

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 5 OCTOBER 1894

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

PETITION.

MINING ON FREEHOLDS, CHARTERS TOWERS.

Mr. DAWSON presented a petition from certain freeholders on Charters Towers asking for way-leaves.

Petition read.

Mr. DAWSON moved that the petition be received.

The SPEAKER: I would ask the hon. member to make that motion at a later hour. The petition is so long that I shall require to look through it to see if it is in accordance with the Standing Orders.

At a later hour.

The SPEAKER said: Having perused the petition, I find it is irregular in two respects. In the first place it is full of erasures, and in the second it is intemperate in language. I therefore rule that it cannot be received.

MERCANTILE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

This Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

This Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence.

CHARGES AGAINST LABOUR MEMBERS.

QUESTION OF ORDER.

On the following Order of the Day being called:—

Having regard to the serious charges made by the Honourable the Colonial Secretary, in a speech delivered by him in the Legislative Assembly, on the 21st day of August last, and published in some of the leading newspapers of the colony, against certain members of this House, and against certain persons outside this House, holding official positions in the Australian Labour Federation, "of creating strikes," and of "inciting persons to commit crime," and of "sympathising with crime and outrage": In the opinion of this House it is desirable that a Special Commission be appointed to investigate these charges with a view, if true, of bringing the said members of this House, and the said officials of the Australian Labour Federation, to justice; and, if untrue, of giving the Honourable the Colonial Secretary an opportunity of publicly withdrawing the said charges—

The SPEAKER said: I would draw the attention of the House to the wording of this notice of motion. I think it is irregular and out of order, because it is dealing with a matter which has reference to a previous debate. It is asking for the appointment of a special commission to inquire into alleged charges made by the Colonial Secretary in a debate which has taken place in this House against certain members of this House, and which is not yet finished. Every member who considers himself implicated in these alleged charges has a right to speak in refutation of them. Even if he spoke previously to the Colonial Secretary, he could have risen in his place and claimed the indulgence of the House to make a personal explanation, an indulgence which is invariably allowed. Members who have not yet spoken in the debate will have an opportunity of refuting those charges. Both the motion now proposed to be made, and the motion which led to the debate in which the alleged charges were made, are by the hon. member for Burke, Mr. Glassey, and he has the right of reply. I think, taking everything into consideration, that the motion is irregular and out of order; but as I can find no definite rule or precedent for my guidance, I submit the matter to the House for their consideration and opinion thereon.

The PREMIER: I am afraid that this motion is somewhat irregular for the reason you have stated—namely, that it refers to a debate which is now pending, and upon which debate the mover of the motion has still got the right to reply. He will therefore have a full opportunity of replying to anything that has been said by any member of the House previously

during the debate. It is a well-known rule that we cannot have the same subject before the House on two different motions. If there is a Bill before the House on any subject, any motion on the same subject could not be allowed. The reason for that must be obvious, because otherwise debate and discussion would be interminable. Another reason I have for thinking it irregular is this: It would be almost impossible to discuss the proposed motion without infringing our rules. The whole substance of the motion has reference to a debate which is now pending, and any member attempting to discuss it must necessarily refer to subjects that have already been mentioned in the debate. That, of course, would at once be objected to by you, Sir, and the consequence would be that we would not be able to discuss the motion at all. I do not know of any particular rule on the subject, but I think it is one of those things we ought to decide simply upon its merits and according to the dictates of common sense. I do not see on those lines how we can attempt to discuss this motion. My opinion is, therefore, that it would be advisable for the House to ask the hon. member to amend his motion in some way or other which would enable him to effect his object.

Mr. POWERS: I think you, Sir, will find some difficulty in finding any ruling which will prove such a motion as this to be irregular. I know the difficulty you are in, the debate upon which the motion is based not being concluded; but I would be sorry to have it ruled by this House, if charges are made by members in this House, that during the same session hon. members against whom the charges are made cannot ask for an inquiry into those charges. When charges are made members have a right to be heard.

The PREMIER: Yes, as a matter of privilege.

Mr. POWERS: I hope if the hon. member for Burke accepts the suggestion about amending his motion it will not be taken to mean that if charges are made against members inquiries into those charges cannot be asked for.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Only charges relating to their conduct in the House.

Mr. POWERS: Whether referring to their conduct in the House or not. If the hon. gentleman will look at the report he will see that the charges were about things done outside the House. If this motion cannot be dealt with until the other question is decided, when will that be? We do not seem able to get to the end of that debate. I wish the Premier would state how the motion could be amended if the hon. member for Burke wishes to go on with it.

The SPEAKER: I may state that I had an interview with the hon. member for Burke, when I suggested a form of amendment which will not transgress our Standing Orders. I had hoped that he would accept my suggestion, but as I have had no notification from him I thought it my duty to bring the matter under the notice of the House.

Mr. GLASSEY: I have no desire to embarrass any hon. member, much less the Speaker, with regard to a motion of this kind, but I am sure hon. members must see that the charges which were made were of a serious nature, reflecting on members of this House and on some citizens outside; otherwise I should not have submitted this motion. However, I am not anxious that any ruling should be given upon the motion which might form a very dangerous precedent. I wish to call attention, however, to the fact that when the hon. member for Ipswich was attempting to rebut some of the charges referred to in the motion he was reminded by Mr. Speaker that he could not do so, inasmuch as my motion was pending, which would

imply that at that time you, Sir, believed this motion was perfectly in order. There is another little matter that I wish to refer to. You were kind enough, Mr. Speaker, to send for me to your room last night, when you suggested a form of amendment for which I am very thankful to you; but, after comparing the amended form with the motion as it stands on the paper, I came to the conclusion that I could not make the alteration. While I do not wish to reflect in the slightest way upon you, Sir, because you were very courteous over the matter, the least I might have expected was that some notice might have been given me before last night, so that I might have had an opportunity of amending the motion or of submitting it in another way. I do not imagine that you wished to take any advantage of me—far from it; but from your previous ruling you evidently thought the motion was in order. However, I do not wish to embarrass the House in any way, and there are a number of my hon. friends who do not feel very strongly the statements made by the Colonial Secretary. I do, and I am sure there are other persons in the community who also feel strongly about them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The repetition of statements by the Colonial Secretary, you ought to say.

Mr. GLASSEY: No; I say the statements made by the Colonial Secretary. As I say, I am very anxious that the House should allow the motion to go as it is, but, if it is likely to give rise to a decision which would create a precedent that might be damaging in the future, I would much prefer to withdraw the motion in the meantime, and give notice of it for a future occasion when the discussion on the general question is concluded. That is the better course to adopt; and I therefore beg leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ACCOUNTS DUE TO RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. McDONALD, in moving—

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

1. What number of persons have outstanding accounts with the Railway Department of more than three months during the last two years.
2. When the said accounts were contracted.
3. When the said accounts were paid.
4. The names of persons contracting said accounts.
5. Whether the said accounts were contracted for goods carried or material supplied.
6. If for material, what was the nature of the said material.
7. Cost of the said material, if any, to the department and the price realised for same.
8. What quantity of the said material, if any, was purchased by the department and why was the said material purchased—

said: When I first desired to obtain this information I submitted it in the form of a question; but, on the advice of the Premier, I substituted this motion calling for a return. I was rather disappointed that the motion was not allowed to go as formal, and no doubt the Premier will reply, as he did on a previous occasion, that the motion will tend to disclose the business of private persons. To come down to the bed-rock of this motion: It has come to my knowledge on pretty good authority that there are a number of accounts in connection with the Railway Department that are open, and bonds have been given for the security of the payment. We heard a short time ago that the Commissioners were creditors in the estate of Fitzwalter and Co., of Charleville, to the extent of £2,000. What that estate paid in the pound, I do not know, nor do I know whether the Commissioners can come on the bondsmen for the full amount for which they

have given security, or whether the insolvent overstepped the limits of the bond. That is one case, but I have heard of another which is much more serious. So far as my information goes, the facts are these: During the construction of the Fortitude Valley line the Railway Commissioners indented a large quantity of dynamite—what they wanted to do that for I do not know, because whenever a contract is let it is always usual for the contractor to supply his own material. A portion of this dynamite was supplied to the contractor, and I cannot understand why the Commissioners should have interested themselves in the matter. Whether too much was imported, or whether there was not so much required as they thought, or whether they found it too strong and had to use gunpowder, does not matter, but a large quantity of it was left on the hands of the Commissioners. It remained there for some time, and then a portion of it was sold, and an agreement was entered into by which it should be paid for within a certain time. That was about two years ago. I do not know what the department paid for it or what price they sold it for, but there is not the slightest doubt that they sold it for less than they gave. I do not attach much importance to that, because it was wiser to sell it at a loss than to keep it on hand when they had no use for it. The grievance I have, and which affects the country more particularly, is this: That the dynamite was sold to a member of this House, and, so far as I can gather, it had not been paid for up to a very recent date. I think it is not a correct thing for members of this House to have transactions with the Government. I am not sufficiently acquainted with Parliamentary procedure to say whether this amounted to a contract with the Government or not, but whenever a bond is entered into between two parties, that is a contract, and when any member of this House enters into a contract with the Government, I am under the impression that he loses his seat. This is a very serious matter, and I am going to give names presently in order that the matter may more thoroughly be cleared up. I have no malice against anyone, only I think it is wrong and unwise to let any hon. member sit in the House who has any contracts with the Government. Clause 6 of the Constitution Act deals with this matter. [The hon. member here read the clause, disqualifying any person who is directly or indirectly interested in any contract or agreement connected with the public service from sitting in either House.] I have been informed that cases similar to this have come before the House; and in one case, I believe, a man who had a contract with the Postal Department got a member of this House to act as his bondsman. That was very nearly being done by a member last session had he not got advice on the matter. It was shown that because he would have to carry out that contract if the contractor failed to do so, he would be indirectly connected with the contract, and would have to resign. I maintain that this is a more serious case, because it is spread over two Parliaments, a general election having intervened. The position is this: That during this Parliament the contract is still in existence, simply because the amount has, so far as I can discover, never been paid. If I have been wrongly informed, I am prepared to apologise to anybody whose feelings I may have hurt. I may mention that the hon. member is the senior member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear. I have no malice against that hon. member.

Mr. ANNEAR: Hear, hear!

Mr. McDONALD: I may state that, for the sake of those concerned, I almost wish that my information was not true.

The PREMIER: The hon. member says he is surprised at the motion not going as formal. My reason for calling it "not formal" was to give the hon. member an opportunity of stating his reasons for asking for the information. I think now that the House has got those reasons it will come to the conclusion at once that the information should not be supplied. I have the same objection to this that I have had to previous motions of the hon. member, and we know how many naves' nests he has discovered already—that it interferes with the business of private individuals. I think it would be a most unfair and unjust thing to publish the names of all the people who have ledger accounts with the Railway Department and the state of their accounts two years ago. The thing seems to be utterly absurd. As to the hon. member's reason that he thinks a contract may have been entered into which would affect the seat of any hon. member in this House, I do not think he need trouble himself very much about that. If every member who has a ledger account with the Commissioners is thereby debarred from holding a seat in the House, there would be a good many vacancies very soon. Everyone knows that that has nothing whatever to do with the standing of any member in the House any more than a newspaper proprietor taking advertisements from the Government is thereby entering into a contract with the Government. I hope the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, will observe a judicious silence and make no reply to the allegations that have been levelled against him, because there is nothing to reply to, and I am quite sure the facts of the case would not in any one instance substantiate the charge of the hon. member. I hope the House will refuse to pass such a motion as this.

Mr. GLASSEY: I do not altogether agree with the remarks of the Premier. I think the very fact of certain statements being made against the hon. member for Maryborough should lead to an explanation. I am not going to say a single word disrespectful to the hon. member concerned.

