

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 1895**

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WEDNESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER, 1895.

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

QUESTIONS.

SUPREME COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT.

Mr. ARCHER asked the Attorney-General—

Will the Government favourably consider the expressed wish of the people of the Central district for the establishment there of a branch of the Supreme Court, with a resident judge?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. T. J. Byrnes) replied—

Yes. Measures will be submitted to Parliament for this object during the present session.

## ELECTORAL CLAIM OF MR. B. F. CRIBB.

Mr. DRAKE asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. Has his attention been drawn to the inclusion in the last quarterly electoral roll for the electoral district of Enoggera of the name of Mr. Benjamin Foote Cribb, as a person qualified to vote in respect of the ownership of a freehold estate situated at corner Five Ways, Milton, being subdivision 115, portion 227, parish of Enoggera?
2. Is the land so described within the electoral district of Enoggera?
3. Was the claim sent in by Mr. Cribb personally or by an agent on his behalf?
4. Who attested the claim?
5. Who were the members of the registration court that allowed the claim?
6. Has the Minister any objection to lay the claim on the table of the House?
7. Is it the intention of the Minister to take any action, under the 7th section of the Elections Act of 1892, against the person who attested the claim?

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

1. Yes, by letter from the hon. member, dated yesterday.
2. Looking at the map, it appears to be within the electoral district of Toowong.
3. Apparently it was delivered by Mr. Cribb personally to the electoral registrar, Mr. Boyce, about the time of his transference to other duties.
4. J. A. Boyce, J.P.
5. G. P. M. Murray, Police Magistrate.
6. The original claim must remain with the electoral registrar to enable him to comply with section 15 of the Elections Act of 1892. There is no objection to a certified copy of the claim being laid on the table of the House.
7. No. There is no evidence that the justice signed the certificate without personal knowledge or full inquiry from the claimant; and, from the facts before me, there does not appear to have been any offence committed by Mr. Boyce, the present relieving magistrate.

## PROTECTION OF NATIVE BIRDS.

Mr. ARMSTRONG asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. What is the period during which native birds are protected?
2. Will the Colonial Secretary issue instructions to the police officers of the colony stating—
  - (a) The period during which native birds are protected;
  - (b) What the duty of police officers is in regard to the maintenance of the laws relating to the protection of native birds?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied—

1. The close season in the Southern district is from the 1st September to the 31st day of March inclusive; in the Central and Northern districts from the 1st November to the 30th April. Many birds are, however, protected all the year round.
2. Yes.

## PETITIONS.

## STOCK TAX ON GOLD FIELDS.

Mr. DAWSON presented a petition from a number of dairymen and stockowners at Charters Towers, in reference to the proposed tax on stock running on goldfields.

Petition read and received.

Mr. DAWSON presented a petition of similar purport and prayer, from residents of Charters Towers and district.

Petition received.

## SUPPLY.

## RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

## "LUCINDA," "OTTER," AND "MINER."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that £4,516 be granted for the steamers "Lucinda," "Otter," and "Miner." The only increase was £18 in the salary of the chief officer, who took command of the "Otter" when Captain South was on the "Lucinda." There was a new item of £500 for repairs and overhaul. The steamers were now getting old, and required more attention than formerly. The three steamers cost about £4,500 a year, which might be roughly

apportioned as follows:— "Otter," £2,500; "Lucinda," £1,000; and "Miner," £1,100. The "Otter" did all the bay work, and when she was not needed the crew were transferred to the "Lucinda." The "Miner" belonged partly to the Colonial Secretary's Department and partly to the Port Office, but was charged to the Colonial Secretary's Department. She did the Port Office work, such as laying buoys, and did the work of the Colonial Secretary's Department, including the Defence Force work. The "Lucinda" did any work that was required, such as dispensing hospitality to visitors, and the work that ought to be done in such a place as Brisbane.

