them who could not afford to attend to his duties without being paid they should pay him themselves. The amount necessary would only amount to a few shillings per head; it would be a straightforward way of dealing with the question, and the constituencies would know what they were doing. He had no objection to actual travelling expenses being paid where there was no opportunity of using the railways, and it was necessary to travel by steamer or coach. He would much rather see a Bill introduced to give members free passes over the Government railways for the remainder of their lives, after they had been members for a certain number of years, or making them any other concession that would not entail any charge in cash upon the country. This was not the time to make any fresh charges upon the Treasury. New taxation was being imposed, and it probably would not be very long before there would be something further in the same direction. The time was inopportune, and he doubted very much if the people in cold blood would wish the salaries increased, whatever they might think in the heat of a general election. The introducer of the motion would also have done better if he had not imputed motives. He had never known that course succeed in carrying a motion, and the hon. member would have gained more had he refrained from doing so. If he claimed sincerity for himself he should admit it in others. He felt as strongly upon the subject as he did when he voted against it before.

Mr. KINGSBURY said an increase in the payment of hon. members would be danger to the Labour party, especially to those who profess socialistic doctrines and desired to have something like equality in remuneration and conditions. They were told by the leading statisticians of the United States that if the revenue of the States were divided amongst the adult male population, it would give £158 per head. That was presuming the adult males were able to receive all the money earned by women and children. A similar calculation made the wealth of the people of Great Britain £140 per annum. They could not presume that this colony was richer than the United States or Great Britain;

but, supposing it to be as rich, the men who desired equality of conditions were at present receiving from the down-trodden, over-taxed, miserable people £150 per annum for four months' work, and had no consideration for the people they represented. The hon. member for Toowong told a public meeting that the shearers earned on an average only £30 per annum, the member for Townsville said they earned £50, and yet with all the sympathy they had for those working people they would, when they had the power, put their hands into the public purse and help themselves. They were told that the excise duty on tobacco would produce £15,000, but the proposal to raise members' salaries would absorb £10,000 out of that sum, so that the men who found their pipe cost them more in the coming twelve months would know that two-thirds of that sum had gone to pay the men who selfishly claimed to double their own salaries because they had the power. Had £300 a year been offered, a very different class of men would have come forward at the general election. They had the inferior type now who were going to convert themselves from 150-pounders into 300-pounders. It seemed to him that they were in the position of men who agreed to execute a trust for a certain remuneration. If they did not like it, they need not take up the trust. It was a trust for three years, and there could be no interference on the part of the persons who committed the trust to them. But some hon. gentlemen, as soon as they found themselves in a position where they could not be interfered with, resolved to increase their commission from 2½ to 5 per cent. In everyday life those men would be committing a gross breach of trust. The House, if it agreed to the resolutions, would be committing a much grosser breach of trust, because the country had a right to look to the House to set an example of honour in all matters, and especially in financial honour. Those on the other side of the House, who were never tired of sneering at financial institutions which had to get a few extra years of time in which to pay their debts, but which always paid them, were not so successful in paying their own private debts, as he could prove by certain matters that it was not necessary to refer to. The extra £10,000 could only be paid by taxation or by loan. Was the colony prepared to tax itself to pay the extra £150 a year? He said not, and believed the referendum would utterly settle that question against those who desired the extra remuneration. The only other method of paying it was by loan, and one of the greatest objections to borrowing money was that they had to pay interest. £10,000 represented interest on £250,000 at 4 per cent., so that in frittering away that £10,000 they would reduce their borrowing power by £250,000, which might be spent in reproductive works for those who were going about the country half starved and looking to the Labour members to help them. But they would not help them with anything but words, words, words—incessant talk; *Hansard* and gas—and would come there, where they had the power and privilege, and put their hands into that deep public purse which was supposed to have no bottom, but which was shallow enough and empty enough. That was the class of men that had come to the House to represent labour. The gentleman who had brought forward the resolutions had done it, he believed, simply on the same principle that another gentleman did when he offered fruit to our first parents. He was really ruining the Labour party because there would be a regular rush for the £300 a year, and their political organisation would not be able to reduce the number to one or two. The hon. member for Toowong might be set aside by the Workers' Political Organisation at the next

election; but if £300 a year were hanging to it, he would be foolish to permit the organisation to set him aside. They would burst all bounds, set all rules at defiance, and rush like sheep—he was going to say like hyenas—for the £300 a year. Let them reject that golden apple of discord. Let them stand on their merits as men. Let them sacrifice themselves on the altar of patriotism and do something to help those men who only got £30 a year; those men about whom they were always talking and chattering; in whom they believed so little and for whom they had never done, nor ever would do, anything.

Mr. KERR said that as one of the Labour faction, he had been amused by the speech of the member for North Brisbane. He did not wonder that the hon. gentleman was not in favour of payment of members. He had said that members were paid £12 a week for only four months' work in the year; but all hon. members were not managers of sewing machine depôts, and receiving another salary. The Premier laid down the principle that because £300 was not the salary when they came into the House that they could not vote for an increase, but according to that principle if a land tax were introduced they could not vote for it because it was not in force before they were elected. The arguments brought forward by the junior member for North Brisbane were no doubt very good from his own standpoint and from that of members who surrounded him. But members representing labour had ascertained from their constituents that they were in favour of increased payment. During the recess he told the electors of Barcoo that he would vote for an increase, and that if they did not like it all they had to do was to ask him to resign and he would be quite willing to do so. It had been said that the Labour members were getting good wages now; but he could say that he never worked for such small wages during the seventeen years he had been in the colony, and he could go to his trade and earn more than £300 a year. If a Labour member entered into competition with the other electors during the recess he would be howled down by the Press of the colony; therefore, that member had to live on his £150 a year. He thought he could live as cheaply as anyone—he had no expensive habits—and he thought £2 a week was not too much to allow a man for living in Brisbane. Then, if he had a wife and, say, four children, he would have only £4 10s. a month to keep, clothe, and educate them. His experience had been that it had cost him £100 more than he had received from the country as the representative of the Barcoo; and he did not think the hon. member for North Brisbane had expended more than his parliamentary salary. Then, again, the duties of a member were not summed up in sitting in Parliament during the session. The duties of a Brisbane member might finish with the session; but it was not so with those representing outside electorates; and he might mention that when travelling over his constituency it cost him £20 for coaching. The Premier had a sly hit at some members on this side when he referred to members receiving something from their constituents; but that presentation simply showed that they had every confidence in that member and believed in his past actions. It had also been stated again that men with a stake in the country were the men wanted in Parliament. There were some with a very good stake in the country, but it was an iron-bark stake. The hon. member for North Brisbane also said something about debts owned by members on this side, and he hurled that back at the hon. member. So far as he was concerned, he could pay 20s. in the £1, and that was as much as the hon. member for North Brisbane could pay.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON had no wish to protract the debate, but felt that a silent vote on this question might be open to misconception. On the first occasion on which he was returned for the electorate of Bulimba, one of the cardinal points in his policy was the abolition of payment of members. At his second election he pointed out that there were certain expenses connected with the return of members, and as he did not wish to shut the doors of Parliament to any class of the community that might be returned, he would support a moderate payment. Beyond that he was not prepared to go. When the colony was in its present financial position, when fresh taxation was being imposed, and public officers were being retrenched, it would be disgraceful for hon. members to increase their own remuneration; and even if the colony were progressing by leaps and bounds to prosperity, it would only be decent to postpone any increase to another session. On that ground alone he would oppose the motion at the present time. Possibly there was something to be said for allowing members representing distant constituencies the costs of visiting some central point in their electorates. But the resolution, as worded, was exceedingly vague. It might imply that the country was to pay the expenses of members peregrinating through the whole length and breadth of their electorates, and in some of the very large ones they did not know what that expense might be. He thought, therefore, that the resolution as tabled was one capable of great abuse. If it were merely to provide costs once a year for the visit of a member to some central point in his constituency and back again, there would be something in that to commend it, because members representing constituencies in the extreme North must be put to a great deal of expense in visiting their electorates; but until the resolution was more definitely expressed he should not be inclined to support it. As to the annual remuneration of members, there seemed to him to be nothing in it to commend it to the Committee. Even if the colony were in a more prosperous condition, it would be only seemly on their part for its coming into operation in another Parliament, and not, in the present state of the colony, to put their hands into the Treasury to pay themselves.

Mr. HARDING said there was a great difference between members living in Brisbane and members sent from the Central and Northern divisions to represent their constituents in the House. The former had their homes in the capital; they could follow their own avocations, and they were not put to any expense in attending to their parliamentary duties. The arguments of such hon. members against the motion were unreasonable. The Central and Northern members did not want to come to Brisbane; but they were compelled to do so, and it was only right that, being so compelled, they should be paid their actual expenses, and not be put to the expense they had to pay to come down. Members from the Northern and Central divisions must either be paid to come down, or the constituencies must be represented by men living in Brisbane, which was objectionable on many grounds. He intended to vote for the resolutions.

Mr. GRIMES said the hon. member who last spoke claimed that members should have their expenses paid for attending Parliament. To that there could be no objection, and he contended that the amount at present given was enough to pay their expenses. He did not agree with the idea that the country should keep members of Parliament. Under such a system they could never tell how much would be needed, as it would take a great deal more to keep some hon. members than it would to keep others. He was

opposed to the idea of the hon. member for Logan that members should raise subscriptions from their constituents to assist in keeping them while they attended Parliament. Only those who voted for a member would subscribe for his support, and the member might tell those who did not subscribe to support him that he would not trouble himself about anything they might want from the Government. Such a system would work very badly, for the amount subscribed would vary with the likes and dislikes of the constituents. He was sorry to see the Labour party driven to ask for increased remuneration in order to maintain themselves. He was sorry for the tyranny under which they were labouring; they were told that they must be content to live on the salary they obtained from the public purse, and that they must not augment it by any work they could do during the recess. He was not ashamed to say that on the Monday before he came to Parliament he might be seen at work with his coat off and his sleeves rolled up; and the same thing occurred on Friday after his return home, otherwise he could not support himself and represent his constituency at the same time. He found that the £150 paid his bare expenses and left a little over for the numerous calls made on a member of Parliament. He was not in favour of increasing the amount. Every citizen who had reached the age of twenty-one years, and was a householder, was called upon to do something for his country, for which he received nothing beyond what would cover his expenses. Even witnesses in criminal cases were only paid their expenses; nothing was allowed for time lost. Every man was expected to do his duty to the State, and men who were chosen by the people to represent them in Parliament should be prepared to do their duty on payment of their expenses only.