Mr. ANNEAR: I challenge all of you to do it; even my colleague, his coach.

Mr. GLASSEY: All I desire to say is that I think the Premier is acting unwisely in not furnishing the information, because the withholding of the information will rouse a certain feeling in the minds of some people that there is something to hide. It does not follow that because the names of certain people would appear on the return as not having paid their accounts to the Government that that would be detrimental to those persons. Why should it be? No person need object to having his name included in a return as a debtor to the Queensland Government. I think the House will act wisely if it insists on the return being placed on the table.

Mr. POWERS: I did not intend to speak on this motion, and should not have done so had it not been for an interjection made by the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, to the effect that the hon. member who moved the motion was coached by me. I knew nothing about this matter when the notice was put on the paper, and I knew nothing about it until it was brought forward in the House; but I thought, after a conversation I had with the hon. member, that the matter was not going to be pressed in its present form. The hon. member can take that statement.

The HON. G. THORN: The fact of having an account with the Railway Commissioners is no more a contract than any member buying sheepskins or hides and carrying them by rail; and I hope the hon. member for Flinders will

withdraw his motion. The case mentioned by the hon. member as having been dealt with by the elections tribunal was a different matter altogether. Walker went security for the carriage of the mail between Surat and St. George, and because he did that he was just as much disqualified as the man who contracted to run the mail. I hope the House will not allow the names of people who are in arrears to be exposed. I am sure that the Government have done their duty, and that they will see that the accounts are strictly paid in the same way as they were paid in 1876, in my time.

Mr. ANNEAR: I think, in justice to the House, I should say that my firm does not owe the Railway Commissioners one farthing, but my firm has made a demand on the Government for the sum of £210 for dynamite destroyed by their officers during the flood. We do not owe the Government one penny; but the Government owe us, as will be proved clearly when the decision comes from England in the case of Brabant and Co. against the Government—the test case which was sent to the Privy Council.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: I think a motion of this sort is very undesirable. The desire is that all persons who have accounts with the Railway Department shall have their accounts published; but the hon. member wants to imply that there is some charge of a grievous nature against some hon. member of this House. The extraordinary thing is that he has never made a charge. It is an attempt to bring indirectly into this House what would be grossly illegal and libellous outside the House. If he has a charge to make against an hon. member, why does he not make it? He brings in paltry rumour. I have no time to go about the town listening to gossip. Apparently the hon. member has. If he was desirous of getting this information, he could have got it without this motion.

Mr. McDONALD: I tried.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: Apparently he has never asked the Premier, the Acting Secretary for Railways; and he has never asked the hon. member whom he would implicate with his innuendoes. I do not think it is a very bold way of proceeding. It seems to be an attempt to take advantage of being a member of this House to make innuendoes against hon. members under the guise of public duty.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: I think that, apart from any question of making innuendoes, this motion is decidedly objectionable. I cannot see that the names of persons contracting with the Government for the carriage of goods should be made public. If this information is given, I do not know where it is to terminate. If individual transactions with the Railway Department are to be laid bare, the transactions of depositors with the Government Savings Bank might also be made public, and I do not see where the line is to be drawn. On public grounds, therefore, I object to the motion; and I take it that if the hon. member wants this information for a *bond fide* purpose he can obtain it by applying to the Railway Commissioners without exposing it to the public prints. And after all, if the information were laid on the table, what good would it do? By what procedure could this information be followed. It is merely to gratify idle curiosity if it cannot effect a cure for the evil, should any evil be exposed. Such a course could only be justified as furnishing grounds for action to remedy abuses existing in the prevailing system.

Mr. HARDACRE: No doubt we all agree with the statement made by the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, but I see nothing at all objectionable in the motion itself. Everyone here is interested in the management of the railways, and we have a right to know what debts

due to the department are outstanding, and if any have been outstanding for years we have a right to know it.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: Do you want to know the Savings Bank accounts also?

Mr. HARDACRE: The Savings Bank is in a very different position, but if there were liabilities in connection with the Savings Bank we would have a right to know all about them. I think, apart from the matter which has been objected to, this motion should be gone on with. What has occurred this afternoon is due to the unwillingness of the Government to give information when it is asked for. It was the same last session; and in two or three cases information asked for was refused, and hon. members were compelled to take further steps. This information was first asked for in the ordinary way, and if it had then been given no further action would have been necessary. When hon. members ask for information they should get it without having to take this course.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. Tozer): The hon. member is quite wrong in his statement that the Government are reluctant to give information. I have been seven days over certain estimates, and every question which hon. members asked upon every detail of the departments I answered most willingly.

Mr. RAWLINGS: Not quite.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: When questions were asked at late hours of the night, by way of a joke, I could see through that, but as soon as hon. members became serious, I always answered them. The Government are always most anxious to answer every question affecting the public interests; but the public interests demand that certain questions should not be answered. The Government, as the Executive of the House, should be trusted. Men in the position we are in are not likely to degrade their high position by acting dishonestly in connection with these matters. I know a great deal of pressure is brought to bear upon members to ask these questions. I get letters constantly, threatening that if I do not do so and so the writers will go and tell the Labour party. I have no doubt they do, but it does not trouble me a bit. If they bother the Labour party as they do me, I do not wonder at members opposite bringing some of these matters on. When I began public life I got a lesson from the late Hon. J. M. Macrossan, who was here years before me. He said to me, "You will find after you have had some experience of Parliament that there is a higher duty for a member of Parliament than that of coming down here to do what practically amounts to scavenging." I do not say these questions are of that character, but I speak of the class of questions suspecting Ministers. There is a Minister at the head of this department, there are the three Railway Commissioners, and there is the Auditor-General, who, if he finds evidence of the slightest dishonesty, must bring it before the Minister. It is not the function of members of Parliament to investigate idle rumours, and Ministers are sometimes bound to refuse to answer in this way questions which they would be delighted to answer as affecting themselves. The hon. member for Flinders, no doubt, brought this motion on under pressure; but if he wants information he has only to ask the Secretary for Railways for it when his Estimates are on. There are ledger accounts throughout the colony, and at one time I had a ledger account for coal which was very satisfactory to the Government; but why should my business or the business of anyone else be paraded before the public? Whatever may have been the motive of the hon. member in tabling this motion in the first instance, he will have an opportunity

of getting the information; but these questions asked of Ministers are undesirable in the public interest.

Mr. FISHER: There are two questions raised by the debate which are worth considering. One is the importance of having every facility afforded hon. members to get information from the heads of departments regarding the conduct of departments in matters of this kind. I would go further and say that members of Parliament should have access to all the books of the colony. A person who understands books would have enough sense to keep undesirable information to himself. A more important question is one raised by a remark of the Premier, which rather astonished the House—that large numbers of members of Parliament have accounts with the Railway Commissioners. If a member of Parliament who is the head of a firm having an account with the Railway Department had to make an arrangement with the Commissioners for a renewal of his account, the Commissioners would be placed in a very peculiar and unfair position, and it is therefore not wise for members to place themselves in the same position as private individuals in such matters. The great libel case of Speight v. Syme in Melbourne shows that the Commissioner in endeavouring to do his duty was often overturned by Ministers and members in their capacity as legislators acting as private individuals. You cannot separate the two. I think the Premier left it to be inferred that it was a good thing for members of Parliament to have accounts—and large accounts—with the Railway Department.

Mr. McMASTER: They must not get goods down by rail?

Mr. FISHER: I do not say that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley should not get goods down by rail. I contend that if possible members should avoid having accounts with, or at least being obligated to, the Railway Commissioners—that they should have prompt cash payments. If a member of Parliament is trying to make arrangements for an account overdue, the Commissioners are liable to be influenced in a way that they would not be influenced if the person concerned was not a member of Parliament, and I would respectfully suggest that members should not have accounts which may lead to an abuse of the system.

Mr. WATSON: I have had a good deal to do with the getting of timber down by rail, and I have always thought, and still think, that the railway authorities are a little too smart. When timber was consigned to me by people in the bush the man in charge of the truck would come down to me and ask whether I would pay the freight. Of course I said, "Yes." He then asked when I would pay it. I replied, "As soon as the timber is landed here," and he said, "That will do." When I have asked whether a reduction would be made in the freights for large quantities, and have given full particulars, I have found that the Commissioners would not reduce the freight. In many instances the railway authorities are very hard on timber-getters, particularly on the North Coast line, and I have often had to go to the relief of the timber-getters before I could get the timber. I have always paid promptly within forty-eight hours after I have received the timber.

Mr. DAWSON: I would point out that the Colonial Secretary made a slight mistake when he accused the hon. member for Leichhardt of stating that he had refused information. The hon. member stated that the Government on certain occasions refused information, and that that refusal sometimes led to complications similar to that which we have this afternoon; but he did not say that the Colonial Secretary refused information. The Colonial Secretary should by this time have commenced to under-

stand that he is not the Government, but only a part of it, and that when an hon. member refers to the Government he does not refer to the Colonial Secretary. This motion is to the effect that certain information should be laid on the table for the use of members only. The Colonial Secretary has told us this afternoon that it is the duty of members to have absolute trust and confidence in the Executive. I quite admit that; but, on the other hand, I claim that the Government should trust members in return. If they cannot trust members they have no right to expect members to trust them, and when the hon. member for Flinders moved his motion, I think that it was imperative on the Government that they should lay the information on the table and trust to the honour of hon. members. There has been a great deal of talk about vague and empty rumours. Until the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, spoke, neither the Premier nor any member of the Government knew whether the accusation or rumour was correct or incorrect. The hon. member cheerfully and manfully accepted the statement of the hon. member for Flinders that he bore him no malice, but brought forward his motion in good faith. I find, however, that other hon. members, such as the hon. member for Bulimba, the hon. member for Mackay, and the Colonial Secretary, do not take the same manly stand; and that, while they showed a certain amount of flimsy indignation at what they termed the innuendoes indulged in, their speeches from beginning to end were innuendoes, trying to implicate the hon. member for Flinders by imputing unworthy motives. I think a careful examination of the motion will show that the hon. member has really done a service to the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, because, if a section of the public really believed the statement which has been made, its introduction has given that hon. member an opportunity of uttering his disclaimer in a public manner. For my part, I see nothing wrong in bringing forward the motion, and I hope the desired information will be given.

Mr. McDONALD, in reply: The Premier began his speech by saying that I had got hold of a good many mares' nests. That may be so, but, unfortunately for the hon. gentleman, there have been a few eggs in them. Occasionally they have been hatched, and when they were hatched it was found that they were real game chickens. I have often heard Ministers say, when questions involving matters of a private nature have been asked, that if the member asking the question would call at his office he would give him the desired information. That courtesy has never been extended to any member of our party; and we have been often compelled to adopt other means of getting information which we would not have cared to do had we been treated in a proper manner. What was to have hindered the Premier, when I asked originally for these returns, from telling me that the papers would be cumbersome, the cost considerable, and private business exposed which ought not to be exposed, and then asking me to call at the office and get the information for myself? The Colonial Secretary told us that the Executive ought to be trusted. Quite so; but, on the other hand, members of the House should be trusted also. In fact, a good deal of the ill-feeling that has been showing itself lately in the House would have been avoided if we had been treated in a different manner from what we have been. We ask for nothing that we have not a perfect right to ask, and we expect to have those courtesies extended to us which representatives of the people should receive. If we are to be denied our rights, motions like this will often be cropping up. The rumours on which I took action came to me quite accidentally; and I wish to say here

that the junior member for Maryborough knew nothing about it until I told him yesterday what I was going to do, and that very few of the members associated with me knew anything about it till yesterday. I brought the motion forward in all sincerity. I really thought the rumour was true. What is a member to do when he hears a rumour of that kind but to ask to get at the real facts? The hon. member for Mackay did nothing but impute bad motives to me—not that that troubles me very much—although I suppose there is more abuse cast upon me than upon any other member of the House. All I wanted was to get the rumours cleared up. If I had gone to the department I should have been told by the Commissioners that they had no power to give the information; and as it was refused by the Premier when I put the question to him, I had no alternative but to adopt the course I have done. On the last occasion when I had anything to do with the Railway Department I went to the Chief Commissioner, who could not give me the information I wanted, and referred me to the Minister, and on going to him he positively declined to give it. The same thing happened on the present occasion as far as the Premier was concerned, and I was compelled to bring the matter before the House and get either a denial or a confirmation of the rumour. I have got a denial, and that settles it. I cannot go any further. The hon. member concerned has acquitted me of any malice towards him. He sees the difficulty I laboured under in getting the information I wanted, and I think he will acquit me of trying to put him in a false position. If the information had been given to me privately, I should have been satisfied, no personalities would have been dragged in, and nobody could have had the slightest idea who or what I was driving at. With the permission of the House, I will withdraw the motion.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

RAILWAY MATERIAL.