Mr. CALLAN said that the master, officers, and crew received a victualling allowance of £36 a year each. A short time previously they had been told that the allowance of black troopers was £40 a year, and he wished to know whether the £36 covered the whole of the rations for the men for the whole year.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was an allowance to the officers and men when away from their homes. They were not always away—in fact, only two days a week. It was calculated that an allowance of 2s. a day was sufficient to compensate the men, who all received the same allowance, for their increased outlay when away from home.

Mr. TURLEY said that at the beginning of the session they had been told that the extra wages paid to the officers and crew of the "Lucinda" during her recent trip North was £160 16s. The whole trip had occupied twenty-four days. The crew were transferred to the "Otter" when the "Lucinda" was not being used, and yet the cost of the crew of the "Otter" for a whole month only amounted to £103. At most there would only be one or two additional firemen and deck-hands required, and he could not understand how such a large additional expenditure had been incurred.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the cost of the Northern trip of the "Lucinda" did not come out of that vote at all, but he would explain it. The "Otter" had had to be left behind, with the exception of the captain, to do the bay work, and when the "Lucinda" went to sea the Board of Trade required her to carry a larger crew than when she worked in the river. The consequence was that the captain said he would require a certain staff. There were two or three officers on board in addition to the captain, and extra engineers and stokers. The wages-sheet had been carefully prepared and certified to by the captain.

Mr. McMASTER said the crew of the "Lucinda" and "Otter" were the hardest worked crew in the port, and he did not notice that any difference had been made in their pay. They had to do double duty, and he thought they should receive consideration.

Mr. CALLAN said the Colonial Secretary informed him that the crew of those two vessels were very often at home, and that £36 was all it cost for extra allowances; but, from the work they had to do, it seemed to him they were very seldom at home.

Mr. TURLEY did not think the reply of the Colonial Secretary was altogether satisfactory. It seemed strange that it should cost £60 extra wages for a three weeks' trip. Two extra officers and a couple of firemen would not cost that amount.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There were three stewards and two cooks.

Mr. TURLEY: That threw a little light on the subject. It was just as well that they should know where the expenditure came in. From the reports in the local papers it seemed to him that some of the local bodies would not wish that those trips should be taken too frequently.

From the report of the Mackay Municipal Council reception committee he found that the expenditure on Mr. Byrnes' trip cost £3 6s. 6d.; the banquet cost £135 5s. 7d., and the expenses in connection with Mr. Tozer's trip were £6 10s. 7d. The receipts from the banquet were £49 17s. 6d., and there was a deficit of £95 5s. 2d. They wanted to know at the meeting where the balance was to come from. The Pioneer reception committee in the same district incurred an expenditure of £23 16s. 3½d., and one councillor on the divisional board moved that only £10 be contributed towards the expenses of entertaining Ministers. He was inclined to think that the less there were of those trips the better some people would be pleased.

Mr. BROWNE said a great many of the rate-payers imagined that the cost of keeping up the "Lucinda" was a good deal more than it really was; they thought, in fact, that the boat was kept specially for the use of Ministers and a few members of Parliament and their friends. They were often told that those trips were instructive, and that the boat was useful for the purpose of entertaining distinguished visitors. Ever since the "Lucinda" came here the same debate had cropped up every year, and the Minister for Lands used to be most prominent in years past in opposing the vote and maintaining that visitors should travel in ordinary steamers. He had had only one trip in the "Lucinda," when a number of members of Parliament were invited to go down the bay to inspect the lights and buoys at Cape Morston. He was surprised when he went on board to find the number of nautical men there were connected with Parliament. They all knew a great deal about lights and buoys, and going down the river he and the hon. member for Woothakata and others had the greatest difficulty in getting near the charts that were being explained by Captain Almond. It was all very well going down the river, but after that there was a bit of a sea in which the "Lucinda" commenced to knock about a bit, and it was surprising to see the number of members who suddenly recollected that they wanted to catch the 6 o'clock train that evening. Further down a good few of them had left the chart and were exploring all sorts of other places. The member for Toowong and the member for Flinders could not have been more sick if they had swallowed three Peace Preservation Bills. The Premier looked very happy; it was his first opportunity of making the Labour party sick. They never went near the lighthouse, never saw any channels, and at the request of a number of gentlemen the "Lucinda" was headed round for town. If they did not swallow much information, the way the eatables and drinkables disappeared was a caution. He thoroughly enjoyed the trip; at the same time it was essentially a pleasure trip, and he did not see why the country should be put to the expense. In the *Courier* of the 6th May last was a letter signed "Molly," which showed how the thing was looked upon by some of the ladies of Brisbane. He was sure that every hon. member would like to oblige "Molly" and her friends, but it was hardly good enough for the country to keep a pleasure boat for their benefit. The boat was used week after week for picnics. There were plenty of steamers plying for hire; and even if it cost a little more to use other steamers for visitors and members of Parliament, it would be better than keeping the "Lucinda" as a pleasure boat. According to the *Telegraph* of the 20th May, on the occasion of the big boat race in the Brisbane River, the whole of the Government fleet were crowded, while the boats belonging to private owners were only moderately patronised. That was not fair to private enterprise.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY hoped the hon. gentleman would postpone his opposition to the vote for a few days, because he just now had under consideration an application from the Trades and Labour Hall for the use of the "Lucinda."