Mr. CHATAWAY said he intended to vote for the Bill founded upon the resolutions going into committee, but, as some hon. members on his side of the House were not of the same opinion, he did not wish to give a silent vote on the question. Nothing was more to the discredit of the Parliament that was called together in 1888 than the action they took with regard to payment of members. No sooner had they been returned on the basis of being paid two guineas a sitting than they voted themselves £300 a year, while in the expiring days of the Parliament they voted their successors £150. He was profoundly dissatisfied with the present system of paying members, neither would he, under any circumstances, pay them £300 a year, nor make it applicable to the present Parliament. When the question of the increase was before the House in 1889 an amendment was moved to the effect that the provisions of the Act should not apply to the then Parliament. On a division being taken thirty-two members voted for increasing their own salaries—only eight of those now had seats in the House—while twenty-seven voted against increasing their salaries, and of those nineteen were again returned. The country, as far as it was able, emphasised its opinion on the members who voted themselves increased salaries. The members who voted against the increase then, and who now sat in the Assembly, were Messrs. Allan, Archer, Glassey, Hamilton—the mover of the amendment—Watson, Agnew, Smith, Stevens, Stephens, Dalrymple, Smyth, Philp, McMaster, Cowley, Tozer, Foxton, Barlow, and Drake. If the proposed Bill got into Committee he would move a similar amendment upon it if some older member would not, and he hoped it would be carried.

Mr. DRAKE said he had heard the speech just delivered once before, and that time he thought by the hon. member for Nundah; but the argument was the same whether it came

from the hon. member for Mackay or the hon. member for Nundah. He was one of those who in 1889 held that it was not right for members elected on the principle of payment of members' expenses at the rate of £2 2s. a day to vote themselves £300 a year. The Bill was then brought forward by the Government, and reasons given for thinking the payment should be £300 a year. He thoroughly believed in the principle of payment of members, and if the sum was to be fixed, £300 a year was about as fair an amount as could be fixed for the remuneration of a member; but he expressed the opinion on the second reading of the Bill at that time, that it was not right that the principle should be made applicable to that Parliament, and he was one of those who suggested that in committee an amendment should be proposed making the payment applicable only to future Parliaments. A division was taken and they failed to carry that amendment. The situation at the present time was different in this respect: In 1889 the principle of payment of members was affirmed and the sum fixed at £300 a year. It was afterwards altered just before the close of that Parliament for the purpose of influencing the next general election; and of that there was not the slightest doubt. It was then a party move, and the party strong enough to reduce the amount from £300 to £150 would, no doubt, under similar circumstances, reduce the amount again. He thought these alterations most undesirable, and he expressed the opinion that payment of members should be looked at from the point of view of the benefit that would accrue from it to the country and the constituencies in the wider choice of members given, and not from the point of view of the benefit accruing to the individual member. He had endeavoured to point out then that the amount of payment should be fixed at the time the election took place, and not by members after they were elected. He thought the principle should be embodied in the Constitution in the same way as the payment of Ministers, as there would then be no fear that the principle would be tampered with for party or electioneering purposes. As the principle was affirmed in 1889, and the amount fixed at £300 a year, and as the question was a test question at the election, he considered that if there was a majority of members in the House strong enough to reintroduce the payment at £300 a year, they would be quite justified in doing so. The hon. member for Bulimba was consistent, and was justified in the action he proposed to take if those who returned him were opposed to the principle, and considered they would be politically advantaged by its absence. But they knew there was a large political party, not only here but all over the world, who considered that the rights and privileges of the great mass of the people would be better protected by a regular provision for members of Parliament. They should look upon the question simply from the point of view of the wider choice it gives the constituencies at the time of an election.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. Tozer) said he had spoken on that subject four or five times, and he had always advocated payment of members. Though the Premier and himself would vote in the same lobby on the present occasion they would do so for different reasons. The Premier did not believe in payment of members at all, and he (Mr. Tozer) did. He had always been of opinion that a member of the Assembly should be indemnified for the loss he sustained in giving his services to the country. It had been purely a question of amount. When he first came to the House members were paid so much a day. There were many objections to

that, but it was a contested point at the time whether or not the system proposed instead of it was better. The Government at the time proposed a fixed amount of £300 a year. He was at the time a country member, and experienced all the difficulties to which country members had referred. He had to break up his home, and had every inducement to vote for the increased amount; but he came to the conclusion that it was not advisable to increase it to £300 a year. The hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, in committee proposed the amendment that the increased payment should not apply to that Parliament. He must say, from the little tricks he saw at the time, members were not very sincere in their votes on the question, and it was one of those votes which some members who took part in it trusted would not be carried. He strongly expressed his reasons for the vote he then gave, and he held the views expressed by the hon. member for Enoggera that it was not wise for members elected upon the basis upon which they had then been elected to increase the amount. He was of the same opinion now. He must say an injustice was done the last Parliament by the hon. member for Mackay. Anyone who knew the history of the last Parliament knew that the Coalition Government never made the slightest effort to interfere with the payment of members; but they were perpetually pestered with amendments and resolutions from the other side of the House, from Mr. Luya, and another member who was not now in the House. The result of that action was that the hand of the Government was forced, and they were compelled to submit the matter to the House. The hon. member for Enoggera suggested that it was brought in by the Government as an electioneering dodge. The hon. member judged their corn by his own bushel. Sir S. W. Griffith had never stated that the Bill was introduced for the purpose of keeping out an undesirable class of people. If hon. members opposite chose to place themselves in the category of those of whom he had spoken, they could do so. What Sir S. W. Griffith had said was that it would give rise to a class of "professional politicians to whom £300 a year would be a much larger amount than they would ordinarily earn in the exercise of their calling." He had said that there were men who, having the faculty of talking glibly, had seized the opportunity of getting into Parliament, and made a much larger income than they could have made otherwise, and the salary should not be such a sum as would induce men to come into Parliament for the sake of salary. It was only due to Sir S. W. Griffith to state that he had never had a thought of alluding to true representatives of labour. The class he had alluded to were leather-lunged men who were not true representatives of labour. When the Government had introduced the Bill, the amount of the payment had been an open question, and it was fixed by the Committee. In fact, so open had it been left, that when a statement had been made about some members being absent from the division who would have voted for a larger sum, the Government had re-committed the Bill to give hon. members another opportunity of settling the amount, and it was again fixed at £150. He was never afraid to face his constituents, and during the last four or five weeks he had addressed very large meetings. Altogether he had addressed 1,400 or 1,500 people, and among his audience he had seen the senior member for Gympie. At a meeting at Gympie, as at all the others, he had explained the matter clearly, and when he had asked if anyone was in favour of increasing the payment of members, not even the hon. member for Gympie had held up his

hand. Not one of them was in favour of adding another £10,000 a year to the burdens of the people. He had pointed out that members received £150 for five months' work. That was £30 a month, and, taking four weeks to the month, that was £7 10s. a week. As those whom he addressed were mostly getting £2 10s. a week, they were not likely to favour giving £7 10s. a week to men who had come from their midst. Of course he might be told that members of Parliament had a lot to do after their five months were over, and some of them did a lot. But he had not thought it derogatory, when a private member, to resume his work after the session was over in order to make a living. The leader of the Opposition was fond of referring to what was done in New Zealand. Was he prepared to do the same on that question, because in New Zealand—where they had representatives of labour in Parliament—they were paid a great deal less than £300 a year? It was there conditioned on payment by results. In Victoria they were now reducing the amount from £300 for the same reason which had actuated them in Queensland—namely, that the country could not afford it. During the last few years Ministers had done all in their power to reduce expenses, and on that policy they had gone to the country. He had been returned, and he had told his constituents plainly that he was opposed to any increase in the payment to members. He had not spoken as a Minister, because he was only a creature of accident, and might be out of office to-morrow. He hoped to be a member of Parliament even if he was not in the Ministry, and, speaking in his private capacity as a member, he contended that he had received no mandate to add £10,000 a year to the burdens of the people. There were men who served the country in various other capacities, and if hon. members wished to be consistent let them vote for the payment of those people, and then tell him where the money was to come from. The men who were serving on municipal councils, divisional boards, rabbit boards, marsupial boards, and hospital committees were not paid for their services; they all felt that the country had some claim upon them, and gave their services gratuitously; and justices of the peace, who had often to ride hundreds of miles in the performance of their duties, were not paid. In all those cases it was a recognised principle that the country had a right to call upon those persons who were able to render public service to do so, and when they came to members of Parliament it was affirmed that no man should be at a loss in attending the House and legislating for others. If it was proved to him that nothing less than £300 a year would save a man from loss he would vote for £300.

Mr. HARDING: Do you compare a Northern member with a Southern member?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not think they should both receive the same, but the motion now proposed would perpetuate that system. He had consistently voted for the payment of members, and when the country expressed the opinion that the amount should be increased to £300 he would not oppose it; but at present it did not appear to him that any man sent to the House was necessarily at a loss with a salary of £150.

Mr. McMASTER could not give a silent vote on the question. He had consistently opposed payment of members ever since he had been in the House, except on the occasion when a measure was passed providing that members should receive two guineas a sitting. He considered that it would be very bad taste for members who had been elected when the payment was fixed at £150 a year to take advantage of their positions

now and increase the amount by another £150, when men were walking about by scores and hundreds—some members opposite would say by thousands—looking for work and for bread. He spent a great deal more time in attending to his municipal duties than he did in attending to Parliament, yet there was no pay attached to that office, though there was a great deal of abuse. It appeared to him that hon. members opposite who were clamouring for the increase and were so anxious to go to a vote had been well drilled on that question, as they were very silent, or, if they did speak, they did so very briefly. Evidently they did not want their speeches on that question to appear in *Hansard*. He believed that he represented as large an electorate of working men as any member in the House, and he might tell them that at the last election there were four candidates for Fortitude Valley, that two were in favour of payment of members and two opposed to it, and that the two who were opposed to it were elected. The question was put to him whether he was in favour of payment of members, and he replied, "No," as he did on the present occasion.

Mr. FOXTON did not care to give a silent vote on the question any more than he did the last time the matter was before the House. The Legislative Assembly had very little to be proud of in looking over its past action in regard to payment of members, and if that motion was carried they would have still less to be proud of. He supported the payment of members' expenses, and he believed it was the very best system they ever had, and that a reversion to that system would tend very much to the advantage of the House. It certainly met a great many of the objections which were now held by some hon. members, as it was so scientifically framed that a member resident in town, and therefore able to attend to his ordinary business, could not earn more by his attendance to his legislative duties than £100 or £120 a year in a long session, while a country member, who had his home and his business in the constituency he represented, might earn the maximum allowance of £200 besides travelling expenses. When the matter was before the House last year he moved an amendment to revert to that system; but, unfortunately, in a desire to do full justice to those who came long distances, and also wishing to meet those who thought £300 a year a fair thing, he proposed in his amendment to make that sum the maximum instead of £200. The amendment was lost by 13 votes to 18, and several hon. members told him afterwards that if he had left the maximum at £200 they would have voted with him. One could not help remarking the satisfied way in which hon. members on the other side were prepared to let the matter go so soon to a division. There was an old adage which commenced, "Speech is silver"—but he never had the truth of the latter part more practically brought to his mind than he had to-day, when he could say with hon. members opposite, "silence is golden."