Mr. WILKINSON, in moving—

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

1. The value of rails and fastenings, tyres, buffers, and springs in stock on 30th June, 1889, and June, 1894, respectively.

2. At what depôts are these materials stored, and in what quantity at each?—

said: I hope there will be no objection to granting the return. The administration of our railways under the present system is on its trial; and as I know from my own knowledge that there was a considerable stock of the material which I have specified when the Commissioners assumed office, and as I also know that that stock has been very much depleted, and that many of the wheels that are now running along our railways are in want of better tyres than are upon them, I am anxious to know how much of the saving which is said to have been effected in the department is due to there having been a large stock of material on hand when the Commissioners took charge. I know that some of the information I ask for can be obtained from the Commissioners' report, but the whole of it cannot be. The reports have been getting less and less full during the last two or three years—I presume with the object of saving in the cost of printing. They are nothing like as full and complete as those issued by Mr. Curnow. The Railway Estimates will be coming on very shortly, and, as the Commissioners claim to have effected a considerable saving, it is only right that as much information as possible should be in the possession of hon. members. I believe also that considerable expenditure has been incurred in purchasing rails for the Southern portion of the colony when we have had large stocks lying in the North; and that some of this material was purchased when prices

were falling, and the colony is to that extent a loser. There are many reasons I could give for requiring this information, but I am not going to take up time. I do not think the same objection can be urged to furnishing this return that was urged against that moved for by the hon. member for Flinders, as it is not a matter in which any private business can be exposed. It is a matter entirely concerning the administration of a State department, and this House has a legitimate right to the information. I also understand that considerable expense has been incurred through having to remove a large quantity of rails which were stored through want of foresight on low-lying land near Normanton under flood-mark. The inquiry that is now going on may bring out some of the information I want, but it may not be available until the Estimates are passed; and, in order that I may discuss matters in connection with the department in which I take great interest, I ask the Minister to be kind enough to give the return.

The PREMIER: Of course there is no particular objection to giving this information asked for, assuming it is required on public grounds.

Mr. WILKINSON: Those are the only grounds on which I ask for it.

The PREMIER: And also assuming that the information, when furnished, is going to be made a proper use of. But it is easy to see from the hon. member's remarks that he is expecting to draw certain conclusions from this return, which are not, and cannot be, warranted by the facts.

Mr. FISHER: Do you know the facts?

The PREMIER: I know the facts—I have got them here. The hon. member says that his object is to ascertain how much saving has been effected in the working of the railways. Well, this return cannot show that. He thinks, if he gets the number of tyres and so forth that were in stock on a certain date, and gets the quantity of the same material at a later date, that the difference between the two will give him the amount of expenditure.

Mr. WILKINSON: I am not so silly as to suppose that.

The PREMIER: How are you going to arrive at the saving?

Mr. WILKINSON: I want this as an aid towards that end.

The PREMIER: All the railway material is charged to the suspense account, and is only charged to the works as it goes into use, just in the same way as in private business. You have got to look at the Commissioners' returns to see how much is used, and then you can come to a conclusion. Then the hon. gentleman apparently wants to prove that the railways have been purchasing for a long time in a falling market, but this return will not supply him with information on that point. He may probably draw a very wrong inference from it, and certainly there is nothing in the return to warrant any conclusions on the subject whatever. However, there is no objection to furnish the information asked for if the hon. member will amend the motion in one particular, which will save a great deal of expense. It happens that we have no return for 30th June, 1889; and to make it up would involve a great amount of clerical labour. The nearest return we have is dated 30th September of the same year, and I can give the hon. member that at once, if he will amend the motion to that effect.

Mr. WILKINSON: I want to contrast the two administrations.

The PREMIER: This is the first return after the Commissioners took office. As soon as they came out stock was taken, and the returns were made out up to the date I mention.

Mr. WILKINSON, in reply: I do not know why the Premier should be so suspicious as to think hon. members want information for improper purposes.

The PREMIER: I said public purposes.

Mr. WILKINSON: I will accept the offer of the hon. member, and take the return he mentions. My object is to distinguish between the two administrations. If large sums were spent on material during the administration of Mr. Curnow, and this material was used during that of the Commissioners, it will tell against Mr. Curnow.

The motion was, by leave, amended by the substitution of "September" for "June," and agreed to.

EDUCATION OF LENGTHSMEN'S CHILDREN.

Mr. HARDACRE, in moving—

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

1. The total number of lengthsmen's children of school age on the railways of the colony who, by reason of location, inconvenience of trains, and other similar causes, are unable to attend schools.

2. The places and the numbers at each place so situated.

3. The number also, if possible, of selectors' children of school age at the same places, who for similar reasons are unable to attend school.

4. What camps within reach of school have single men employed, and how many.

5. What camps beyond reach of school have married men employed, and how many—

said: Some time ago in Great Britain it was found that, notwithstanding the spread of education and the establishment of national schools, a number of children on the brickyards and canals were growing up in ignorance, and when the particulars were published it raised a great deal of discussion, which resulted in that state of things being remedied. During the recess, while travelling through my electorate, I found a similar state of affairs existing, particularly in regard to the lengthsmen on the railway line. I found every few miles there were camps of people with a large number of children absolutely unable to go to school, partly on account of the distance, and partly on account of the time the trains ran. The stations were from twenty to fifty miles apart, while these camps occurred every seven miles, and it will be seen that it is utterly impossible for the children to go to school. This is a matter in which these people are intensely interested, as they do not like to see their children growing up in ignorance. Until recently these children were sent to school by the morning train and returned in the evening; but now, owing to alterations in the trains, that cannot be done. Also a large number of stopping places have been cut out by the present administration, which has further increased the number of children so situated. What exists in my electorate must exist more or less all over the colony. We have about 2,300 miles of railway, and if we add up the number of lengthsmen's camps, and calculate the number of families at each, we will find there are a great many children who cannot get to school for the reasons I have mentioned. As these men are in the service of the Government, and are compelled to live in these places, we should give them every consideration. I have mentioned selectors' children also because they are in somewhat the same position as the lengthsmen's children, and should receive the benefit of any arrangement that may be made. In addition to desiring the total number, I desire to find out the number of married men and single men in these places, because I believe changes might be made with advantage, and married men given the places that are nearest to schools, and the single men given the

other places. I am somewhat surprised to find that this motion was not allowed to go as formal, because I did not think there could be any possible objection to it. However, I inquired of the Minister for Education, and it seems a somewhat similar return was laid on the table two or three years ago; and I understand the objection to this return is largely owing to the expense that would attach to it and the delay in getting it. But the whole information could be obtained by simply sending out a circular, as is frequently done by the Railway Department, to the camps. That would cost nothing; it would involve no difficulty, and I believe we could have the information inside of two months. I hope that the Government will consent to the motion. The question is of great importance to my constituents, and it is a matter that I am very much interested in. It will be seen that the return previously prepared will not be useful to me, as it is out of date, and I desire more information than is contained in it. I ask for it so that we may have something to go upon in trying to arrange some scheme to get over the difficulty I have mentioned.

The PREMIER: I have no doubt a return of the nature asked for would be very interesting, but, as the hon. member himself has pointed out, it would be most expensive to get.

Mr. HARDACRE: No; I said most inexpensive.

The PREMIER: I say it would be most expensive. It would cost a large sum of money to get such a return, as can be easily found out by looking at the one laid on the table some three years ago. Of course it is no use telling the hon. member anything. He knows better than anyone else.

Mr. HARDACRE: I have a right to my opinion. You have no right to say that.

The PREMIER: I do not think the hon. member has got a right to contradict me. I know about as much of the conditions of the colony as the hon. member. The motion is defective, inasmuch as it does not specify any time. We all know the railway hands are very often changed, and probably before the return is finished many of the camps now supplied with single men will be supplied with married men. Moreover, I can assure the House that if this motion is carried the return will not be furnished this session. That is quite clear. I do not know that any great changes have taken place since the country was put to the expense of a return of this nature. The return was moved for by the hon. member for Burke, Mr. Glassey, in 1891, but it was not furnished during that session. It contains the number of children of school age at all the railway stations; the number of boys and girls; the children between twelve and fourteen (boys and girls), and the number of children attending school and conveyed by train to school; the number of children not attending school through want of facilities. Of course the men have been shifted about from camp to camp, but, as far as drawing conclusions or generalising is concerned, I should imagine the return we already have would furnish as much information as the hon. member can desire. This I do know: That the Commissioners and traffic manager do whatever they can to so arrange the camps that there will be facilities for sending children to school. Circumstances may happen to prevent that being done, but wherever it is possible, and the interests of the service permit it, the men are put in places where their children can easily obtain educational advantages. I have no objection whatever to the return, except so far as the expense is concerned, and it may possibly occur that before it could be prepared the occasion for it will have passed away.

Mr. GLASSEY: I hope the Premier will not object to this return being laid on the table.

The PREMIER: I do not object.

Mr. GLASSEY: I am quite sure that if the hon. gentleman takes a little more time to consider the matter, he will see that there need be scarcely any delay. I venture to say that within two months I could have a return of every railway in the colony.

The PREMIER: Including selectors?

Mr. GLASSEY: No. That is a different point, and I would advise my hon. friend to erase that part from his motion. Some years ago I had considerable experience along the different lines of railway, and I was very much pained to see the large number of children who had no means of receiving any education. I am glad the Premier and the Secretary for Public Instruction will place no obstacle in the way of this motion being passed, and if we have the return before the Education Estimates are proposed, it is possible that some suggestion may be made whereby those children may be educated. I once made a suggestion with the object of some education being given to those children, but it was jeered at. My suggestion was that where the children could not reach the school it was possible that the schoolmaster might reach the children—that travelling schoolmasters might go along the railway lines on tricycles—and I have not altered my mind on that subject.

The SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. member that that has nothing whatever to do with the motion now before the House.

Mr. GLASSEY: I do not wish to trespass on the rules. I was simply showing the difficulties that stood in the way of educating these children, and referring to the suggestion I made with a view of getting over the difficulty.

Mr. ARCHER: I think everything that can be done ought to be done to enable the children of the men working on our railway lines, as well as the other children of the colony, to be educated. For this purpose it is a matter of importance that they should reside near public schools, and I think that if individual cases were brought under the notice of the Commissioners the men with families might be transferred to places where their children could attend school, and the necessary facilities would be afforded without the necessity of bringing forward a motion asking this House to interfere in the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: I can go further than the hon. member for Rockhampton and say that on several occasions the Commissioners have acted on my recommendation and made those transfers. We all desire to see education extended, but with our immense lines of railway stretching through sparsely-populated country, there must be cases in which it is difficult to afford the desired facilities. The Railway Commissioners are anxious that married men should be located in places where their children can attend school.