Mr. BROWNE said the Trades and Labour Hall had as much right to the "Lucinda" as anybody else. When the parties to whom he had alluded applied for the "Lucinda," the hon. gentleman did not take many days to consider. It was generally granted almost before it was asked.

Mr. FISHER said that when members on the other side went on a pleasure trip in the "Lucinda," as some of them did early this year, they were lauded for their patriotism; but when parties in opposition travelled at their own expense to ascertain the wants of the country, they were set down as stirrers up of strife. The expenditure upon the "Lucinda" was quite unnecessary, and he agreed with the hon. member for Croydon that the sooner the vessel was done away with the better. If he were a Central member he should suggest that one of these steamers should be sent up there for excursion purposes.

Mr. TURLEY said they had been told when they were doing away with one of the two crews that the crew left would be sufficient to do the work in connection with both steamers, but everyone who had taken notice must have seen that the "Lucinda" had been used more lately than at any other time since she had been in the possession of the Government. The crew consisted only of two men on deck and two below, and it was very unfair to expect them to keep both vessels clean, and always ready for use, without any extra assistance. Seeing the large use that was being made of the "Lucinda," it would be just as well for the Government to engage two crews the same as before.

Mr. GLASSEY said it seemed as if the Colonial Secretary rather sneered at the application made by the committee of the Trades and Labour Hall for the use of the "Lucinda."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

Mr. GLASSEY thought the hon. member's remark was rather sarcastic, and he would remind him, and the country also, that the representatives of the Trades Hall represented a large number of people, and when they asked for the use of that vessel they simply asked for the use of a vessel which they helped to maintain. The cost of this vessel, including the purchase money and maintenance, must be fully £50,000, which the people have had to pay, and the bulk of them received no benefit from it. Therefore his remark in reference to this application from the Trades and Labour Hall fell very flat. Even if the application were granted it would be a very small concession to the people who had contributed so largely to the maintenance of this steamer. He agreed with the hon. member for Croydon that the "Lucinda" should be done away with; and if an extra vessel was wanted it could easily be engaged as occasion required. This pleasure yacht should not be kept merely for the use of a small portion of the swell order of Queensland at the expense of the bulk of the people.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said there was a great deal of exaggeration in regard to the expenditure on this steamer. If a party went down the river for what the hon. member for Croydon called an "entertainment," the Minister in charge invariably paid for it out of his own pocket.

Mr. FISHER: Does that apply to the Northern trip?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had already given the items in connection with that