Mr. ALLAN could not give a silent vote upon the question. One thing was quite certain, and that was that on the three occasions on which he had been returned for the same constituency he had always expressed his opposition to the payment of members. He admitted there was a great deal to be said on the other side; but there was a great deal more to be said against it. Before there was payment of members at all Parliament was as reputable and respectable and able as at present, and they looked back upon men who were here then with reverence and respect. Nor did he ever know that at any time there was an insufficient number of candidates to fill the seats. There were always sufficient men of intelligence ready to place themselves in the

hands of the constituencies without any payment whatever. For that reason they would do no great harm if instead of the motion now before them they had one to do away with the payment they now received. He liked to see members representing labour in the House as well as members representing banks and squattages or anything else; but he did not want to see them paid a premium for coming here. The labour man who received £3 a week now got a very fair wage. Parliament sat about sixteen weeks, which meant in the year about £50, so that by receiving that amount a labour member would be at no loss, and when the session was over he could go back to his work the same as other hon. members did. But to give a man a premium for coming here simply gave him a good opportunity of standing on the stump and walking about doing nothing during the recess. At a time like this, when they were talking about retrenchment, raising their own salaries was the last thing they should think about. Besides, he considered it unconstitutional to vote money to themselves. He had always voted against it and should continue to do so. They should show more sense than to talk about such a thing, and he was prepared to support a motion to do away with the payment of members altogether.

Mr. BELL said the hon. member who had just resumed his seat said that Parliaments that had been held before payment of members was introduced were not less reputable or able or well behaved than those elected since; but it was his belief that the first duty of a parliament was not to be either reputable or able or well behaved. Its first duty was to be representative, and he firmly believed that under a system of proper remuneration of members they would obtain that which was the first necessity for the country—an assembly of representatives of the men and the interests of the country. He made those few remarks to justify the vote he intended to give, and as one of the many strong arguments that convinced him that in voting in support of the motion he was doing his duty as a member of the legislature.

Mr. DUFFY said that at the general election he informed his constituents that he was in favour of increasing the payment of members to £300 a year, and he further said that if a motion were brought forward with that object he would vote for it. In pursuance of that promise he felt called upon to vote for the resolutions, although perhaps the time might be thought inopportune.

Mr. PHILLIPS said he fully recognised that £150 a year was little enough remuneration for the services members rendered to the country, but, at the same time, he was pledged to oppose any increase. He recognised also that it was a little hard upon Northern members to have to pay their expenses when they visited their constituents—it cost him a considerable sum when he visited his—but he could not vote for the resolutions.

Mr. PETRIE said he was returned the other day by a very fair majority, and his constituency was not in favour of the proposed increase. The leader of the Opposition had said that in the five elections held since the general election four out of the five successful candidates had expressed an opinion in favour of an increase of payment. He supposed that his electorate must be the fifth one referred to by the hon. member. He had pledged himself against an increase, and in any case he thought the time most inopportune for increasing the payment when they were retrenching the salaries of Civil servants and studying economy in all directions. He should, therefore, vote against the resolutions.

Mr. ARMSTRONG was one of those who came to the House opposed to the payment of members, and he had also expressed that opinion since being elected. They had come to the House with a mandate to study economy, and if after agreeing to retrenchment they showed their insincerity by doubling their own salaries they would not be doing what the country expected of them. The country had approved of payment to the extent of £150 a year being given, and he should oppose any increase of that amount.

Mr. DALRYMPLE was very much astonished at hon. gentlemen opposite desiring to give a silent vote. For weeks the House had been listening to their eloquence, and he did not know of any other occasion on which they had desired to close a debate. He intended to vote for the resolutions, but he did so because there was one portion of them which he believed might with advantage be carried, for the reason that it was equitable and just; that was the portion which placed members in the North on the same footing as members in the South in the matter of visiting their constituents. For the £300 a year he did not propose to vote, although he might say that he justified it when he was before his constituents. At the same time, he did not think that the present was an opportune time to increase the payment of members. At any rate, he could speak about it afterwards.

Mr. CALLAN said hon. members who had spoken had confined themselves to referring to the increase of £150 a year, but very few had spoken of it from the point of view of it being an increase in their expenditure of £10,000 a year. The Treasurer had told them that they had only, as it were, escaped by the skin of their teeth with a deficit of £8,000, and now certain hon. members wanted to increase the burdens of the country by an additional £10,000. Of course there would be a majority in favour of the motion, because members would naturally give their votes in favour of their own pockets.

Mr. BELL rose to a point of order. Was the hon. member in order in saying that in giving their votes they would be consulting their own pockets?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think that is a point of order.

Mr. CALLAN said the increase to £300 a year would have a very bad effect, because it might induce young men who had considerable ability, instead of bettering themselves, as they might do, to devote their whole time to politics. The hon. member, in introducing the resolutions, spoke of Sir William Harcourt, and said he was going to propose a measure for giving payment to members of the House of Commons. But England was not in the state Queensland was in; she was quite capable of paying her members, but this country was in a deplorable condition. He honestly and sincerely disagreed with the resolutions, and would vote against them.

Question put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 32.

Messrs. Hamilton, Powers, Fisher, Jackson, Harding, Dalrymple, Chataway, King, Dunsford, Glassey, Groom, Rawlings, Daniels, Battersby, O'Connell, Browne, Bell, Morgau, Leahy, Ogden, Turley, Reid, Cross, Dawson, Duffy, Wilkinson, Fogarty, W. Thorn, Kerr, McDonald, Hardacre, and Drake.

NOES, 22.

Messrs. Nelson, Tozer, Byrnes, Barlow, Morehead, Dickson, Archer, Philp, Armstrong, McMaster, Stevens, Crombie, Phillips, Cameron, Callan, Smith, Kingsbury, Allan, Foxton, Grimes, Midson, and Petrie.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. HAMILTON moved that the Chairman leave the chair and report to the House that the Committee had come to certain resolutions.

Mr. GRIMES thought the hon. member might be content with the advance already made. Hon. members on the other side had been very quiet over this resolution, but they were not very quiet last night. This was a very serious matter for the country, and he was not disposed to let it go in such a hurry. When numbers of people were out of employment and suffering severe want it was most indecent for members to be rushing this matter through in the way they were doing, and he should object to it being pressed forward another stage at the present time.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who put you up?

Mr. GRIMES said he was put up by no one; but when he saw the necessity for talking he meant to talk.

At 7 o'clock, in accordance with the Sessional Order, the House proceeded with Government business.

#### WAYS AND MEANS.

##### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—DEBATE ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The CHAIRMAN having stated the question relating to the proposed alteration of the duties on tobacco [*vide* conclusion of the Financial Statement, page 170].

Mr. WILKINSON said: I was very much pleased to hear the Treasurer, in his Statement, say that one of the good effects which have resulted from the severe ordeal through which we have passed, was that not only the members of the Committee, but the community generally, take a much keener interest in the public balance-sheet. I only wish that some of the tables which are at the command of hon. members were more at the command of the public. They would then take a still keener interest in the state of the public balance-sheet, and I believe that interest would be manifested in such a way that they would compel this or any other Government to carry out a very different system of retrenchment to what has obtained in the past. Looking down the list of salaries in some of the official documents at our disposal we can see that a very large saving could be effected without touching the very small men, as was done under the system of retrenchment instituted last session. In the schedule to the Estimates-in-Chief we find numbers of men drawing salaries from different services which run up to £500 and £600, and even more, while men receiving £100 a year, and less, have been severely retrenched. I hope that when the new Special Retrenchment Bill comes on the Government will not lose sight of the hardships the poorer-paid Civil servants have suffered in the past, and that the wages men should be placed on the same footing as the more highly-paid Civil servants with regard to their retrenchment being only continued from year to year. There is a feeling among the wage-earners in the service that while the retrenchment, as it affects the Civil servants, is only from year to year, their retrenchment is to be a permanent one. I hope that that will not be so, but that all the public servants, whether serving in a high or in a more humble capacity, will be placed on an equal footing. It has been said that some of the highly-paid Civil servants are like barnacles on the ship of State. We are told now that the ship of State is in dock; it would be a very good time to have some of those barnacles scraped off. Many of those very high salaries could be very well saved to the country; they are sinecures that could be well dispensed with. Instead of taking the sixpences from the working men we might knock those hundreds of pounds off with great advantage to the State. The Colonial Treasurer goes on to say that it was abundantly evident that it was not the time to increase the burdens of the people, and any

attempt to do so would have been abortive, and Parliament wisely adopted the alternative of reducing expenditure to as small an amount as was consistent with efficiency. In my opening speech in this Chamber I expressed the opinion that that retrenchment was carried out at the cost of efficiency, and I hold that opinion still. I believe it can be shown that the public assets have depreciated in value considerably because of the drastic retrenchment of large numbers of men. According to the Railways Act, we are supposed to be in possession of the report of the Railway Commissioners for the past year on the 1st August, while the House is in session, but their report for last year has not yet come to hand. If the Commissioners have not had sufficient time to comply with the Act in this respect, the office must be undermanned. I believe that before the Estimates for any department are brought forward members should be given ample time to consider the report of that department, and not have it sprung upon them at the last moment when they will have little time to go through it. It has come to my knowledge that not only is the permanent way on our railways suffering, but our bridges are not being cared for as they should be to secure safety, the rolling-stock is getting out of repair, and tires are being run on the wheels that are on the verge of being unsafe. After they are run down to a certain extent they become unsafe, and you do not know the day an accident will occur from their use. Therefore I say that the retrenchment has been carried out at the cost of efficiency. We are told that the receipts from the Cairns, Cooktown, and Normanton lines have fallen much below the estimate, owing probably to the reduction of the traffic rates; and as no large increase in the volume of the traffic on these lines is expected, the reduced earnings may be expected to continue, and the Estimates for 1894-5 have been framed accordingly. I am an advocate for low freights, as I believe they will be of advantage to the country. I believe that if the freights on the Southern lines were lower than they are a volume of trade would be attracted to these lines which would more than compensate for the reduction in freights. Many of us are concerned as to how to make our railways pay; but I consider that they are intended to fulfil a very much higher destiny than to be made a profit-making concern. As a boy, I remember it was said that these lines were being taken out to open up the country, and making land available for settlement; and that should be their chief function. The real use of our railways has been lost sight of in the endeavour to work them on commercial principles. Anything we might do to settle people far out from the centres of population to enable them to get their produce to market we should do; and if we had closer settlement on the rich lands of the Darling Downs and other places, which are now simply sheep walks or cattle paddocks, and converted them into dairy farms, it would advantage not only the territorial revenue and the divisional board revenue, but it would also increase the railway revenue. We should not lose sight of the fact that by encouraging this closer settlement we are likely to profit in every department of the State—through the Customs in consequence of the increased population. I notice that while we have been reducing the number of hands in the Railway Department, as well as in other departments, there has actually been an increase in the number of traffic managers, inspectors, engineers, and superintendents. In the Southern division, with a mileage of 1,273 miles, we have a general traffic manager, whose total emoluments amount