Mr. DANIELS: I do not see why facilities should not be given to the children of selectors as well as to the children of railway employees to attend school. Some time ago I waited on the Minister for Education with reference to a widow who had six children. She paid to send two of them to school, but she had two others of school age she could not afford to send. The school was five miles away, but the railway passed her door, and the children could have gone to school and back by train. I went to the Secretary for Education, and he approved of the principle of carrying children to school free by rail.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is not a question as to whether children should be carried to

school or not; it is simply a motion for a return, and I must ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to that.

Mr. DANIELS: If I can have the indulgence of the House I will not take up more than two or three minutes.

The SPEAKER: If the hon. member wishes to show the necessity for the return he may do so, but he cannot go into a totally different question from the one before the House.

Mr. DANIELS: Possibly by introducing this case I may be able to show the necessity for the return.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: You can do all you want on the Education vote.

Mr. DANIELS: I am sorry to say we cannot do that on the Education vote, because the Secretary for Education would tell us he has no control over the railways.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: You can speak on the Education Estimates.

Mr. DANIELS: That is all right, but there is no fear that the Secretary for Education will grant money to carry people's children along the railways. I have referred to this matter as a case in point. The Premier approved of it. The letter went to the Railway Commissioners, and they said they could not grant the privilege to this woman, because if they did they would have to make it general.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must go no further on that point, but must confine himself to the necessity for the return asked for in the motion.

Mr. DANIELS: I abide by your ruling if I am out of order. I support the motion.

Mr. KERR: I believe this return is needed. I know personally a great many of the people living on the Central Railway, and many of them who have large families are stationed away from the schools, while single men are stationed near the schools. The children there are placed at a great disadvantage. I know some men have strained themselves, and in some cases have done without the necessities of life, in order to send their children to school. There are others who do not take such an interest in the education of their children, and it would be a great benefit if lengthsmen with families were removed to places near schools. This return would supply useful information on the subject and on the number of selectors' children who are in places away from a school.

The HON. G. THORN: I do not think this return will do any good, though it will not do any harm. I know that on the Fassifern line, and on the Southern and Western Railway generally, the engineer in charge makes it a practice to locate lengthsmen with large families near a school. I presume it is also the practice in the Central and Northern portions of the colony. If the hon. member for Leichhardt has a grievance in this matter, I am sure the Commissioners or the engineer in charge will be only too ready to remedy it.

Mr. WILKINSON: I do not think the hon. member for Leichhardt wishes to infer for a moment that the railway authorities have not done what they could to meet the evil. I am satisfied they have done very much to overcome the difficulty; but I understand the object of the motion to be to see whether some other means may not be devised to reach those children who are not yet provided for in this respect. In getting the information the circular sent to the lengthsmen might contain a request that they should give the number of selectors' children living within a certain radius of their camps. The information could be got in more quickly if that is done.

It is a matter of supreme importance that the children of people in places at a distance from schools should have some means of education provided for them. When this return is sent in it is possible some scheme may be devised by which the children referred to in the motion may get some instruction.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. Philp): I would point out that a motion similar to this was moved in September, 1890, by the present member for Burke, Mr. Glassey, and it took twelve months to collect that return. When the return was furnished it was found that out of 2,700 children in the lengthsmen's camps 2,200 were going to school, and those who were not attending school were in a proportion of only about 20 per cent. Taking the average for the whole colony, the number of children of school age then was 86,000, and only 45 per cent. of that number were going to school, and even then as compared with the other colonies, where they have compulsory education, our average is better than theirs. I do not know when this return is to be got in if it is to include the children of selectors as well as lengthsmen. I think we might have a school for a range of three or four camps. I can assure the hon. member that the parents of the children are more anxious to get them to school than any member of this House, and applications for provisional schools are made daily from the country districts. If the hon. member, instead of trying to revolutionise the whole State education system of the colony, would look after his own electorate he would do some good. If he knows of any place where there are a number of children who have not got a school to go to, he can come to me, and I will try to remedy it. I must say that if there is one thing which members look after more than another it is the education of the children of the colony, and they do that very well indeed. If the hon. member would look after his own electorate in this way he will do more good than by getting this return.

Mr. HARDACRE: If it is going to debar or delay the return of the lengthsmen's children I am prepared to withdraw the 3rd paragraph of the motion requiring the number of the selectors' children. I believe in the same benefit being given to them; but I think that will result if I get the number of the lengthsmen's children.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the 3rd section of the motion be omitted?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARDACRE: I am sorry I did not let the motion go before tea, but I was anxious to make it clear that I have omitted the portion referring to selectors' children not because it is not equally necessary that they should receive schooling, but solely because of the greater difficulty in dealing with that particular matter.

Motion, as amended, put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 12.

Messrs. Reid, Hardacre, McDonald, Kerr, Ogden, King, Fisher, Dawson, Dunsford, Glassey, Cross, and Wilkinson.

NOES, 16.

Messrs. Nelson, Barlow, Philp, Tozer, Dickson, Smith, Battersby, G. Thorn, Crombie, Lord, Armstrong, Callan, Agnew, Cameron, Dalrymple, and Midson.

Resolved in the negative.

ACTING CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

In the absence of the Chairman of Committees, the hon. member for Bulimba, Mr. Dickson, was appointed Acting Chairman.

TOWNSVILLE SCHOOL OF ARTS BILL.
COMMITTEE.

Preamble postponed.

On clause 1—"Interpretation"—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY suggested that the Bill be postponed till next session. He had never seen such an incomplete report from a select committee laid before Parliament. Only two witnesses—Trevor Neilson and Anthony Ogden—had been examined; and if anybody could get any information from their evidence as to the history of the building, it was more than he could. He knew something about the original piece of land at Townsville, and that the Government subsequently bought the land and paid a big price for it. The money of the colony was also invested in the new piece of land held under the original trust. The proper course would be to refer the Bill back to the select committee for further information. The House was always desirous to assist institutions like schools of arts—to put them on their legs, so to speak—but very often the moment power to mortgage was given away went the property. Where was that lovely piece of land which was the original racecourse at Ipswich? In the hands of private individuals. The schools of arts in both Ipswich and Brisbane had lost their properties, and he disliked seeing those institutions ringing their death-knells, as they were very useful institutions. He suggested that the municipality should take over the control, and instead of proceeding with the Bill he asked the hon. member to refer the matter to the people of Townsville. If the municipal council wanted a loan on their rates to clear off the liability on the school of arts, they could come to the Government. He hoped, in the interests of the school of arts, the hon. gentleman would not press the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. R. Philp) could not agree with his colleague, the Colonial Secretary. The school of arts at present owed about £1,400, for which they had to pay the bank 10 per cent., but if the Bill were passed they would be able to borrow the money for 6 per cent. or 7 per cent., and so effect a great saving. The mistake that had been made was in selling the old site to the Government, as they had had a splendid building, and the new one had cost them £1,000 more than they had received from the Government. If the Bill was passed the institution would get along all right. Similar concessions had been granted in other cases, and there was no recent case of a school of arts losing its property. The trustees and committee had always managed affairs well, and all they wanted to mortgage the land for was to obtain money at a lower rate of interest.

Mr. AGNEW was sure that the advice given by the Colonial Secretary was given in the interests of the school of arts, but he had no hesitation in listening to the opinion of the Secretary for Mines, who knew all the circumstances. If he was in favour of the Bill, they might rest satisfied and pass it.

Mr. WATSON asked if the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill was satisfied that if the committee could obtain the money at 7 per cent., they would be able to redeem the property. He remembered Mr. Coxen mortgaging the old school of arts property in Brisbane for £7,000, and in a few years the property was lost. If the hon. member satisfied him on the point he had raised, he would not oppose the Bill.

Mr. CURTIS said that, as similar powers had been granted to other schools of arts, they could not fairly refuse to pass the Bill. If the money could be borrowed at a moderate rate of interest, in time they should be able to redeem the property.

Mr. DUNSFORD said that the matter had been fully considered by the trustees and the committee of the school of arts. By mortgaging the property they would effect a saving of £45, which would enable them in time to pay off their overdraft. They only proposed to shift the debt from one financial institution to another, and he did not see why they should prevent the committee carrying out what was an ordinary business transaction.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that othersimilar powers had not been conferred on any school of arts. In the case of the Rockhampton school of arts the money had been borrowed to put up a new building—that was intended to perpetuate the school of arts; but they were now asked to do quite a different thing, because the people of Townsville did not generally support the institution. They were asked to shift the liability from the shoulders of two or three, and put it on the land. The result would be that, as no one would have any responsibility, there would be no effort made to clear off the liability, and the property would pass into other hands. If an effort was made, the trustees would be able to raise enough money without having to mortgage their property. In one case they had given power to an institution to sell a portion of land which was not required for the purposes of the original trust, with the view of improving the remainder; but they had never been asked to allow a public institution such as that to mortgage it and hand it over to someone else.

Mr. CURTIS said if the liability were incurred on behalf of the institution it was only fair that it should be shifted on to the land. He was under the impression that the new building in Rockhampton was erected by means of money raised by the mortgage of a portion of the property.

Mr. AGNEW: Part of it was sold.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said that, while agreeing generally with the Colonial Secretary, he thought on this occasion he took a rather pessimistic view of the matter. After writing off 5 per cent. for depreciation of the building and 33 per cent. off the land, they still had £5,000 worth of security for an advance of £1,500, and there could not be any very serious hitch. It was rather hard to keep this debt on the shoulders of a few willing horses, and he felt inclined to see the Bill through.

Mr. FISHER thought that whenever these institutions required assistance they should go to the Government or to the municipal council of the town. He was pretty much of the opinion of the Colonial Secretary that ultimately these public institutions and public lands, which were granted for a special purpose, would fall away from the uses for which they were intended. Townsville should not be treated differently from other places.

Mr. GLASSEY did not think there was much in the contention of the Colonial Secretary that the Bill should be withdrawn with a view of bringing in some measure enabling the trustees of this institution to arrange with the municipality. The hon. members for Townsville knew the local circumstances better than other hon. members, and thought that the trustees should have immediate relief by mortgaging the property and saving £45 per annum. Supposing that next year the property was likely to be lost, then the representatives of the institution could arrange with the municipality to carry it on, and a Bill dealing with the matter could be introduced. It would be an unfortunate thing if this excellent institution should fall into the hands of private persons. He had for many years believed that the municipalities should control these institutions, and thought so still;

but, as this one was suffering from financial embarrassment, the House should grant relief. Parliament had always been willing to treat these institutions fairly, and he should support the Bill.

Mr. DALRYMPLE thought the balance of argument was in favour of the Bill. He did not think it was necessary in all cases to come to the Government, because when the Mackay school of arts was in straitened circumstances they issued debentures, which were taken up by the inhabitants. It was a pity that the school of arts in Townsville should be so badly supported. The whole of the subscriptions only amounted to £190 a year, and it was to be hoped that would be increased. Doubtless previous experience justified the Colonial Secretary in saying that some institutions having obtained mortgages fell into the hands of private persons, to the loss of the public; but they had to face the position, and unless the public subscribed this sum of money it would be possible for the creditors to take possession and effectually stop the institution being used at all. With that possibility in view, the best thing they could do was to pass the Bill.