trip. That was not a question of hospitality but duty. He regretted that anything he might have said should have been considered a sneer by the hon. member for Burke. He did not intend any such thing, but was showing how useful these vessels were. They were rather peculiarly situated in Brisbane. Sometimes people came here, and it was desirable to advertise the colony to them. They had no Blue Mountains, as they had in New South Wales, to take people to, and the only thing the Government could do was to invite them down the river, and give them opportunities to associate with the people of Brisbane. That was their only way of showing hospitality. From an economical point of view it would be a great mistake to do away with the "Lucinda," because it would cost a good deal more for hiring other vessels. They had a long coastline, and there were many places that must be attended to. It was absolutely necessary to send certain persons to the lazaret at Friday Island, and the "Otter" was very suitable for that work, and during the time she was away, if the departments had to rely upon hired steamers, they would pay a great deal. They therefore put the "Lucinda" into commission. Many people wanted to see their friends at Dunwich, where there were some 700 or 800 persons, or at St. Helena. They used the "Lucinda," and no doubt derived some pleasure from the trip. She was a working steamer, although she was at times used for purposes of entertainment. The members of the Government must be hospitable; it would never do, in a matter of that sort, to be niggardly. The hon. member for South Brisbane exaggerated in his statement about the employment of the men. As a rule the "Otter" only went out once a week, and the "Lucinda" never went out without a Minister on board, and Ministers did not go very often. Certainly, the other day she was placed at the disposal of the Admiral as a tender to the "Orlando," but she was used to bring to town not only the officers but the men of the flagship. The men on board the "Otter" had made no complaint to him of being overworked. The work was divided amongst them as fairly as possible. He would point out that in 1890 the cost of the steamers, including the "Miner," was over £8,000 a year; whereas now the colony got the same amount of work out of them for £4,500. He should certainly like to see a more useful boat than the "Lucinda," but she was purchased long before he came into the House. But, even if she was laid up she would require to be taken care of like the gunboats lying idle in the river, which gave no pleasure to anybody. The "Lucinda" not only did useful work, but afforded a means of enjoyment to a large number of persons in the community.

Mr. TURLEY said that, if the "Lucinda" was now a working boat as well as a pleasure boat, she must cost a considerable amount in the employment of casual labour; and if that were so, would it not be as well to have men on board her the same as there were on board the "Otter"? The cost would be just about the same, he presumed. Could the hon. gentleman give the Committee any idea of the amount paid in employing casual labour on board the "Lucinda" while the "Otter" was engaged in work elsewhere?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the only extra items of expense over and above £5 were incurred when the "Otter" went to Friday Island with lepers, and when the "Lucinda" went up the coast with the parliamentary party. When the "Orlando" was in the bay they borrowed a few men from the Harbours and Rivers Department.

Mr. RAWLINGS was amused to hear the Colonial Secretary say he considered the trip up

North was a duty. The hon. gentleman must have some very peculiar ideas of duty. So far as he knew, the hon. gentleman had not been authorised to spend that money, some £500, upon a parliamentary trip; and if it was a parliamentary trip, why were not all the members invited?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They were.

Mr. RAWLINGS said they were not, and he was informed by one of the members who did go on the trip that it was not every member who was wanted.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Because there are not seventy-two berths on board the ship.

Mr. RAWLINGS: That was not the reason given to him, but because some were not congenial to those who were going. As he had not received an invitation, though it was known that he was going North, he presumed that he was one of those who were not considered congenial. He would not have accepted an invitation if he had got one, as he objected entirely to such unauthorised expenditure, and they should recall it if they could. While they retained the "Lucinda" she offered an inducement to spend money in the same way again, and the best thing they could do would be to get rid of her. Members would not learn as much on such trips as they would if they paid their way, as they ought to do. They had their free passes, and if they wanted to travel over the country they should use them as far as they would take them. As for the hospitality which must be shown to distinguished visitors, there were not many of them, and the "Otter" or the "Midge" would be quite good enough for them. He protested against the expenditure incurred in keeping up the "Lucinda" as a pleasure yacht.