to £850, and three assistant traffic managers, with salaries of £450 each. Too much of our revenue goes in the shape of travelling officers who are not required. The general traffic manager should be able, with the clerks and others he has at his command, to do without any assistants. If the railways were owned by a company there would be very much less expense in management—not only in the traffic but in other branches of the department. The Railway Department is one of those mentioned in the Financial Statement as having effected a saving. The amount put down is £16,294; but there has been a much larger saving than that. I have computed the number of railway employees at 3,781, and allowing only a reduction of 6d. a day off each man, there should have been a saving of between £30,000 and £40,000. It would be interesting to find out where the balance has gone to. I am pleased to see that it is promised to repeal the superannuation clauses of the Civil Service Act. There is another Act that I would like to see amended, and that is the Railways Act of 1888. It could be amended in many respects with advantage to both the State and those employed under it. While the Civil servants are under the superannuation scheme, a number of the railway employees are under a compulsory scheme of insurance, which presses particularly on the poorer paid men in the service, some of whom are getting only 6s., 5s. 6d., and 5s., and some even less than that per day. Those men who have joined the service since the advent of the Railway Commissioners are compelled to insure their lives, and one can easily understand how little remains after the payment of premiums out of such wages. It would be an act of grace for the Government to take this into consideration when repealing the superannuation clauses, and relieve these men by repealing the insurance clauses of the Railways Act. I am not disposed to criticise adversely everything that the Government bring forward. I want to be honest and to give them credit for what is good in their proposals, and to be free to criticise what appears to be not to the best interests of the country. But I have to say this, in all honesty, that there is too much favour extended to big industries and to big things generally in this country, and too little to those which are small and struggling. We find that the same principle which actuated the Government in their policy of retrenchment—in allowing the higher salaried men to escape comparatively free while it pressed very heavily upon the lowly paid—is carried into every department. While the sugar industry and the frozen meat industry and everything else in which big capitalists are interested are encouraged, we find that when a poor man starts an industry which promises to improve his position, immediately it is singled out as the subject of a tax. I am very sorry to have to condemn the proposal to impose an excise duty on tobacco. The prices obtainable for agricultural products are so low that in many cases the farmers prefer to let their crops rot in the fields rather than send them to market. The agricultural industry is very little referred to in the Statement, whereas we should have heard a good deal about it. Though it may not be as rich, or show as much in actual cash as some of the other industries, still it is bringing to the country a wealth which is better than gold. It brings brain and muscle and brawn, and if we can settle people upon our lands we shall have better riches than is obtained by winning gold, because these are they which produce wealth for all time. They will be continual producers, and without this element in the production of wealth, no

other wealth can increase. I am not, perhaps, at one with the gentlemen with whom I am associated, on the question of the resumption of public works. I hold the opinion that our public works policy came to an end too suddenly. A large number of people were induced to come here while public works were in progress, and I think we should have dropped them gradually, and allowed them an opportunity to settle upon the land. Had we done that we should have been in a much better position than we are at present. I therefore do not view with any amount of disfavour the proposal to resume public works, but I shall watch very carefully the form those works will assume. I believe that the expenditure of public money can be made remunerative even if it were only in the cutting down of some of the gradients on existing lines. The cost of haulage where the gradients are steep is very considerable, and that no doubt accounts to some extent for the high rates on our railways. If the gradients were decreased, larger loads could be carried and the rates could be lowered. Of course, like other members, I have my own pet railway, which I will trot out when the question of railway construction comes before the Committee. In resuming public works, I would suggest that contracts might be let on the line recently adopted in New Zealand—that is, that they should be given to gangs of workmen instead of to large contractors. By copying that feature we should ensure a much wider distribution of the money among the community, which would be a benefit to the colony. While on this question I would say that it might be worthy the favourable consideration of the Government whether they could not make easier the means of getting on the land. I am as anxious as the hon. member for Bulimba to see a very much larger population in Queensland. I believe we might have 40,000,000 of people here instead of 400,000, and I should like to see the population increased; but I contend that for the State to assist people to come here and enter into competition with those who are at the present time suffering poverty and distress for want of employment would be a cruel policy. Let us make the conditions of life such that big people will know that when they come here they will be able to find employment, and there will be no need to assist them to pay their passage to the colony; the people will flock here and become permanent settlers. The colony has been made attractive for a certain class in the past; it has been made a happy hunting ground for speculators and syndicators who have money to invest where the rates of interest are high, and who have drained the life blood of the country, as is shown by the figures of Mr. Coghlan, the New South Wales statistician. We want to make the colony attractive to another class—to those who will come here themselves, and bring the whole of their wealth and stay in the country. I am quite in accord with a paragraph which appeared in the *Courier*, in which it is stated that the present runs, if thrown open to selection, would be quickly taken up as grazing farms at a much higher rent than they now bring in, or ever will bring in, under the present leases. We are not getting an adequate return from our unalienated public estate. Looking over the *Government Gazette* recently I found that a large number of the runs in Queensland are in the hands of banks and other monetary institutions. It is very likely, therefore, that those who are the nominal owners have to pay high charges in the shape of interest. When we find that the occupiers of grazing farms, who are engaged in the same sort of industry as the squatters, can pay a very much higher rental and yet make

it a profitable investment, we might reasonably look for a larger revenue from the larger leases. The other day I asked for a return from the Secretary for Railways, and was taken to task for making a statement in this House on hearsay. I have now something more than hearsay; I have the return given by the hon. gentleman, and I find that there were some grounds for the statement I made. I find that Ipswich has been made to suffer by the removal and transfer of railway men. I made that statement at the election, and was contradicted. Now, in looking over this return, I find that the wages of the men transferred to Ipswich are £4,200 less per annum than the wages of the men transferred from Ipswich.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: You know very well that the bridge was carried away.

Mr. WILKINSON: I make every allowance for that; but I am taking things as they are now. I am quite prepared to admit that some of these men may be sent back again; but it seems strange to me that while the Ipswich men were sent to Maryborough, the Maryborough men were sent to Woolloongabba. If it were intended that the Ipswich men should be sent back, it was nearer to have sent them to Woolloongabba, and let the Maryborough men remain at their homes. I am very pleased to see in the Speech that the consumption of alcoholic liquors continues to decrease. The reason given by the Treasurer was that the purchasing power of the people had decreased. That might have had something to do with it; but we were informed by the evidence of bush publicans last year, that the shearers who earned cheques, instead of knocking them down in the public-houses, were camping upon the creeks. I think the habits of the people are becoming more temperate, and the spread of the temperance principles amongst the Western bushmen is largely due to the Labour party. I deny that this side has any sympathy with crime. At the time of the cutting of the Ebor Creek bridge I did as much as any unofficial man in Queensland could to discover the perpetrator of that outrage, as I can prove from my own writings in the *Railway Times* of June, 1891. I hurl back the charge that any member of the Labour party is in favour of crime upon those who make it. We are as law-abiding as any members of the other side of the House, and are as anxious to see good government obtain in the colony. If the Labour party were on the Government benches to-morrow they would have to uphold the law and order. Although we may not have the advantages of education that some hon. members on the other side may have, we have the natural intelligence to know that the State cannot hold together without law. That we have bad laws everybody will admit; that we are responsible in a measure for those bad laws we are also prepared to admit, as they were made by the men we selected to represent us in the past. I was sorry to hear in the Statement that at the end of 1896 the sugar makers in Queensland will have to seek a sale for their produce in other markets, where they will come into competition with the sugar from other places produced under the most favourable conditions in regard to cheap labour. I knew that time must come, but I did not think it would be so close upon us. There may be another side to that question. The cheapest labour in one form may not be the cheapest in reality, and while the Javanese labourer may be cheaper as an individual, in the aggregate he may not be cheaper. I maintain that a white man is able to do far more work in any climate than any one black man, and although he may have to be paid a higher rate of wages, his labour will be found as cheap as that of the barbarous or semi-civilised savage. More than

that, we have lands in their virgin state yet, while the sugar lands in other countries must shortly, if not at once, cost a considerable amount in manuring to bring them up to the richness which our coast lands possess. I have not a very intimate knowledge of sugar matters, but I feel very strongly upon this coloured labour question. I feel the time is not far distant when we will be able to dispense with coloured labour in every form. Coming to the Co-operative Companies Act, and the groups established under it, I do not want to charge any Minister or the Government with being desirous of spoiling the effect of that Act. It was forced upon them, or swallowed against the convictions of many of their supporters, if not of their own; but after it had passed their best effort should have been directed towards making it a success. Various opinions have been passed as to the quality of the land upon which these groups are settled. I saw a sample of the soil brought down by the prospector of the Monmouth group, and I thought it was of an inferior quality—an opinion which has been confirmed by those who settled there. These experiments should be tried upon the very best land we have, and that is far from being the case. I hope that during the session the Government will take steps to amend the Act, because, as it stands now, the man whose name stands first on the list has to be secretary whether he wants to or not, or whether the other members want him or not. As a matter of fact I believe that the secretary of the Monmouth group, though quite willing to fulfil the duties of his position, would feel very much more secure were he elected to the position. I believe it would be to the advantage of these groups individually and collectively if some amendment were made by which they could choose their own officers. I have said what I consider would be to the advantage of the colony, and I hope, in conclusion, that the Government, in pursuing their scheme of retrenchment, will have a little more mercy on the small man, whether he is on wages or salary.

Mr. CHATAWAY: References which have been made by the Treasurer and members generally to the sugar industry justify me in saying a few words on the Financial Statement. As far as I am concerned, the most gratifying thing that has occurred is the evidence given by the hon. member for Croydon that he has discovered there is no royal road to learning so far as regards the sugar industry. Hitherto the mining representatives, dazzled by the wealth obtained in their electorates, have disdained to acquire knowledge. They have begun to teach before they began to learn. If they took the *Sugar Journal* they would discover a great deal of elementary knowledge that would be very useful to themselves and their listeners; and after years of arduous toil it is just possible they will have a crushing that is worth the work they have given to it. At present they do not pan out a pennyweight of solid information from a ton of talk. I agree with very much that has fallen from the last speaker on the small encouragement given to the agricultural industry. I am fully in accord with him, and I also agree with him on the subject of grazing farms. I was very pleased to hear the "Hear, hears!" that dropped from the Opposition cross benches when the hon. members for Carnarvon and Cunningham were speaking on the proposed excise duty upon tobacco. It showed to me that at least there was an admission that members who are intimately connected with any particular industry may possibly know something about it. My feelings were considerably modified when I heard members representing one agricultural industry talk ill of another agricultural industry. There has been too much of that in the