Mr. SMITH said the opinion of those most interested should carry some weight, and he was sure the committee of the school of arts were sensible men, who would manage the affairs of the institution with ability. He was therefore inclined to support the Bill, but he remembered very well when the Townsville School of Arts was sold, and at that time the House perpetrated a very great wrong and iniquity upon the electorate of Bowen by removing the Supreme Court, where there was a very suitable building, to Townsville, and purchasing a building there at a cost of £5,000. Of course that would not have any effect upon him in his endeavour to assist the hon. member to get the Bill through.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 2, 3, and 4 passed as printed.

On clause 5—"Power to lease subject to same direction and like approval"—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY would like to hear what was the necessity for that clause. Under it the whole of the land could be leased, and that might have the effect of at once doing away with the school of arts. Why should they not be content with the power to mortgage?

Mr. OGDEN said as it happened the back part of the school of arts land was vacant, and the object of the clause was to get some benefit out of that land by leasing it. The hall was separated from the other buildings, and they might also lease it for a term, and use the rents for meeting their other liabilities. The Colonial Secretary had said that the information was very vague; but he must know that people could not be brought from Townsville to give evidence. He had had to conduct negotiations by telegram, and had endeavoured to supply all the information he possibly could.

Mr. MIDSON explained that he unfortunately had not been able to attend any but one formal meeting of the committee, but had he been present he intended to say something upon that clause. It appeared to give absolute power to lease the whole of the land, and in that way the school of arts might pass altogether out of the hands of the committee. He would be in favour of allowing the unoccupied portions to be leased. He was not in favour of corporations acquiring those properties, and thought a population of 12,000 people, such as Townsville had, ought to be able to get the institution out of difficulties. He would support the Bill if the hon. gentleman in charge would accept an amendment of the clause.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES thought the Committee would be quite safe in allowing the

clause to pass. The trustees would only lease the unoccupied portion of the land, and there was not the least danger of the property passing out of their hands.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS advised the hon. member to consent to a modification of the clause, which would permit of the leasing of those portions of the land not occupied by buildings. In the case of the hall, if it was leased, the lease would in all probability not extend over such a long period as twenty-one years.

Mr. OGDEN did not like to alter the Bill, for the simple reason that those who had the management of the institution were as anxious to safeguard it as he was.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said that if the hall were leased for twenty-one years, Townsville would, in all probability, make vast strides, and the person who leased it would make a good thing out of it.

Mr. KINGSEBURY thought the clause might be allowed to pass. The tendency was towards decentralisation in small affairs. That land practically belonged to the people of Townsville, who were quite as smart as the people of Brisbane. They elected their committee of management, and that body, with the trustees, might be trusted to do what would be for the benefit of the institution.

Mr. RAWLINGS said that, having given the power to mortgage under clause 2, he could not see why the power to lease should not be given.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY protested against every one of those applications for extended powers.

Mr. POWERS was of opinion that, having given the power to mortgage the whole of the property, they might as well give power to lease, so as to enable the committee of management to get revenue to pay the interest on the mortgage.

Clause put and passed.

The remaining clauses, the schedule, and the preamble were passed without discussion.

The House resumed; the Bill was reported without amendment, and the third reading made an order for Tuesday next.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day for the resumption of the debate on Mr. Glassey's motion (*vide* page 259) being read,

Mr. SMITH: I do not rise to detain the House long in dealing with this motion, because the subject has been pretty well thrashed out; the various arguments for and against have been used over and over again, and I shall endeavour to avoid reiteration of what has already been said. I do not believe in strikes at all. They are the worst possible thing that could happen for the poor man, and they certainly do not put money into the pockets of the pastoralists concerned. I think there was less justification for the late strike than for any that was ever carried out previously. The causes assigned for it were: Certificates, monopoly, wet sheep, and reduction of wages. Who ever before heard of a man striking because, as he chose, he could either take a certificate or leave it? That surely is a poor excuse for a strike. Then with respect to the question of monopoly I hold that the monopoly of the work is entirely in the hands of the shearers. It is for them to settle amongst themselves whether a certain number of them shall shear in all the sheds or whether the work of all the sheds shall be distributed equally amongst them. The shearers themselves can settle that matter, and it has no reference to the pastoralists. Another reason for the strike has been the shearing of wet sheep. I am neither a shearer nor a pastoralist, and I am

interested in this dispute merely as an ordinary citizen of the country. I can speak disinterestedly on the subject, and I must say that I cannot find out why the pastoralist should insist upon the shearing of wet sheep, when that is plainly, for the shearing and for the wool, the worst condition in which a sheep could be shorn. The reduction of rouseabouts' wages from 30s. to 24s. a week is assigned as a further reason for the strike. A great many people in the colony would be very glad to receive 24s. or even £1 a week and their keep.

Mr. WILKINSON: Yes; all the year round.

Mr. GLASSEY: This is only for a few weeks in the year.

Mr. SMITH: That is not the fault of the pastoralists, and the time the men are not employed by the pastoralists should be taken up in some other way. When the pastoralists' products are down in the market, as they are—50 per cent. in some cases—why should not the wages come down in proportion? There ought to be a proportionate relation between the price of the products and the wages paid to the men who are employed to produce them. That would be only fair to all parties, and I think they should come to some mutual arrangement in that respect. The hon. member for Burke says conciliation ought to be the order of the day. This matter of conciliation has been brought before the House in four different ways. In the first place, in the Governor's Speech, on the 17th July, the Government promised a measure to give increased facilities for land settlement, with a view to removing the difficulties which at present frequently occur between employer and employee. Fourteen days after that, on the 31st July, the senior member for Gympie, Mr. Fisher, moved—"That in the opinion of this House the time has arrived when Parliament should take steps to prevent the constant recurrence of industrial disputes." Is that not a reference to the measure promised in the Governor's Speech? Of course it is, and the House unanimously agreed to the motion. Then the hon. member for Burke brought forward the present resolution, affirming "that in the opinion of this House it is essentially necessary in the interests of industrial peace to terminate the present shearers' strike." That also refers to the very same matter as is dealt with in the Governor's Speech, the only difference being that the Government foreshadowed a policy which would prevent the recurrence of these disputes in the future. Again the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Powers, brought forward a motion very similar to the measure promised by the Government, his motion being that, in order to promote settlement and encourage peaceful relations between employer and employee, the resumed portions of pastoral runs should be thrown open for settlement as grazing or agricultural farms. Now that the Bill promised by the Government has been introduced, we see that that is exactly what was contemplated by the Government, and which was foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech. The hon. member for Burke in this motion only speaks of two parties—the pastoralists' union and the shearers' union. There is no word about free labourers. Are not free labourers white men and brethren? And why should they be ignored? The hon. member and those who think with him wish to compel them to join the unions. I do not think that is a fair position for the Labour party to take up. The free labourer has a right to the sympathy of hon. members who profess to be the representatives of labour. Why should the two unions be the only parties the hon. member will recognise in this dispute? Are the others to go down? I think the free labourers should be

considered equally with the two unions; no difference of that kind should be made. The hon. member says that, "in the event of either party refusing to appoint representatives to such committee within the period of a fortnight from the date of passing of this resolution, this House immediately proceed to appoint representatives for the party so refusing, and will take such legislative action as may be found necessary to compel both parties to abide the decision." There is coercion; the hon. member wants to compel the two parties to this dispute to come together. I can only say that had the hon. member explained when he wanted to move a certain amendment to call a certain measure before the House—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is now referring to a matter which took place in committee, and he is out of order in doing so.

Mr. SMITH: Well, I will not refer to it. I merely wish to point out that the hon. member for Burke had a little chicken of his own—a Coercion Act of his own, which he, no doubt, intended to call Coercion Act No. 2. Of course he knows perfectly well that coercive conciliation is an absolute contradiction in terms, and that compulsory conciliation is impossible. Members on his own side do not agree with him, for the hon. member for Toowoong says he would not be coerced. If he was compelled to work for an employer he did not like he would clear. And he is perfectly sensible in taking up such a position. No workers can be compelled to work for employers whom they do not wish to work for; and why should employers be obliged to employ labour they do not require? Compulsory conciliation is really an impossibility, and the only way I can see out of the difficulty—the only compulsory conciliation that can exist as far as I can see in the instance under consideration—is such a measure as I should like to see brought in, if the hon. member for Burke succeeds in carrying his Coercion Bill No. 2, and which I would call Coercion Bill No. 3—namely, to saddle the two unions—pastoralists' and shearers'—in the disturbed districts with the extra expense entailed upon the Government in keeping peace between the two parties. There is no more coercive way to bring people into conciliation than touching their pockets; and if we could saddle equally both parties with the extra cost the Government have gone to in giving the necessary security to life and property in those districts, we should soon have the two parties coming to terms. But I am afraid that to do so would be an impossibility, because although you could get at one of the unions you could not get at the other; and I do not see how you can make a man pay if he has not got the money. He can snap his fingers, and do as he pleases. But I say again, and emphasise it, that to saddle both parties equally with the expense the country has been put to in keeping the peace in those disturbed districts would be the best means of bringing about compulsory conciliation. I have lived in proclaimed districts myself many years, and I am not unacquainted with the state of affairs in such districts; and when the Government taxed the people who caused the disturbances, the disturbances gradually died out. So it would be here. I am aware that the shearers of this country are unfortunately situated. For the last twenty-five or thirty years they have followed this one industry of shearing sheep. They know no other business, and they enter into no other employment. When shearing is done they do not know how to turn their hands to anything else. Unfortunately there is no work for them. A great deal of that is due to the fact that public confidence has been destroyed, and there is no money forthcoming to make improvements, otherwise a great deal of

this labour would be put to some useful purpose. As long as there is this unrest, as long as this condition of things exists, we shall have the unemployed in the Western districts. I hope the substantial measure introduced by the Government will have a beneficial effect; that the shearers will work into the new system and become small landed proprietors. Then in the busy season they can go out shearing, and make sufficient to improve their holdings, and become contented and happy citizens.

Mr. KINGSBURY: I think this debate has reached a period when it is absolutely out of order that it should be continued. I do not like attending funerals, but that is the condition to which this debate has come. We are asked to come to a decision that, in our opinion, "it is essentially necessary, in the interests of industrial peace, to terminate the present shearers' strike at the earliest possible date." We are asked to terminate a strike which has already terminated; to express an opinion about what is already done. Then the conciliation committee is to be called together to settle an existing dispute which is already settled. Having sat, and come to some decision as to how the strike which is ended should be brought to an end, the legislature is to be asked to do something to carry out the desire of the conciliation committee that a strike that is dead should be ended. We have reached a position of absolute absurdity with regard to this motion. I believe myself that, under the circumstances, it is out of order.

Mr. POWERS: I understand the hon. member for Burke is going to push the motion to a division, although, as the hon. member for North Brisbane has said, the strike is almost, if not altogether, practically at an end. One hon. member proposed that an amendment should be moved before the debate closed, and I should have been glad to see it moved. I do not intend to do so myself at this stage, because I think the debate has been carried on long enough, and I do not want to reopen it by moving any amendment. I wish, however, to express my opinion on the subject before we go to a division. As far as the settlement of the strike is concerned, I do not think the motion would have been practicable even if it had been carried when the strike was on, as it was when the motion was introduced. We could not have attempted to carry it out on the lines as laid down in the motion. But I think a motion might have been carried that would have had a very beneficial effect if it had been allowed to go to a division when first introduced—that is, that in order to bring the strike to an end the parties might have been asked to meet. But even then the difficulty would arise, just the same as if this motion was passed. It does not go beyond that. It merely asks them to appoint representatives, and if they were appointed, and never met, the business would be at an end as far as this House is concerned. It does not contain the necessary machinery for getting the witnesses together. I hope the debate will have done some good. For the first time we have an admission from the Ministerial side that both parties are to blame. It is the first time we have heard from that side that the Pastoralists' Association are to blame at all. Many hon. members, no doubt, on both sides sincerely wish that the Pastoralists' Association had complied with the request for a conference. I believe a great many people in Queensland wanted that—both pastoralists and those outside; but it is no use reopening that question. The hon. member cannot expect to do any good by persisting in his motion now; although if this debate leads to the introduction of a Bill for the purpose of going as far as we can in the direction of conciliation, good will have been

done. I believe we can go to a great extent in that direction, and that is shown by the reports of the commissions that have been held both in New South Wales and in England. Those who have made this question the subject of very close study have come to the conclusion that not only is it practicable to take a step towards conciliation, but that it is also advisable. They all admit the great difficulty of compulsory conciliation. They see no difficulty in holding compulsory inquiries, but in giving compulsory awards—awards which can be carried into force against those who do not submit themselves to the conciliation court. If we go the length of establishing compulsory inquiries, which both Mr. Kingston and the South Australian Assembly have affirmed, we shall have advanced a very great step. If the Government do not propose to bring in a Bill, we can promise them that this side of the House will bring forward a proposal before this session is over which we believe to be practicable. I rose to say that if the motion goes to a division I shall have to vote against it, but that vote must not be misconstrued into a disbelief in compulsory inquiries on my part, in which I believe.