past, and I am sure that agriculture would have received due recognition if members who represent agricultural constituencies had realised that in union lay strength, and had forced upon this Chamber a recognition of the most important set of industries in the colony. Nobody has been more guilty of setting one agricultural industry against another than the junior member for Drayton and Toowoomba. Not only in this House, where it is of least consequence, but persistently in his paper has he written one industry down as worthless to the colony and a curse to everybody who comes in contact with it. He has not only prevented the formation of a country party, but he has prevented the district he represents, with its magnificent surroundings, from taking its proper place as an agricultural constituency. I believe that the town of Toowoomba would have been the second in the colony had it been properly represented. As it is now it is an unimportant provincial town. But I do not doubt that the hon. gentleman has read the handwriting on the wall which foreshadows his downfall. Early in this year he was deposed from the position which he had held for thirty years as president of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society, by the present member for Aubigny, and now that same member has wrested from him his pocket borough of Aubigny. I think the colony in general, and the agricultural industries in particular, may look forward with hope to the next general election and the contest for the electorate of Drayton and Toowoomba. I am not going into the relative value of sugar, wheat, and tobacco; all are necessary to the well-being of Queensland, and should be encouraged; but what I wish to say is that agriculture has received very scant attention at the hands of the House. It is true that we have had a tobacco expert, a travelling dairy, and an instructor in agriculture, all kept for the benefit of those who grow the products of temperate climes. I have no objection to this expenditure; indeed I think it is necessary; but there really has been no aid given in the shape of instruction to the young farmers of this colony. We have only 250,000 acres of land under cultivation—a mere fleabite in our vast acreage—yet with this small area more labour is employed in agriculture than in the whole of our mining. According to the latest statistics, gold-mining employs about 8,000, and mining of all sorts about 10,000; whereas agriculture employs about 41,000, or more than four times as many as are employed in the whole of the mining industry. And if the families belonging to the men engaged in these industries were counted, the difference would be still more startling. Mining has an important Minister and geological staff, and representatives in various parts of the colony. I am not complaining of this, but I believe that the same attention should be given to agriculture. If we had a Minister for Agriculture we should very soon have the agricultural college and the experimental farms which have been so long promised and so long delayed. Every other British colony within reach pays more attention to agriculture than Queensland. While we spend £11,000 on agriculture and £18,000 on mining, New South Wales spends £31,000, and Victoria £38,000 on agriculture. New Zealand spends £19,000 on mining, and £35,000 on agriculture. Who can be surprised at the prosperity of that colony? Last year South Australia spent £75,000 on agriculture, while this year £38,000 is asked for. More startling still is the expenditure of £40,000 on agriculture at a place like Cape Colony. They expend no less than £2,575 on the cultivation of vines, and £1,425 on tobacco culture. On agricultural societies they spend £5,950, on agricul-

tural schools £3,210. Part of this expenditure is for giving bursaries or scholarships to the deserving sons of poor people who are not in a position to send their children to these colleges to be educated in the ways of farming. They have two analysts and an agricultural journal which informs the farmers of the latest things going, and gives them useful hints. The junior member for Charters Towers told us last night that sugar could be grown here by intelligent white people cheaper than in any other country with black labour. I am not going to dispute that question; I have not the requisite knowledge to do it. The figures of the cost of the production of sugar in foreign countries are exceedingly difficult to obtain, and with the exception of those relating to one country I have never been able to lay my hands on them. I shall receive a large amount of education from the hon. gentleman if he will have the goodness to show me the figures on which he arrived at his conclusions. The hon. member for Ipswich put the matter in a more uncertain light. He said he believed so. I believe so myself, but I do not really know anything about it. So far as many parts of this colony are concerned, I believe there is nothing in the constitution of a white man to prevent him from doing all the labour required in the cultivation and harvesting of cane; and I have given a better proof of my sincerity in this matter than any other member of this Assembly. I reiterated that belief at a time when the statement of such an opinion in the North meant social ostracism, and more or less business ruin; and I believe I can safely say that no other member of this Assembly has ever risked a penny by giving expression to his opinion on the question of white and black labour. I have watched farmers growing cane with white labour, and encouraged them to persevere under the difficulties which they experienced. I have joined with them in their regrets when they could struggle no longer, when they were compelled to give up their cherished ideas and resort to the aid of alien labour. I have known some fifty farmers who have commenced to grow cane with white labour. Some of them continued it only for a month or two; others as long as four years; but one and all in the end have had to give it up. There is one condition of things where alien labour in the growth of sugar is not required, and that is where the holding of the farms is so small and where the farmer's family is of such an age that he can employ his wife and family to provide him with that reliable labour which is now supplied to larger farms by coloured labour. That it is a desirable state of things that women and children should work in the fields I beg leave to doubt; but when they do, a living at any rate can be made. This was clearly pointed out in a letter written to the *Times* by Miss Shaw—25,000 copies of which were printed in England, and 5,000 copies in this colony. This letter was written by a woman, and I was surprised to hear an hon. and gallant member—a member of the Women's Suffrage League, who expects no doubt to get on the Treasury benches by the assistance of the ladies whom he is going to provide with a vote—could find no keener sneer, no more cutting sarcasm, than to say he was surprised that this was not printed on scented paper. Members who have never read this letter seem to imagine that it is a letter entirely advocating the employment of coloured labour. It is nothing of the sort. In her opening words the writer says, "Nowhere that I know of can be found such an opening for English labour, English intelligence, and English capital."

Mr. DRAKE: As in South Australia.

Mr. CHATAWAY: The contradiction of the hon. member is worthless, as I will show

by-and-by. The letter goes on to point out that sugar can be grown, under such circumstances as I have described, without the aid of alien labour, and states that a farmer who had worked for five years under those conditions had made a living for his family, and was better off by some £250 than when he started. But she shows that this profit would have been turned into a loss if that farmer had employed at the current rate of wages even one white man. The inference is, that without the assistance of his wife and his family, he could not have made a living the way he was going on. This is the state of things we may imagine to be possible in the future. We may have a dense population settled on the soil, and the whole family will work in order to make a bare living. And we shall probably have wages in the agricultural districts at the rate agricultural wages are in other countries. But meantime we have to deal with things as they are. In the North of Queensland there are millions of acres of rich land, all eminently suitable for sugar-growing. It is unoccupied, or at most feeds a few head of stock, and it returns almost nothing to the State. Without coloured labour it will remain as it is for the next fifty years. This is not my own opinion only; it is backed up by the opinion of the chairman of the Royal Commission that was appointed to inquire into the sugar industry—the junior member for Drayton and Toowoomba—who says that if Polynesian labour is withdrawn the whole of the population now depending on the sugar industry for a livelihood will for a time, and until new industries rise, be thrown out of employment. That may be going a little beyond the truth. I do not believe the whole population would be thrown out of employment; there would still be a considerable moiety remaining on the land, even were Polynesian labour withdrawn. But those who have lived and worked amongst sugar say that there will be no great expansion of settlement with white labour alone. When the two hon. members for Charters Towers were at Mackay some little time ago, they had a good deal to say about an experiment which was to be tried to grow cane with white labour alone. All right-minded people welcomed their suggestion, and such an enthusiasm did they create that one man whom I know has written to the secretary of the Australian Labour Federation, and made the following offer: That he will allow them the occupation for a certain time, rent free, of certain land within reasonable distance of a mill, a mile closer than he himself is. He will guarantee that they shall receive the market price for their cane under shares which he holds in that mill; six men shall be put upon the land, all of whom shall be members of the Australian Labour Federation; and he will present three of them with rations for a certain term of years if the Australian Labour Federation will find the other half of the expenses. I do not know what the answer to that offer will be, and I only refer to it to show the enthusiasm created when two hon. members for Charters Towers, fluent and earnest of speech and desirous to do what is good for the country, go amongst the innocent farmers of Mackay. I am not an apologist for black labour. It requires no apology, in my opinion. If the man who makes two blades of grass grow where only one grew before is a benefactor to his country, how much more does he earn the gratitude of every citizen who, at his own expense, imports that labour which clears the Northern tropical scrubs and enables the white man—who previously was often struck down by deadly malaria, as shown by the chairman of the Royal Commission—to make a happy home? I have now the quotation to which the hon. mem-

ber for Enoggera objected. I find here the words I quoted—"It offers at the present moment a field for the employment of English labour, intelligence, and capital, such as is rarely presented to agricultural enterprise." That is from the second letter in the bound volume of the letters and is on the sugar industry in Queensland, and yet the hon. member for Enoggera says the writer was referring to South Australia.

Mr. DRAKE: That is not the quotation I was referring to.

Mr. CHATAWAY: It has been stated that the paper read by Miss Shaw before the Colonial Institute, and to which the hon. member for Enoggera listened with so much pleasure, was published at the expense of the Queensland Government. I am credibly informed that it was not.

Mr. DRAKE: I know that it was.

Mr. CHATAWAY: We hear a good deal about coloured labour depriving the white man of legitimate employment; but I ask where is employment to be got at the present time? Where do those who are unfortunate enough to be unemployed go? Is it to the lands of the pastoralist, where unionism is now rampant, or to the mining districts, where the Australian Labour Federation hold sway? No; it is to the sugar districts, where black labour is employed, and where at the present moment 6,000 casual hands are finding employment for the current six months. Not only so, but I am informed that men in Mackay are paid the highest wages paid in any place in the North of Queensland. Hon. members may doubt that statement, but I have it on the authority of that walking encyclopædia, that living and breathing inquire-within-upon-everything, that compendium of useful information, that child's guide to knowledge, the junior member for Townsville. When my colleague, Mr. Dalrymple, was giving a list of wages paid in one of the mills, I find according to *Hanard* that that hon. member interjected, "Those are the highest wages paid in the North."

Mr. OGDEN: I meant in Mackay.

Mr. CHATAWAY: The hon. member said in this House that he did not want to say things without foundation. If he meant "in Mackay," he would not have said "in the North"; and I am not concerned to contradict an hon. member whose motives are pure and whose aspirations are honest. It would be untrue to say that there is nobody in the sugar districts opposed to black labour; but I unhesitatingly assert that the vast majority of people in the sugar districts believe, and I think on good ground, that were coloured labour withdrawn the industry would collapse. The chairman of the Sugar Commission has said that, in the event of the withdrawal of coloured labour, a very large portion of the coast districts of the North would not be cultivated, at all events for a very long time, and from £4,000,000 to £5,000,000 invested in the industry would be wiped out of existence. He says, further, that the whole population there is dependent upon the sugar industry for a livelihood, and would, until new industries arose, be thrown out of employment. The hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Powers, during a debate on the subject said that if the country judged against that labour and wanted 10,000 men thrown out of employment, and if the representatives of working men came here and wanted engineers, artisans, seamen, and all classes of labourers thrown out of employment, at their door would be the blame. A representative of the Brisbane working men replied that they could all come to Brisbane, where there was plenty of employment for them, and that their coming would save the cost of

immigration. That was said when the great loan industry was in its most flourishing condition. I do not think any Brisbane representative would have the hardihood to say the same thing now. Still, in spite of what the junior members for Toowoomba and Maryborough said, we still find men in the sugar districts who are averse to the employment of Polynesian labour. An open letter has recently been addressed to Sir William Macgregor, which was published in the *Worker*, protesting against the employment of New Guinea labour; and at the same time, from the same branch of the Australian Workers' Union, a petition was presented to this House on some other subject; and in order that the Committee may really understand the position of this body, I may be pardoned for briefly referring to its members. As far as I know, it comprises five members. That important officer, the secretary, is the gentleman who figured so prominently last year in the Press as the man who earned 28s. a week and rations at cutting cane. The *Worker* quoted this as an evidence of the poor way in which men are paid in Mackay; and other papers have quoted it with exactly the opposite object. He is a hard-working Scotchman, and has a keener appreciation of the "bawbees" than any man I know. He has given up manual labour, and I do not blame him. He did so well at cutting cane last year that this year he has opened a store, and retails goods to innocent Polynesians. He keeps his store open for twelve hours every day, and a lesser number on Sunday. He is rapidly becoming a capitalist, and I fear that when the Australian Workers' Union or the Australian Labour Federation next make a strike levy they will lose him as a member. The next man is the president. He has been thirty years in the district of Mackay, and, as far as I know, he has never done a day's work. During the strike in 1891 he was out West, and the union—to their credit be it said—sent his wife money in spite of their own difficulties. When the strike was over I inquired of his wife whether I should take any steps to bring her husband back, and she said, "Lord, no! not in these hard times; I have enough to do to keep myself without having to keep him too." The vice-president is a man of flocks and herds, and well endowed with this world's goods. He does no manual labour, but when occasion offers, he presents himself for election to vacant seats in the municipal council; but hitherto he has not been successful. Those are all the officers. As far as I know, there are only two members. One is an ex-mayor of Mackay—one of the wealthiest men there. His hand is in everybody's pocket, and in his own too, when anyone is in trouble. No charity is complete without aid from him and his inestimable wife. The other member is the wire-puller. I have not the pleasure of his personal acquaintance, as he has but recently come from Brisbane, and I think he is an intimate friend of the hon. member for Toowong. He pulls the strings and manufactures public opinion for the A.W.U. in Mackay. Turning from sugar, I notice in the Treasurer's Statement that he suggests a resumption of public works on a moderate scale. I trust that a district like Mackay will not be neglected. I should like to show the Treasurer a road over which some 16,000 tons of produce are carried, and 9,000 tons of sugar will be carried this six months. If a short line of three and a-half miles were built to join it to the railway it would give this 16,000 tons of produce to the railway; and I hope the Secretary for Railways will not neglect to examine this matter before he decides what railways he is going to propose. We can all congratulate the Treasurer on his Statement. It is really more a judicial

utterance than a party Statement, and we must all agree that no clearer statement of our position has ever been placed before this House.

Mr. McDONALD: During the course of his speech the junior member for Mackay referred very often to "the A.L.F.," as if it were something very horrible. There is nothing very mysterious about "the A.L.F.," which is simply a combination of the various unions in Queensland. The hon. member also spoke in very disparaging terms of the president of the Workers' Union at Mackay, a man of seventy years of age, who has helped to create and build up the wealth of this colony for many years, and who is as honourable a man as the junior member for Mackay. It does not redound very much to the credit of a young man to take advantage of the privileges of the House to speak in such a way of a man seventy years of age, and I do not think he would have the manliness to say the same thing outside the House. The Treasurer stated in his Budget Speech that one result of the severe ordeal through which we have passed is that it has led not only members of this Committee, but also the community generally, to take a much keener interest in the public balance-sheet. Several hon. members on this side have pleaded their inability to understand our finances as they are placed before us, and I do likewise. There is a little item on which I wished to get some information. I asked a member of some nine years' standing in this House to explain it; but he was unable to do so. I then went to an ex-Treasurer, but with no better success. Eventually I went to the Auditor-General, and there I got some little satisfaction. When I find such difficulty in getting information in regard to the accounts, I am not at all surprised that people outside are unable to understand them; and I think it is very questionable whether Ministers themselves—the Colonial Treasurer included—thoroughly understand them. The matter I particularly refer to is the railway from Cloncurry to the Gulf of Carpentaria. In table C it is stated that the amount voted for that line was £500,000, and that the unexpended balance is £425,927 18s. 2d. Turning to table N, which gives the loan expenditure from the year 1884-85 to 1893-94, we find that the amount expended from loan on that railway is £144,681, which deducted from £500,000 leaves £355,319 instead of £425,927. There is a difference of £70,000. How in the name of common sense can we expect the public to understand such accounts? I am not blaming the Government or the Treasurer, because this matter has been going on for years, and took place before he had charge of the Treasury. It seems to me that these tables are compiled in a most mechanical manner, and are practically valueless as sources of information to the public. In the particular instance I have quoted the information is worse than valueless, because it is misleading. Of course I managed to find out how this difficulty took place, and it appeared that those in charge of these funds have a very convenient method, when any money is required for a special purpose, especially in the matter of stores, to charge it to the loan fund of the line best able to bear it. I do not wish to impute motives or say there is anything wrong; but it appears that this is not the only colony where such a state of things exists. I saw by this morning's paper that the Premier of New South Wales proposes to remodel the system of keeping accounts, and the sooner we follow that example the better it will be for the public generally, because they will be the better able to understand the financial position of the colony. Another most extraordinary thing is that the Treasurer told us that the deficit was only about £8,000. I really do not know how he has

arrived at that conclusion, because he has admitted that there are always large accounts coming in in the first quarter of the following year which should have been paid in the previous year. In 1890-1 the amount was £252,720; in 1891-2, £209,012; and in 1892-3, £206,259. Now, if we were being wound up, it would be found that the deficit is £214,259. What is the use of placing such statements before the public? It is absurd and ridiculous; and these things should be remedied in our system of keeping the national accounts. We find from the statement of the loan account that we have about £700,000 to meet next year, and within a few years we will also have large sums to meet in connection with Treasury bills and Treasury notes. When we take into consideration the fact that last year we saved £120,000 by retrenchment, and still had a deficit of £8,000, we shall see that sooner or later we must face additional taxation. The Treasurer tells us that the territorial revenue is falling away considerably, and we will have in the near future to devise some system by which we can replenish the Treasury to carry on the business of the country. Would it not be far wiser for the Government to come down in a straightforward way, and tell us the real position of our public affairs, and propose some scheme by which we can get out of our difficulties. If they did that, the House would gladly assist them. It is no use putting it off merely to hold the Government together. Personally I am in favour of a land tax, and I think most hon. members on this side and a good many on the other side are also in favour of it. By a land tax we would be enabled to replenish the Treasury to such an extent that we would not only be in a position to meet the requirements of Government expenditure, but would also be able to provide a sinking fund with the view of ultimately extinguishing the national debt. It is all very well for the Treasurer to tell us that only some £200,000 falls upon the people, when we know that the whole of the £1,200,000 that has to be paid in interest has to be wrung from them before they can get a fraction for themselves. It is simple nonsense to say that that £1,200,000 does not come from the people. I maintain we have now got into that position when a land tax should be imposed, and it is ridiculous for the Treasurer to come down with a scheme that will only produce some £15,000, two-thirds of which will be spent in the cost of collection, when we practically have the machinery in existence by which they can get a far greater amount and at very much less cost. If we take the ratable property in accordance with the statistics of 1893, we find that the capitalised value is £26,336,146, and 3d. in the £1 on that would bring in £335,026. Allowing 50 per cent. of that for improvements, so that we should not tax industries, we would get an amount of £187,513; or at 6d. in the £1, £335,026. It is argued that such a tax is not required, but I maintain that it would go towards wiping out the national debt, which will always be a heavy burden upon the people. Taking into consideration our large exports, we find that actually £8,397,519 worth are produced as raw material. It takes tallow, wool, live stock, exported meat, sugar, rum, and timber. Those items bring in £5,959,706; and if we add to that gold, amounting to £2,437,813, it brings the result to what I have mentioned. All that wealth is practically taken from the soil, and that is a reason why a land tax should be imposed. We also find that we have exports to the extent of £5,279,880 over and above our imports. Where does that wealth go to? A large portion of it goes away to pay interest on the public debt, and a still larger portion goes to absentees. I think it is high time that we had

an absentee tax, which would have the effect of having a large portion of that money spent in the colony. I think it is a scandalous shame that something is not done to prevent such an enormous amount of wealth leaving the colony. As long as that goes on we will have a return of this depression time after time. The Treasurer also told us that we had touched bottom, and are on the road to prosperity; but the hon. member for Cunningham tells us that he believes no such thing. I really do not think that we have touched the bed rock of the depression, and we will have to do something to prevent such a large proportion of our exports going away. To my mind the depressions that we suffer from are going to continue as long as we have our present industrial system. We have only to look at history to find that these depressions occur every ten or eleven years as regularly as clockwork, and what is most extraordinary in connection with them is that they come immediately after we have had our most wonderful yields of minerals and wealth of every description. They are not merely depressions that come and go away in a day or two. If we follow the course of each one from time to time, we find that each one has lasted longer than its predecessor and has always brought more misery in its wake. That ought to be an object lesson from which we should derive some advantage. We on this side are always being accused of being hostile to the sugar industry. As one of the Labour party, and I think I can speak for all, I say that that is false and wrong. We are no enemies to the industry. We want to see it prosper as much as possible, but we contend that sugar should be grown by white labour. The hon. junior member for Mackay, whom everybody acknowledges as an authority on the subject, admitted to-night that it was quite possible for sugar to be grown by white labour. That I was very pleased to hear coming from such a source. There is one serious feature in connection with the sugar industry, and the Treasurer himself admits that it is serious when he tells us that by the end of 1896 they will be able to put out enough sugar to more than supply the wants of the whole of the Australian colonies, which are the principal buyers of our sugar at present. After the industry has reached its highest yield in 1896, what will be the result? In 1897 they will not be able to get present prices, because the market will be glutted, and the competition will be so keen that the prices of sugar will go down. Then they will cry out for additional cheap labour, or else the wages of those already employed in the industry will be brought down, and the grower will receive a less price for his cane, and the industry will be in a worse position than it is at present. That is a matter which should be looked seriously in the face, more especially as there is an attempt to boom the industry just now. Then we come to the meat industry. We find that the numbers of our stock—I am referring more especially to sheep—double every eight years, and the result is to throw more and more wool on the market. In connection with the frozen and tinned meat trade we are told by the Treasurer that the additions to the works at Brisbane, Rockhampton, and Townsville of cold storage and improved machinery will have the effect of doubling their capacity—I presume, of doubling their output. But, according to what I have heard from men mixed up in the trade, the great cry is that they have no market; and if that is the case at present, how are they going to get a market if their output is doubled? It must ultimately tend to lowering prices. The Treasurer also tells us that a proposal will be submitted for the construction of some lines of railway under a

guarantee of interest by local authorities or other responsible parties. If the Government are going in for any railway policy I will tell them the correct policy, though I do not say I am going to support it. A number of lines have already been promised, the funds have actually been voted, and it is matter of history where those funds are. A number of people have been led on those promises to do certain things; and I think it would be wrong for the Government to come down with proposals for any railway other than those already promised. It would be breaking faith with the people who have been led to expect that those railways would be made. At the end of his Statement the Treasurer tells us that capital is plentiful, and seeking a safe and remunerative outlet; yet we are told that capital is very timid, and that the labour agitators have driven all the capital out. If we look at the vast excess of our exports over our imports we should think that there is a very remunerative outlet for capital in Queensland. If capital has been frightened it is not by labour agitators, but by those who have had control, not only from a Government point of view but also from a private point of view, in connection with the various banks that have failed. People have practically lost confidence in those who have had the management of their capital; they have not been frightened by labour agitators. But I am not aware that the introduction of this capital does a great deal of good; I think we should try to provide our own capital. If we can find employment for the people, each one will produce every year a large proportion of capital or wealth, and then the colony will be much better off. We are also told that the purchasing power of the people has diminished; but we do not see any attempt on the part of the Government to increase that power. Under such circumstances it is only natural that the purchasing power of the people must become lower and lower; and if their wages are to be decreased every year, as seems to be the desire of some persons, that purchasing power must be still further diminished. The time has come when some attempt should be made to so remodel our system of accounts that they can be understood by others besides the Auditor-General; and when that is done some provision ought to be made, as I have already suggested, to wipe out the national debt. As long as that debt remains it will always be a burden to drag the people down. A start should be made at once to establish a sinking fund by which it can be ultimately wiped out, and thus relieve the people of a very large portion of their burdens.