Mr. McMASTER: I agree with the hon. members who have spoken on this side that it is time this debate was brought to a close. In fact it should never have commenced. It has wasted a great deal of time, and it will do no earthly good, except, perhaps, that it may show the country the weakness of the introducer of the motion. We are asked to appoint a committee, and to compel the Pastoralists' Association to meet a number of men appointed by the unions. The hon. member does not ask that a number of workmen should meet a number of employers, but that the pastoralists should be compelled to meet some persons appointed by a committee. The hon. member for Toowong told us that the condition of affairs in the West is deplorable, and I regret very much to hear that such is the case. I also regret the destitution into which the workmen have been led by following their blind leaders; but I am pleased that the honest workmen are now beginning to awake to the true character of their leaders, and are taking the management of affairs into their own hands. I agree that it is time to put a stop to these disputes, and to get at the real cause, so as to remove the evil. I think it is very easy to get to the root of the trouble, and as easy to remove it. The real cause of the difficulty in the West is nothing more or less than the professional agitators. If the Colonial Secretary had put down his foot more firmly than he did some time back, he could have laid his hands upon those professional agitators, and the whole trouble would at once have ceased. No man can make me believe that it is the honest workers—either shearers or rouseabouts—who have caused the trouble. There is no class of men more honourable than the working class, and there is no class of men who, when they are banded together, are more loyal to one another; but there is no class more easily led and duped by these professional agitators, who will not work, but who will talk for ever. Work and they fell out long ago; they know better than to work when an hour or two's talk will be sufficient for them to lead and guide honest working men. Once the honest working men get entrapped into these unions they are too honourable to turn their backs upon their colleagues; they would rather suffer, and they do suffer. They are leaving the unions now, when the unions have left them. How soon the leaders declare the strike off when the funds are gone! Not only that, but we have seen in print that these professional agitators have secured

sheds for themselves and their friends, and then declared the strike off and told the men they had better get work where they could, and if they could not they must do the best they can. These men have been deluded and deceived, but there is a day of reckoning coming, and these agitators will find that they must look for pastures new. They will be too well known. A large number of these men in the West have been sent there—gaol-birds and spicers, who do not want to work; and they have become the curse of the unions by leading the honest workers astray. There is a class of men going through the country who remind me very much of what I read many years ago in a good old Book about a man named Samson, who quarrelled with the Philistines and could not get at them. What did he do? He got a lot of foxes and tied their tails together, and fixed a firestick to them, and they went through the cornfields of the Philistines and burned them. A few days after these men have gone through the country we find firesticks and woolsheds in a blaze; and if Providence had not been so kind as to send copious showers, the grass would be burned as well as the wool. Fire and destruction follow these men, and it behoves the Government to put their foot down very firmly and remove this curse from amongst us. One need not be a very old resident of the country to remember the beginning of this agitation and the beginning of strikes. It is only about ten years ago. They began in the General Post Office. That was the first agitation I ever heard of here, and I have been in the colony nearly forty years. A strike occurred amongst the letter-carriers, and the next thing I heard was that the agitator and those who followed him were dismissed. The Post Office was quit of them, and that is what I should like the Government to do in the Western districts. Remove the evil, and we will have peace and prosperity. I have no doubt the hon. member for Burke, if he was not in the strike at that time, knew all about it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He struck on the way out.

Mr. McMASTER: We never heard of this until he and the like of him came here. I will be able to show by figures that it is to the interest of a number of these professional agitators to keep the trouble going in the West. I do not mean to say that all the squatters are angels; but I remember twenty-five or thirty years ago many honest hard-working men went out West from Brisbane and other places for two or three months and came back with handsome cheques, and they used to improve their own property during the rest of the year. There were no strikes then, and no quarrelling between employer and employed. The squatters were not such tyrants as they were said to be, and we had no unemployed about the towns. But since 1889 the firebrands have begun to go about the Western districts, and there has been perfect turmoil ever since. There are a number of men living comfortably in Brisbane, driving about in buggies and enjoying themselves at home with their families in the evenings, who are interested in the continuance of this state of affairs. But what about the honest worker humping his "bluey," who is helping to keep these men in comfort, listening to the piano being played in the evenings? He is keeping these men going, and finding the sinews of war. If we were to give them every shilling they are asking in the way of wages, they would find some other grievance or else their occupation would be gone. The hon. member for Toowong told us what he would do if he had to suffer out West; but he knows better than to go out West and hump his "bluey."

Mr. HARDACRE: He went as a traveller.

Mr. McMASTER: He may have done. I will not say he went as a firebrand; but I do not think he went to preach the gospel of peace. The hon. gentleman said that if he were out West, and were to suffer as those men did, he did not know what he would do; and that if the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, who was of the same temperament as himself, went out there he would be just as bad as he was—that I would be a fire-eater. I am thankful to know and think that I am not of the same temperament as that hon. gentleman. I tell him if I were out West I should not be a fire-eater. I should be what he calls a "scab," and very likely I should have to remain a "scab," because I would not allow a clique that pulls the wires in Brisbane to control me, nor would I place my conscience and liberty in the keeping of such men. I should earn my living honestly and honourably. I would not be compelled to join a union. What was the hon. member before he joined the union? Was he not a "scab"?

Mr. REID: No.

Mr. McMASTER: It is an ugly word. He must have been a "scab" and a very ugly one too.

The SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. member to refrain from personalities.

Mr. McMASTER: I say any man who wishes to earn his living honestly and honourably has no right to be prevented from doing so by any other man. I went to the trouble of looking up a few figures the other day in reference to the subscriptions to the unions, and what they have spent in management expenses. I took the figures from the report of the registrar of trades unions for the last three years, and they are as nearly accurate as I can get them. I have taken the figures of several unions, so that I may make a fair comparison of the income and expenditure. First, there is the railway union. In the year 1890 they contributed to the union £1,510 6s. 6d. To manage that sum it cost in salaries and sundries a considerable sum. I am at a loss to know what "sundries" are.

Mr. GLASSEY: Contingencies.

Mr. McMASTER: You can call them what you like. I have sufficient knowledge of human nature and of the world to know what those things mean, although I have never been connected with a union, or any of my family either, and I do not suppose we ever shall be. Well, to manage £1,510 6s. 6d., it cost £1,390 18s. 7d., or 91 per cent. for salaries and incidental expenses. Then there is the omnibus and tramway union. I was not an omnibus proprietor at that time, though unfortunately I am now.

Mr. McDONALD: Was it Chalk?

The SPEAKER: I must call upon the hon. gentleman to refrain from these interjections.

Mr. McMASTER: They are not injuring me. I think the hon. member who interjected that was secretary to the union.

Mr. HARDACRE: No; he was not.

Mr. McMASTER: The hon. member has been secretary to the tram and omnibus union. That union contributed £115 10s. 9d., and the expense of management is fair and reasonable. They only spent £72 4s. 6d., or only 62½ per cent. The Australian Labour Federation is down in the list next. They contributed £923 12s. 2d., and they only spent £341 11s. 5d. in management, or 34 per cent. The Blackall shearers in 1890 seemed to be a very wealthy class of men. They contributed £5,433 13s. There was strike pay given, and the percentage in wages is not very high. They spent £1,278 13s. 7d. in salaries and management, or 23½ per cent. The Barcaldine carriers contributed £763 14s. 6d., and they spent in management, salaries, and sundries, £323 13s. 9d., or 42 per cent. The Hughenden carriers contributed £1,398 13s. 2d., and they only spent in

managing their affairs £672 8s. 2d., or 51½ per cent. The Peak Downs carriers contributed £69 1s., and spent in salaries and sundries £58 15s. 1d., or 84 per cent. The Townsville wharf labourers contributed £176 8s. 6d., and spent £12s 13s. 4d., or 72½ per cent. The Rockhampton wharf labourers contributed £150 10s., and spent £86 0s. 6d., or 57 per cent. The total amount contributed in 1890 by all those unions was £16,547; and to manage that the sum of £9,317 was required—a little more than one-half. In 1891 the honest worker began to get his eyes open, and did not care about handing over his money to those who mismanaged it. The Townsville wharf labourers contributed £28 6s. 9d.; to manage that they spent £12 8s. 6d., or 43 per cent. In that year they were, perhaps, a little better managed—at all events, in the interests of some individuals. The wharf labourers in Brisbane contributed £206 13s. 2d.; to manage that they spent £253 10s., or 23 per cent. more than the amount contributed. I presume they got the difference from the balance they had in hand from previous years. The omnibus and tramway union—that year the hon. member for Leichhardt was secretary—contributed £96 18s. 5d.; to manage that it took £85 10s. 11d., or 88½ per cent.

Mr. HARDACRE: Not in salaries.

Mr. McMASTER: It is not surprising that that union is now defunct, and the men manage their own affairs.

Mr. HARDACRE: They are only getting 2s. a week now; they got £2 a week then.

Mr. McMASTER: The seamen contributed £230 1s. 11d.; they spent in salaries and incidentals £278 17s. 1d.—only 99 per cent. The contributions to the Australian Labour Federation amounted to £424; and to manage that amount they only spent £380 16s. 10d., or 89½ per cent. The railway employees contributed £936 15s. 2d.; and spent £1,043 11s. 5d., or 10 per cent. over the whole amount contributed. I believe they have taken the management of their own affairs.

Mr. HARDACRE: You are mixing up general expenses with salaries.

Mr. McMASTER: I know what "sundries" mean. I know that in the municipal council books there are small amounts charged as sundries, but they are for managing affairs. The men who draw the salaries are the men who have the management of these sundries. In 1891 the Blackall shearers contributed £4,048 19s. 6d. There was a strike on. The firebrands had been through the country, and fire followed. There was disturbance in the land, and those men had to go into camp until the funds were exhausted, and they were told to go and look for work wherever they could find it. To manage that amount they spent £1,808 19s. 3d., or 44½ per cent. The Barcardine carriers contributed £673 19s.; to manage that they spent £257 9s. 3d., or 38 per cent. The Townsville general labourers' union was dying out that year. They had their eyes opened the year before, but I believe a few have stuck to the union. They contributed £23 14s.; to manage that it only took £15 14s., or 65 per cent., which was fair and reasonable. The North Queensland carriers at Hughenden contributed £1,192 1s.; and to manage that it took £842 6s. 10d., or 80 per cent. In 1892 the seamen in Brisbane had begun to wake up too, and they contributed only £313 13s. 1d., and spent £205 15s. 6d., or 65½ per cent. The railway employees contributed £124 10s.; and to manage that amount it took only the small sum of £222 7s. 11d., or 80 per cent. over the whole amount contributed.