Mr. RAWLINGS: I desire to enter my protest against the proposed excise duty on tobacco. I think it will be a very great mistake. The hon. member for Carpentaria seems to think there is no tobacco grown in the North. I can assure him he is wrong. It is an industry that great efforts are being made to push on all over the North, and especially in my own district. I would rather see the proposals withdrawn and a tax put on beer; but, if the excise is put on, and the other duties raised in proportion, it would not so much matter, although in that case it would to some extent reduce consumption, and so injure the industry. It would be a great pity to crush out a young and promising industry by taxing it in the manner proposed. I would add my testimony to what has been said by others with regard to the simplification of the public accounts. I find the greatest difficulty in understanding them. I will give one or two instances. In the Statement we are told that the funded debt of the colony is £30,639,470, and that we have expended £28,110,711. Table C shows the same amount of

funded debt, and states the unexpended balance to be £2,790,231. According to the Statement, the unexpended balance would be £2,528,759.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is all explained in the next paragraph.

Mr. RAWLINGS: Then, again, according to the *Gazette* the expenditure from trust funds last year was £152,000. In table E it is put down as £182,000. How are members to find out what the facts are? At present they are a riddle. Why should they not be so placed before us that we can understand them without having to hunt all over the country to find what the figures really mean? Then there is an item of £50,000 in table C for artesian wells, while nothing whatever has been expended on them last year.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: You can easily see that that vote is all alive still.

Mr. RAWLINGS: Then why not say so? What sort of a system of book-keeping is it? We know very well that the money has not been thrown away, but we are supposed to understand the accounts, which is simply impossible in the way they are put before us. We are told that the receipts from the Bowen, Cairns, Cooktown, and Normanton lines have all fallen much below the estimate. Why? Because the estimate was a great deal too high. Last year the estimate for the Cairns Railway was increased from £10,000 to £14,000, and at the same time the rates were lowered by one-half.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The rates were lowered after the estimate was made.

Mr. RAWLINGS: Still, £14,000 was never received before, or anything like it. What was the actual result? We got in reality £1,459 over expenditure, the largest amount we have ever received from the line. In another table the expenditure is put down at £12,000. True enough, but how did that come about? That is due to flood damages, and this is what gets over me: I do not mind the Treasurer putting down flood damages to expenditure if he would treat all the railways alike. A railway down South is damaged, and the Indooroopilly Bridge is lost, and that goes down to loan account. Our railway gets damaged through serious floods, and large repairs have to be made owing to defective engineering. I do not say a word against the engineers who laid out that line, because no man is free from errors of judgment; but there we have to adopt a new system with our bridges and all that sort of thing, the money is laid out and will not require to be laid out again, and it should have been spent in the first instance in the way it has now been spent, and these repairs are put down to expenditure to make that account worse than it is, when they should be put down to loan account. That is an unfair way of dealing with the thing, when serious damage to railways down here are put down to loan account and not to expenditure. The Treasurer tells us in the opening of his Statement that the actual realisation of revenue has been within 1 per cent. of the estimate. I object to that, because in the next paragraph of the Statement the Treasurer referred to an amount of £56,836, derived from special sales of land and paid in interest on Treasury bills, which was not taken into account in framing the estimate last year. As a matter of fact, then, by his own showing, the realisation did not come within 1 per cent., but within about 2½ per cent., and we are actually £89,268 behind the estimate.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Where do you get the £89,000?

Mr. RAWLINGS: The hon. gentleman himself shows that we are behind £32,432, and I add that to the £56,836 which he says was not taken into account. The difference then is

about 2½ per cent. It is no great amount, but the Treasurer might as well have faced it properly, and put it in that way. Then again, speaking of this saving of £45,000, some of that is a direct loss. For instance, here is a department like the Department of Public Instruction already cut down by an enormous sum, giving a saving of another £5,187; then, again, the Railway Department, that is behind £118,947, makes a saving of £16,294. Is it not possible that these savings have been made at the cost of efficiency? I think it is very likely. Again, the Treasurer, dealing with the interest and loan account, puts down the interest received from the banks holding Government funds at £102,678. I have no doubt that is correct, but if one takes the trouble to run out at 4 per cent. the amount of money to our credit in the banks at the end of last year—£2,584,584 reconstructed money; advances to public depositors, £168,000, which I suppose went into the banks; Treasury notes advances, £329,000—half of that, because we get only 2 per cent.; rough total, £2,916,584, at 4 per cent.—I think we should get more than £102,000 interest. I do not say I am correct, but according to these figures I say we should have had a great deal more interest than £102,678. I suppose some of it is redeposited, as I see that the Savings Bank deposit in the Queensland National Bank is increased by £20,000. Was not the interest redeposited?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No; it has gone to the credit of the Savings Bank account.

Mr. RAWLINGS: I see that on 30th June, 1894, the sum appears as increased by £20,000, and it looks to me as if the interest had been added to the original deposit of £500,000.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is not so. The interest is paid to the depositors.

Mr. RAWLINGS: That is right enough, but the account in the bank seems to me to have been increased by £20,000, and perhaps the hon. gentleman will tell us by-and-by how it has been increased. Another thing I would like the Treasurer to lay upon the table of the House is the agreement made with the banks in reference to the issue of Treasury notes. As it has been placed before the gentlemen of the Press, it is about time it was laid on the table of the House.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Why did not you ask for it?

Mr. RAWLINGS: Why did not the hon. gentleman do it? There are hundreds of little things I would like to know, and they should be at our disposal without our having to drag information out of the Government by asking questions of which we have to give a day's notice. The whole thing is rubbish when these papers should be laid on the table without the trouble of asking for them. The Treasurer must know it is of considerable interest to members of this House, and yet the information is withheld. With regard to the superannuation fund, I am very sorry the Government think of abolishing it. I would far sooner see the Government place the fund on a sound financial footing than have it abolished. I fancy there is no more helpless creature on the face of the earth than a discharged Civil servant, as a rule. If there is no provision made for them we do not know what to do with them. The poor souls when they pass their prime become inefficient, and cannot do a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, and if the Government have got the superannuation fund to fall back upon, they will not feel having to dispense with them so much. As regards public works, I shall be very pleased to see a start made in that direction. Two years ago we could borrow money, which was popped into the banks; and as a matter of fact, we are now making money out of it. I do not see why the Government should not

borrow another £2,000,000, and spend it on public works. As long as the money is judiciously expended, the colony is benefited by every shilling of that money. I believe that we all benefit to the full amount of interest we pay for the £30,000,000 we have borrowed; and it would not be at all an unwise step for the Government to offer a loan at an early date, so as to complete works which are useless to the colony until they are extended.

Mr. KERR: I am quite in accord with the junior member for Mackay that not enough attention has been given to agriculture. One of the reasons why agriculture has not been paid much attention to in the past is because we have always had squatting Governments. In the Financial Statement we are told that the imports of flour, grain, etc., show a decrease of £50,154, and that it is disappointing to find that we send out of the colony between £400,000 and £500,000 for breadstuffs which we could produce. When Professor Shelton was visiting Barcaldine and the Western districts some few months back, he informed the residents that the Western plains were capable of producing wheat. We are told that an ounce of practice is worth a pound of theory, and as we are paying Professor Shelton £750 and a travelling allowance, we might establish three experimental or training farms, one in each of the three districts of the colony, placing Professor Shelton in charge of one. I would give him a small farm of, say, 300 acres, and provide him with implements and seed, so that he might prove by ocular demonstration that wheat-growing could be successfully carried on on the Western plains. There is a large market open for wheat-growers, and judging from the amount of money we are sending away annually, it is time something was done to stop the leakage. I believe that the chambers of commerce in the Central district are moving for the establishment of experimental farms there; and, as the Premier appears to lay great store by the opinions of chambers of commerce, I trust he will take the opinions of those bodies for what they are worth. We have a little paragraph on the pastoral industry in which it is stated that the effect of the recent drought in the Western district, though very disastrous, has not been of such an alarming character as was estimated. Considering the amount of money that has been received from the Central and Western districts from the special sales of land, which money has been taken out of the districts where it was raised, I think that some of it should be again returned to those districts. We read that in America they have drought-proof grasses, and I think it would be a good thing if the Government would go to the expense of importing some of those grasses, and sow them along the stock roads in the Barcoo electorate. When showing the hon. member for Leichhardt and the hon. member for Toowong around the electorate, they were very much struck with the number of dead sheep to be seen along the roads, which were as bare of grass as the floor of this Chamber. If the reserves along those roads had been sown with drought-proof grasses, there would have been sufficient grass there to have prevented the loss of those sheep. I was very sorry to notice that one squatter in my district was so greedy that he had so constructed his fence along the stock roads that his sheep could pass through and eat the grass which should have been available for travelling stock, and I think the Government should take action to compel the owners of runs to erect sheep-proof fences. The existence of such fences as those I have mentioned are a cause of a great deal of trouble to drovers, as the sheep of the run owner get boxed with those

travelling along the road. With regard to the eleven co-operative land settlement groups which have been formed, I am sorry that so much has been made of the small amount of £5,805 which has been advanced to the whole of these groups. Some hon. members who represent farming districts opposed the measure because they thought it would assist a class of men who would enter into competition with men who were already settled on the land. I am very pleased to say that the Reliance group, which is settled in the electorate of the hon. member for Leichhardt, does not enter into competition with other settlers. They are surrounded by a lot of small cattle owners, who do not envy them. One gentleman who resides in that electorate waited upon me at Tambo, and offered, on behalf of himself and other cattle owners in the district, to present twenty head of cattle each to the Reliance group, which in the aggregate would amount to something over 200 head, because they wished to see the settlement a success. I happened to reside in that district some seventeen years ago, and I am sorry to say that I have not much faith that it will be a success, as it is so unfavourably situated. The group is surrounded by cattle stations, most of which have made their improvements, and there is, therefore, no employment for the men, so that they will have to live on what they can produce. I do not say that they have been intentionally placed there with a view to kill the settlement, but there has been a blunder and bungle somewhere. They are a long distance from railway communication and cannot possibly compete with those who are nearer to a railway and are altogether more favourably situated. I am very sorry to see that the Treasurer doubts the wisdom of making further advances to any large amount to these settlements, as he fears that by doing so the self-reliance which the groups were established for the purpose of cultivating runs the risk of being destroyed. In my own electorate there is a class of men who want to settle on the land, and they do not want any assistance from the State. They have made application to the Minister, but he very properly points out that it is outside the Land Act. Their application showed that they were working carriers numbering fifty-six persons, twenty-five of whom were adults. They asked to be allowed to settle upon a block of land which had been surveyed, and offered for sale without result, and which comprised about 14,363 acres, on the northern side of the Barcaldine town reserve. They offered 12s. per acre for the land, the first instalment of the purchase money to stand over for five years, and the remainder to be paid in twenty-five yearly instalments of 6d. per acre. They also agreed to pay interest on the payments suspended at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum during the said five years. They were ready to start work at once with a view to the cultivation of cereals and vegetables, and would enclose the land with a substantial fence within the first two years. Collectively they owned 250 horses, 250 bullocks, and eighteen wagons, and would ask no other assistance from the Government. I think the Secretary for Lands might introduce a short measure to enable these men to go upon the land, because they would not enter into competition with others, but would make successful settlers, as they are accustomed and willing to work, and require no State aid. In regard to the duty upon tobacco, I think the excise duty will fall upon the shoulders of those least able to bear it—that is, upon the consumers, and the largest consumers are the working men of the colony, whose purchasing power has been reduced. If each man smokes 1 lb. of tobacco in a month, 12s. duty

will be added to the cost by this excise every year. The hon. member for Carnarvon stated that the leaf grown in the district he mentioned is equal to the American leaf. I know a little about tobacco, having been engaged in a factory in the old country for some two years, and having passed through several branches, and I can say that some leaf I have seen is equal to any grown in America. The hon. member also stated that manufacturers in the colony are using about one-third American leaf and two-thirds colonial, and are selling the tobacco as American. Now, anyone who has bought tobacco from the manufacturer knows that you pay for the tobacco, and you also pay for the duty, and if these manufacturers have been selling the tobacco as American, they have been making an enormous profit, and have been pocketing duty. There is a leakage there, and it is time the Government stepped in and appointed an officer to supervise the industry. I remember that in England the excise officer came to the factory every day and took the weight of the whole of the tobacco going out of the factory, and also that of the tobacco leaf brought into it. If our Government are losing money by allowing the manufacturer to sell colonial tobacco and charge duty upon it, it is time they appointed some officer to see into it. Then, again, we have had a tobacco expert who was to teach the farmers how to grow and cure tobacco. The Government have gone to the expense of importing Professor Shelton and Professor Allcut, and I think they should go further and import an expert to give instruction in the manufacture of tobacco, so as to enable the manufacturers to produce an article that will compete with the American product. A large storekeeper in Blackall informed me that if our tobacco was cured so that it will keep in this climate without going mouldy there is a large market for it. Goods going up country are of course a few months in transit, and this storekeeper showed me two samples; one of tobacco that had just arrived, and another of tobacco that had been in stock and had gone mouldy. When I was connected with the trade, one of the chief lines of tobacco was called "Irish Twist," and the proprietors, finding that another article was working them out of the market, sent their foreman to Ireland and paid a large premium to have him instructed in the art of curing this particular tobacco, and the consequence was they increased their business to a very large extent and reaped the benefit. I am thoroughly opposed to the excise duty on tobacco, although I am not a smoker, because it will crush out many small men who are struggling at the present time. We are told by the Treasurer that in 1896 we will be producing more sugar than we can use. Then I say what will our small farmers go into? I trust that the Government will take into consideration these men and not impose this excise duty but endeavour to foster the industry and raise revenue by means of a land tax which I hope we shall some day see.

Mr. GRIMES: I rather regret to see the want of courtesy that appears to be exhibited by hon. members on one side to hon. members on the other side. In years gone by we should have looked upon it as not fair play for a member to rise and refer pointedly and frequently to another member not in his place. I very much regret the hon. member for Mackay, who I see is not in his place, should have brought up the black labour question and attacked the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba in the way he did, and also attack members on the other side, and then afterwards make his presence scarce from the Chamber; I suppose he believes in the old adage, "He who fights and

runs away, lives to fight another day." I think it would have been more manly for him to have remained in his place and hear what was said from the other side. I have listened to the speeches made on this question, and I must say that if the policy of the Opposition is as shadowed forth in the speeches we have heard from the other side it will be a sorry day for Queensland when they come to be in the position of Ministers, and put that policy into force. We have had all manner of prescriptions given, too, as a cure for the depression and the financial condition of the colony. Several hon. members have mentioned a land tax, but I thought we introduced a pretty stiff land tax as far back as 1879, when the Divisional Boards Act was introduced and carried through. That was a very stiff land tax on the agriculturist; and previous to that, there was the tax imposed by the Local Government Act. Perhaps hon. members on the other side are not aware that Queen street property is paying in rates and taxes what amounts up to 35s. or £2 per foot per annum. I have heard some of them say that this is for the purpose of repairing the streets and roads. Previously, that was all paid for out of the Treasury; but now, owing to the reduction of the endowment, the burden falls almost entirely on the owners of the land. A good many farmers in my electorate are paying 2s. 6d. or 3s. 6d. an acre as a tax on the land they cultivate; and I think that is a pretty heavy burden, especially in these depressed times, when produce is fetching such a small price. Hon. members have advocated a tax on mortgagees, but surely they must see that if such a tax were imposed the money-lenders would take care to roll it on to the borrowers, and the result would be to make the position of the borrowers worse than before. People engaged in industries are already almost fixed between the upper and the nether millstone. There are the capitalists on the one hand demanding high rates of interest, and on the other hand there are the employees pushing them for the last penny they can pay; and between the two those engaged in the industries of the colony are not having a very good time of it. I think it is very unfair of those who speak on the other side to refer, as they do, to the way in which taxation is imposed. If they would put the matter fairly and squarely we should not have so much reason to complain. The hon. member for Croydon referred to the burden which the working men have to bear in the way of taxation, and spoke of a man having a wife and four children, pointing out that according to the returns the average taxation was £3 2s. 4d. per head. If he had studied the matter he must have known that he was giving a wrong impression when he represented that that man would have to pay something like £18 a year. He must have been aware that a large portion of this was not taxation through the Customs, but taxation in another form. Had he looked down the list of dutiable articles he would have found that very few of the necessaries of life such as a working man needs for his family bear very much taxation. He must be aware that the four children are not consumers of whisky, beer, rum, or tobacco, which form the most heavily taxed dutiable goods. I can fairly state that not above one-tenth of the money received upon dutiable goods comes from the necessaries of a working man's family. I was surprised also that an hon. member laying claim to some intelligence should tell us that it is a mistake to go in for labour-saving machinery, and attribute the depressed state of the labour market to that cause. It seems as though he would like to put back the sundial of the world something like 500 or 1,000 years; he would go back to the distaff for spinning, and to the treadmill for grinding flour. I hold that the introduction of machinery has in no way

tended to reduce the amount of employment or to reduce wages. Everyone who has studied these matters must know that had it not been for the use of machinery in England and America those countries would not have been able to maintain their commercial supremacy against countries where labour is very much cheaper. And while the use of labour-saving machinery has enabled them to hold their own, it has considerably increased the value of labour. This is particularly the case with reference to agriculture. I remember the time when the agricultural labourer in England had to maintain his family on 8s. or 9s. a week. Now, through the use of labour-saving machinery, the farmers are able to pay almost double that wage. In my own experience I remember the time when I could get 2s. 6d. per lb. for a certain article which I have now to sell at about 2d. It must be obvious that if we had to return to the old system of hand labour we should never be able to compete with the commodities of other countries. I should like to know how industries are to be carried on according to the hon. member, who on the one hand condemns the use of labour-saving machinery and on the other publicly states on a platform that a man should be shot who accepts less than £1 a week wages. Hon. members opposite advocate a tax on production rather than a tax upon imports. I commend their ideas to the farmers of the colony, for whose support they are making a bid, before they receive them with open arms. It will, perhaps, open their eyes a little. It is pleasant to be told by the Colonial Treasurer that an equilibrium has nearly been established between revenue and expenditure. But how has this been brought about? I regret that I cannot see any signs of increase of prosperity. I rather think we shall find that the equilibrium has been brought about by the reduction of our expenditure. I fail to see any signs of progress in the other direction. But in some things I am afraid the Government have economised in the wrong direction; and I am especially sorry to see that the Government have been niggardly in their supply of clothing and blankets to the aborigines. We have taken from them their means of subsistence, and the least the Government could have done was to give them the pittance of a full blanket each. With regard to the superannuation clauses of the Civil Service Act, we have been long agitating for their repeal, and I am glad to find that the Government have decided to repeal them. We are told that the Government intend to resume public works. In that they will have to exercise extreme caution; and they must remember that they came into power on the understanding that there should be no more taxation. If they see their way clear to expend the money on works that will be at once reproductive and be no burden on the taxpayers, I shall be very pleased to support them. But I agree with the hon. member for Warwick that our inability to obtain further loans has had a good effect in developing the resources of the colony. It has forced people to look in other directions and go into industries which they would not have attempted under ordinary circumstances. It will be well for the Government to be cautious, lest by the spending of large amounts of loan money they should so inflate the wages of labour that it will be almost impossible to carry on the ordinary industries of the colony, as was the case in years gone by. At this late hour of the night, I have only one further remark to make, and I am sorry I am compelled to make it. I refer to the action of the Government in sending to New South Wales two delegates to represent them at the requiem high mass for the repose of the soul of the late President Carnot. I feel bound to speak about it. I consider the Government went beyond their

function in appointing representatives on that occasion, and they have outraged the religious feelings of a large portion of the community.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : No, no !

Mr. GRIMES : We have no State Church in Queensland, and we have by statute abolished all State aid to religion, excepting to the recipients of it at the time the Act was passed, of whom I believe only one now remains. I would accord the utmost religious liberty to every citizen, and I would give all equal protection in carrying out their religious convictions and practices; I would even have granted leave to those gentlemen to have gone down on their own account to carry out their religious beliefs; but when the Government sent them down to represent the colony I protest against that as an action which has done violence to the religious feelings of a large portion of the community.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : No, no !

Mr. GRIMES : I agree with showing sympathy with the French nation, and I would go with the Government so far as sending a letter of condolence to them sympathising with them on the loss of their President under the circumstances; but the Government should have stopped there and have gone no further. There are hundreds in the colony who believe with me that it is not our privilege to petition or pray for the souls of the departed. I believe it is wrong to do so, and others believe that with me, and the action of the Government has compelled me to do by proxy what I would not do personally. I am sure I am voicing the feelings of a great many in the colony when I say I will not be a consenting party to the action of the Government in that respect.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : No, no !

Mr. GRIMES : I take advantage of the first occasion I have to enter my protest against this. We have nothing to do, and should have nothing to do, with the religious convictions of the community. Let the Government attend to the material interests of the colony, and let other things alone.

The House resumed; the Chairman reported no progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again on Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at a quarter to 11 o'clock.