Mr. HARDACRE: You have found a mare's nest.

Mr. McMASTER: If I have, no doubt the hon. member will put me right. In those times about a score of men thought they were going to carry

everything before them. They thought they were going to get everybody united, and that they would be able to rule, not Queensland only, but the whole of the colonies. I am surprised they did not try to form a union in Parliament. Everybody was going to join a union and be affiliated and banded together, and the bloated capitalist and fat man was to be driven out and sent to Jericho. The Electric Telegraph Association contributed £106 8s., and to manage that they spent £99 16s. 9d., or 93 per cent. The Federated Labourers' Union only contributed £5 5s. 7d.—I cannot understand this figure, because I find that to manage that it took £24 5s. 5d., or about 360 per cent. over the amount contributed. It puzzles me to know how they could have spent so much over their income, but as that union died I can only suppose that this was the winding up, and the large amount is due to winding up expenses. The boot trade union was in pretty good form that year. They contributed £348 6s., and it only took £232 11s. 1d. to manage it, so they were not over extravagant. The Charleville and Warrego carriers—that is where the money lies, Mr. Speaker, and there is no doubt the agitators must not let the Western country go or their funds will run short. The Charleville and Warrego carriers contributed £1,364 4s. 9d., and to manage that they spent £1,323 8s. 3d., or not quite 100 per cent. The Hughenden North Queensland carriers contributed £941 18s. 3d., and to manage that they spent only £827 12s. 5d., or 85½ per cent. The total contributions to the unions for 1892 amounted to £2,798 18s. 11d., and the total of expenses of management and other expenses was £4,715 14s. Taking the average percentage for 1893, last year—and I hope the finishing up of this trouble when honest workmen will be allowed to manage their own affairs and spend honestly earned wages as they think proper—the percentage of expenses to income for 1893 was only 83 per cent. of the total amount paid in by those hard-worked men whose condition the hon. member for Toowoong told us was deplorable. It is more deplorable to think that 83 per cent. of the contributions of hard-working men should be spent by men going about the country preaching discontent and disorder amongst honest workmen. My figures are taken from the report of the Registrar of Trades Unions and Friendly Societies, and if I have made a mistake it has been unintentional, as I knew I would have to meet hon. members opposite if I made a mistake in taking out the figures. I am reminded that these reports are sent in by the union managers who appoint their own auditors. I am not accusing these men of sending in false reports, but the registrar says in his report that there is a great deal of difficulty in getting in these returns, and as I said when I commenced to refer to the figures, and if the whole truth was known the position might not show as favourably as it does. I wanted to show that a large sum was contributed by the hard-working men of the Western districts and in other places in the colony. What I wish to show by these figures is that it is not to the interest of these men that peace should reign in the Western districts. Notwithstanding the statement of the hon. member for Burke that if a committee or a board was appointed, he would guarantee that peace would very soon reign, I say that as long as these funds are available, peace will not reign in the Western districts. It is not Queensland alone that suffers by the heavy expenditure for managing and controlling the unions; the same thing is experienced all over Australia and Europe. I have here a clipping from a paper which contains some remarks made by Mr. Woolridge, president

of the Sydney Plasterers' Union, and delegate to the Trades and Labour Council, which show that for some time past some ten delegates out of 180 have received two-thirds of the money voted by the unions; and he says that those ten men live on the unions, and that steps would have to be taken to remove them, as they now considered that they had a prior claim to the funds of the council.

Mr. HARDACRE: That was shown to be all wrong.

Mr. McMASTER: The report shows that there were ten men living on the unions and nothing else, and I quote it in confirmation of the figures which I have given to the House.

Mr. HARDACRE: It was all exploded afterwards.

Mr. McMASTER: The fact that these men live on the unions is not exploded. A good many of the unions will be exploded. I hope so, at any rate, if the money of honest men is to be misappropriated in that way.

Mr. HARDACRE: I say the statement has been exploded.

Mr. McMASTER: I have no doubt the hon. member has endeavoured to deny it, but it is there all the same. I was talking last week to a gentleman in Queen street, and he told me of a gentleman who had died not long ago in Glasgow. He was for many years secretary to the unions there, and when he died he left a magnificent estate a few miles out of Glasgow. He used to drive into town with his carriage and pair, and his coachman and footman in livery. Of course he threw the unions over after a time, but he made a very good thing out of them. I think he was secretary to the ironworkers' union for many years. He commenced to hold forth on the top of a cask on Glasgow Green, and they used to send the hat round. But by-and-by he got into a better field; he got into clover; he mixed up in a "ring." There was a clique of them, and every one of them became wealthy, he in particular. I have in my hand a clipping from *The Manchester Guardian*, which was republished in one of the Brisbane papers, and it points out most unmistakably that the really mischievous persons are the agitators, who deliberately promote the trade disputes by which they live. It winds up in these words—"The sickening dishonesty of the whole thing is flagrant; and in face of the result of their work it is ridiculous to talk of them as other than what they are—lying, selfish agitators. If they were really honest men they would have been taught by the result of their work long ago. They have not been taught, and it is manifest that they mean to go on doing the mischief by which they live." If those men who go out West preaching discontent amongst the honest workers would only go out there and preach peace and good will between them and their employers, they would bring credit upon themselves and a blessing upon the honest workers. Let them advise those honest workers to do what they did in the early days—to save their year's earnings and put the money to a better use than handing it over to the managers of the unions to take care of it for them against what they call the day of trouble, which they themselves probably are doing all they can to bring about. If the men were to put their earnings into stock or homesteads for themselves and their families, we should hear no more about the deplorable condition of the men travelling through the Western district, of which the hon. member for Toowong spoke. I have not the figures by me, but I believe the strike contribution of those men during 1891 was something like £90,000, and I have seen it stated that the money spent during the last three years amongst those unions is little short of half a million. What have the men got

for it? It has gone; somebody else has got it. Perhaps the managers may be able to tell where it has gone, but the working man cannot. He is left without boots to his feet or a blanket to travel with, and he is told by these managers to go out "on his uppers." If the money contributed by those honest working men had been judiciously laid out, instead of being fooled away by those so-called leaders, how many comfortable and happy homes there would have been in the Western district to-day! We should have seen them by hundreds. But their money is gone, and their employment is gone too. It is a cruel thing for any man to go amongst his fellow-beings, and mislead them to poverty. Hon. members opposite know in their inmost hearts that the words I am speaking are true, and the working man out West knows it to his sorrow. Many a child has to go hungry to bed because of those agitators having misled the men. I will give an instance. There is an old shearer at Bulimba who used to go out West for two or three months, and he would come back with a decent cheque until he got a little home of his own. In the hard times of 1891 he could not get anything to do round Brisbane. The strike came on. He went out West as a free labourer; of course the Labour party would call him a "scab." He borrowed a few pounds on his property to provide for his wife until he returned and to help him on his journey. He was away two or three months and came back with a very nice cheque, with which he paid off the mortgage and kept himself and his family for the remainder of the year. In 1892 and last year he did the same thing. This year he went out again. His wife did not hear from him for weeks, and at last she received a letter in which he deplored the fact that he had not been able to get work; and that unfortunately he had had to join the union, as his life had been threatened by a few men. He is afraid that he may lose his property. I would like to know why that man should not be allowed, in a free country, to earn a living for himself and his family in peace? If he did that he would be called ugly names; he would be hunted and howled at, and he might even run the risk of getting shot—what, unfortunately, a good many men are afraid of just now. It is the duty of the Government to rise to the occasion and protect such men. Why should men be terrorised by a score or two of men who have very recently come to the colony? Why should men who have helped to build up the colony be compelled to knuckle down and obey the behest of those would-be leaders and rulers—the men who would be in Parliament if they could, and who as soon as they got in would want to sit on the Treasury benches? Why should we have to do what those men want, who have never built up a single stick or stone to help the colony, but who, on the contrary, have brought almost ruin to thousands of families? It is time that free men should arise and assert their rights, and put these men down.

Mr. DAWSON: I have listened with a great deal of attention and pleasure to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. I am rather grieved that the hon. gentleman forgot to deliver the funeral oration referred to by the hon. member for Brisbane North, but that he got away from the funeral to a living organisation. I have noticed that when a man knows nothing he is pretty positive, and the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was very positive. He comes here with second-hand opinions—a kind of literary pawnshop. He delivered himself of his second-hand goods in a kind of free distribution. He quoted a large number of figures about the various organisations in Queensland. Before the hon. gentleman sat down he

asked us to believe that he had not deliberately misrepresented those figures, and I am willing to accept his statement; but I accuse him of this—that he read something which he did not understand. The hon. gentleman delivered a long and, presumably, a learned oration upon a subject he professed at the outset to know nothing about, as he had never been in a union in his life. Anyone who had been in a union would know why it is that many of those organisations have only small balances. That is due to the low fee paid. I am not going to give many examples, but I shall give one. If the hon. gentleman could manage an organisation without expense, he is the genius the people have been looking for during the whole of this 19th century. He would be invaluable as a member of an organisation, and is simply wasting his time as a common member of Parliament. The Carriers' Union, whose headquarters are at Hughenden, seemed to have a considerable amount of expense in connection with its working; but during the very year the hon. gentleman referred to no less a sum than £56,000 went through the hands of the carriers' agent. He conducted all the business of that huge organisation at a cost of considerably under 2 per cent. If the hon. gentleman did not deliberately misrepresent that fact, he certainly did not understand it. He wants a little more intellectual capacity before he talks on these matters.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The same business was done for nothing before.

Mr. DAWSON: It was not. When the Carriers' Union appointed their own agent it hurt the other forwarding agents in the North very considerably. The hon. gentleman made a great deal of noise about the Tramway Employees' Union. I believe the contribution to that union was 6d. per week, which was afterwards reduced to 3d. per week. During the existence of that organisation the wages received by the members ranged from 35s. to 45s. a week; but since the union—to use the elegant language of the hon. member—was “burst up,” the wages have fallen to 24s. a week. It would pay the men to contribute much more than 6d. a week to get the terms they had when the organisation was strong and vigorous. If it had not been for their stern resistance, the men would now be drawing 16s. and 18s. a week. I think that fact is thoroughly well known to the hon. member, or it ought to be. A great deal has been made of the doings of certain members who have been connected with unions, and a large number of extracts have been read. One man writes a letter to a paper accusing certain other people of committing certain crimes, and that hon. gentleman comes down to the House under the impression that other hon. members will take the simple statement of one man as convincing proof and abundant evidence that these men are guilty of that crime. That hon. member mentioned something that a man had told him in Queen street, and therefore it must be true. But I met a man in Queen street who told me that a member of Parliament rode home in a very strange vehicle, and, according to the logic of the hon. member for the Valley, that statement must be absolutely true; but I do not believe it. He never attempted to prove that these crimes were committed by unionists; and even if he had proved it up to the hilt, what does it show? Is a charge to be made against an organisation because certain individuals inside that organisation have committed dishonest deeds?

Mr. McMASTER: I did not say so.

Mr. DAWSON: I am very happy to hear it, and I accept the hon. member's disclaimer since he has thought fit to apologise.

Mr. McMASTER: I did not apologise.

Mr. DAWSON: The hon. member did make an apology.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must not misrepresent the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, who says he did not apologise.

Mr. DAWSON: I should like to know what he did make. I am endeavouring to refute a statement he made, and he says now that he did not make it at all. Anyone who has been listening will see that I am not misrepresenting him. The hon. member made a number of points, and then kindly delivered an admirable reply to those same points. He told us that the power of the unions was broken, and then he said they were so strong and aggressive that they prevented people from going to work. Either one statement or the other must be incorrect. He drew a very pathetic picture of the misery inflicted by unions—the starvation suffered by the families of unionists, and the terrorism under which they lived, and the children going to bed hungry; and then he said there was no band of men in existence more honourable and more loyal to their fellows than the same members of the unions.

Mr. McMASTER: I said “working men.”

Mr. DAWSON: Either one statement or the other must be incorrect, and if either is incorrect it is because the hon. member does not understand the position. He also said that no men are easier led than working men, and that it is quite a simple matter to make dupes of them. In all probability the hon. member is quoting from his experience, and has found the working men of the Valley so easily duped as to return him as their member. There was a time in the past when that statement would have been perfectly correct. The working men all over the civilised world were easily led, and were the dupes of those who monopolised the political power, and the misery and anomalies that exist to-day are mostly due to the smartness of the dupers and the easy way in which the working men fell victims to them. There may be dupes in certain parts of the colony, but the greatest dupes we have will be found in Fortitude Valley. There has been a very old tale here, repeated times out of number, about the burning of woolsheds, and it is about time that hon. members were a little candid and expressed what they really think upon that subject. I do not for a single instant believe that hon. members on that side of the House, who get up one after the other and repeat the story, conscientiously believe that the men whom they accuse of the deeds really committed them. If they do believe it then, as reasonable men, they must do so because they have evidence; and if they have evidence and understand their duty as honest men and citizens and members of this House, they should produce it, and get the persons whom they accuse before the law courts so that they may be justly punished. If they fail to do that then they are failing in their duty, or stating something they do not conscientiously believe. It has been said by speaker after speaker that the unionists are the persons who are burning these sheds.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Martin said so.

Mr. DAWSON: Supposing he did, is that conclusive evidence that it is true? The hon. member for Mackay said so, but it does not necessarily follow that it is so. There is one statement that has been taken up as a parrot-cry by these retailers of secondhand opinions—because I believe the opinion originally came from the hon. member for Mackay, who is the only original thinker on that side—they all retail from him. The argument is this: Certain unions exist in the West, and where those unions exist fires have taken place, therefore

the unionists have caused those fires. But those hon. members forget to point out that unionists exist in districts where fires have not taken place. They might as well say that the Pastoralists' Association exists in these districts, and fires have occurred there, and many examples could be cited to show that men have burned their property for the sake of the insurance money. I have a perfect right to assume that, because these sheds were insured, the pastoralists burned them for the sake of the insurance money. My statement lies upon exactly the same foundation as the statement made by hon. members opposite. I may go further. There have been cases where the Government, in order to discredit their opponents, whom they fear, have been instrumental in committing crime. We have known of that being done in recent years, and the use made of the secret service funds. I can draw a conclusion from that. The present Government of Queensland have strong opponents; opponents whom they are not only beginning to fear, but who are making them shake with fear. Sheds have been burnt. It is to the interests of the Government that their opponents, the Labour party and the unions, should be discredited in the eyes of the public. To discredit that party, and to secure an uninterrupted run of power, I can say that the Government got somebody to burn down the woolsheds in the West. I maintain that I have as much evidence against the Government and the pastoralists as the Government have against the unionists of committing these deeds.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What about Dagworth?

Mr. McDONALD: What about the poisoned tanks and the poisoned apple?

Mr. DAWSON: If the Colonial Secretary knows who committed the deeds at Dagworth he is not fit for his position if he does not punish those individuals. If those who committed the deeds at Dagworth have done it under the auspices of the unions, the Colonial Secretary is justified in calling upon all the force he has at his command to break down a union that commits deeds of that description.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They should assist me.

Mr. DAWSON: I am glad to hear the hon. gentleman say that. It has been urged by the hon. members for Mackay and Rockhampton (Mr. Archer), that ever since the unions came into existence they have been against law and order, and that the Government had been put to the severest test to maintain law and order. I am pleased that the Colonial Secretary has had the generosity to say that they have assisted to maintain law and order; and it is not the first time we have had that announcement. The late Premier and present Chief Justice acknowledged that the very persons who are now accused had been of the very greatest assistance to him and his Government in maintaining law and order.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I said they should assist. I did not say they did.

Mr. DAWSON: Mr. Hinchcliffe and the member for Flinders were personally thanked by Sir Samuel Griffith for their efforts. There is another old story about the leaders forcing on the strikes. I am sure some hon. members on the other side know better than that. Abundant evidence has been produced that as far as this particular strike is concerned the leaders did all they possibly could to prevent an industrial disturbance. I imagine that the documents in the possession of the Colonial Secretary would give him that information without getting it from members of this House. He has access to a good many messages that go through the telegraph office.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I never see one of

Mr. DAWSON: The hon. gentleman gets a copy of them, if so desired.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

Mr. DAWSON: At all events the public Press has given sufficient information to show that the strike was not forced on by the leaders. The men determined to try their strength in defiance of those they had placed in a leading position. I am sure the hon. member for Mackay does not believe anything so silly as that the leaders caused the strike. Any man with the most elementary knowledge of sociology knows different to that.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: I do not.

Mr. DAWSON: Then I am exceedingly sorry that my estimate of the hon. gentleman must be lowered. Agitators do not make discontent. It is discontent that makes agitators. Leaders do not make movements, but movements make leaders. Oliver Cromwell did not make the English revolution. The great English revolution made Oliver Cromwell, and it is perfectly ridiculous for any man claiming to be acquainted with sociology to come down here and state that agitators cause the state of unrest that we see at the present time. We are told that there was no such thing as discontent, unionism, or anything else until a few years ago; that it is the result of the presence of one or two persons who are discontented themselves and are never happy unless they make everyone feel the same way. Strikes are not things of two or three years ago. They have taken place all over the world for years, and I must say that labour organisations have done more to obtain real freedom for the working class than anything that has ever been in existence. I think unionism is calculated to do a considerable amount more good, and the number of Labour members in this House seems to be a pretty good augury of it. We are told also that until the hon. member for Burke came to Queensland we never used to hear anything about the squatters. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley might not have heard about them. He might have been too much concerned in weighing out tea and sugar, rusty bacon, and bad tobacco—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is indulging in personalities, and I must ask him not to do so.

Mr. DAWSON: I do not wish to be personal. Though he never heard of a thing he must not run away under the impression that no one else ever heard it. I have heard some peculiar tales about squatters in the olden days; and I have heard pastoralists admit that the condition of the working men in the bush has improved considerably since labour organisations sprang into existence in the Western country. It is because those men know what they have gained that they fight to maintain that which gave them the freedom they enjoy. Hon. members talk about men doing what they are bid. It is evident that they have never been inside a labour organisation. If the people they come in contact with rise and bow because they raise a finger, they must not conclude that other people do it. I have had a fairly long connection with unions, and I know that every man who does not believe in what is going on will raise his voice and object. And if there is an organisation in existence in which the general members have absolute control, it is a labour organisation. There you have a better system of democracy than in your Government; and more particularly is this so in what is called the new unionism. There was a time when the old unions conducted the whole of their business by means of small committees. The new unionism absolutely abolishes those committees; and every member is able to take his part in the business. Then there is the old yarn about freedom of contract and the terrorism of the

unionist objecting to the free labourer. I maintain that the unionist in defence of his position has a right to ask any man—

Mr. DALRYMPLE: With a waddy?

Mr. DAWSON: Not with a waddy. I am speaking of white men, not labourers on sugar plantations. The usual argument is that the employer says, "I will pay you a certain wage. You are free to accept or to leave it. If you leave it you have no right to try and prevent anyone else from taking it."

Mr. DALRYMPLE: By violence.

Mr. DAWSON: Every man has a right to citizenship.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: He does not get it.

Mr. DAWSON: If not, it is the fault of the Government. The men who refuse to accept that wage have a perfect right to resist what they regard as a menace to their position, their liberty, and it may be their lives. A man may suffer from degrading conditions and lose his life after a great deal more suffering than a man killed with a waddy. And I say that men have a perfect right to resist, and to endeavour to get as many people in their own line of business to assist them in their resistance, provided they do not interfere with the citizenship of people. Supposing the pastoralists came down and said, "No man can be employed on any of our stations unless he consents to have one eye gouged out. You are free to either accept work on those terms or to leave it?" The principle is exactly the same. They are free to have that eye taken out and get work, or free to keep two eyes and do without work. I say they are perfectly justified in using all the means in their power to resist anything of that description. This motion has been described by most members on the other side as nonsensical and something unheard of. What does it really mean? It is something that was advocated in this city not long ago by a visitor from London, who was of sufficient importance to be taken in hand by the Chamber of Commerce and patronised by the leading lights of the Pastoralists' Association. What is this but compulsory conference—the thing advocated by Mr. Scammell? The suggestion was thrown out by the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Archer, that the Government, in order to protect the pastoralists, should insure the stations, and then if any woolshed happened to be burned, the Government would have to pay the insurance money. I, as a unionist, as a citizen of this colony, and as a member of Parliament, cordially second that suggestion; and I believe that if the Government could be induced to insure the stations we would have a conference when any difference arose between employer and employee, for the reason that if they thought there was going to be any loss to the country the Government would take very good care to compel both sides to confer and settle their disputes. I now wish to refer to two statements made by the Colonial Secretary, who made a deliberate charge in this House. I am sorry I have not the *Hansard* report by me, but he stated that certain members of this Assembly were in the habit of going to trysting places and meeting some of those Western men, and the result of that meeting was crime.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I never said anything of the kind.

Mr. DAWSON: The other statement is that the delegates of the associated shearers' union, to his full knowledge—and he took the full responsibility of the statement—posted up the leaflets signed "No. 1 Group."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is true.

Mr. DAWSON: If that is true there is a legitimate cause of complaint against the hon.

gentleman in his capacity of chief policeman of the colony for not bringing those delegates to justice long before this. If he is certain and has evidence to show that those persons did that, the hon. gentleman has neglected his duty in not bringing those persons to justice, and if any person should come under the provisions of a certain Act, it is the hon. gentleman, who has failed to act as he should have done on behalf of the citizens of this colony. The hon. gentleman was asked where this posting up of the leaflets was done, and in reply to the hon. member who asked the question, he said, "I shall probably be able to let him know in the courts of justice yet. I shall endeavour to do so." I say that was not a fair use for the hon. gentleman to make of his position to stand up in this House and before a man he was going to arrest is brought to trial, pass judgment on him, and thus prejudice the case of a person he intends to prosecute. With regard to the other statement I made, and which the hon. member has denied, if he can show that I have misrepresented his meaning, I am willing to withdraw the statement. I find he said—

"The course they adopt is not to form large camps, but individuals, two or three in number, go out, meet at certain trysting-places, and are there given directions—I am sorry to say I believe from some of the members of this Assembly—which result in crime."

That is exactly my statement, but if the hon. gentleman denies it, I am willing to take his denial.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Read on.

Mr. DAWSON:

"If such is not the case, then in the districts where these crimes are taking place, they, by stating they are acting on their advice, are doing the Labour members of this House an injustice, and it is my duty to tell them so."

In the first place, the hon. member referred to certain members of the House, and in the next place he says the charge is against Labour members. The hon. gentleman should withdraw that statement in as public a manner as he made it, or else do his duty—furnish evidence of its truth and punish the persons who did that kind of thing.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I shall certainly endeavour to do that.

Mr. DAWSON: I hope the hon. gentleman will succeed. I think there is a good deal in the contention that the motion now before the House is practically dead. The necessity for it has passed away, but I hope some of the suggestions thrown out in the course of the debate will not be lost sight of by the Government, and that some practical result will follow in the interests of the peace and prosperity of the people of this colony.

Mr. WATSON: I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Question put and passed; and the resumption of the debate made an order for Friday, 19th instant.

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