Mr. McDONALD did not altogether object to the Northern trip, as he believed that facilities should be provided to enable members to see as much of the country as possible; but he objected to the manner in which the trip had been carried out, as he did not think that any members should be under the patronage of the Government to go anywhere. As that method of taking people about the country led to scandal, it would be wise for the Government to drop it. The articles appearing in some of the papers published at places visited by the party were not very creditable to them, and it would be better for the credit of the colony if such things were not indulged in again. He said that, though he did not wish to see the "Lucinda" tied up, as he thought she might be useful in many ways.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON said that taking into consideration the length of our coast line, and the desirability of enabling the Government and officials to visit the different ports more conveniently than they could by the ordinary coastal boats, and taking also into consideration the requirements of Moreton Bay, the "Lucinda" was very necessary. Apart from that, if the idea of selling her was seriously entertained, it would probably be difficult to find a purchaser for her at her value at the present time. He was not one of the Argonauts who accompanied the Colonial Secretary, but he thought their trip North in search of the golden fleece of popularity was a judicious one, and he had no doubt they had received valuable information concerning the Northern ports. He hoped it would be borne in mind that it was undesirable to afford facilities for bringing the Government steamers into competition with private enterprise.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They are not given.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON said they had been given not long ago, and so long as they were made available for picnic excursions private enterprise would not be encouraged as it should

be to provide adequate steamer accommodation for the port. He was glad to hear that the practice was not followed now, and he hoped that in future the Government boats would not be used in that direction except under exceptional circumstances, where no private steamer was available for the purpose.

Mr. DUNSFORD believed the main cause of complaint in regard to the "Lucinda" was that she was not available to any large section of the people, even for pleasure purposes. Only leading citizens were allowed the use of the boat, so that she might be said to be used for class purposes. For that reason alone, if for no other, he desired to see the boat put to a better use, or sold. With regard to the trip up North, it had been said by the Minister that invitations were issued to all Northern members, and to members of the Labour party. That he denied. Invitations, and even telegrams, were sent to a few Northern members, who were, he supposed, congenial, but other Northern members were ignored altogether; so that, as far as members of that House itself were concerned, the boat was used for making class distinctions. Something more than a mere verbal protest should be entered against that kind of thing, and he therefore moved that the salary of the engineer-in-chief on the "Lucinda" be reduced by £4. The engineer was probably worth the £17 a month that he received, but he moved the reduction simply as a protest.

Mr. GLASSEY said a few years ago there was a very excellent system in operation, whereby members of the legislature who felt inclined to visit the Northern parts of the colony were allowed a free steamer ticket once a year. He had taken advantage of that arrangement on one occasion, and derived considerable benefit from the trip. For some reason or other that system had been abolished, but he believed that it would be far better to have such a system than to keep a special boat for that purpose, which was used for class purposes. Why that system was abolished he did not know.

Mr. SMYTH: You ought to do.

Mr. GLASSEY: He had taken a ticket to the Gulf, and only going as far as Cooktown, he arranged with the shipping company for a rebate to the Treasury. He remembered that it was alleged by the class of men represented by the junior member for Gympie, that he had obtained some personal benefit out of that ticket, but when the matter came before the House they found that they had made a mistake, and that it was others who had been guilty of that practice. However, he believed that under stricter regulations abuses of that kind could be avoided, and he hoped that before long the present or some other Government would consider the advisability of reviving that system, which had been a benefit to members and to the country.

Mr. SMYTH believed that the late hon. member for Stanley, Mr. O'Sullivan, was the means of a free steamer pass being granted to Southern members once a year to go to the Northern districts. The hon. member for Burke pretended to be ignorant of the reason why that arrangement was cancelled; it was only pretence, because he immediately afterwards referred to the fact that the matter was brought before the House, and accused him (Mr. Smyth) of insinuating that he had misused the pass. That was not correct. He had never said or insinuated anything of the kind, or alluded in any way to the hon. member, but it was a well-known fact that there were members who took out passes for a long distance and only went a small portion of the journey, afterwards obtaining a refund from the shipping company and putting the money into their own pockets. That was the reason the system was discontinued. He believed that the system did a great deal of

good, and that the recent Northern trip of the "Lucinda" would also be productive of a great deal of good. On that occasion under secretaries and officers of departments went up North to inspect works, and investigate the branches of their various departments, and the information gained by them would repay the cost of the trip. He had not been invited to go, and it was the Southern members who should go North. He expected that Northern members had rather too much of it.

Mr. JACKSON was not sure that the junior member for Charters Towers was right in taking exception to the vote because certain Northern members had not got special invitations by wire; but he might have made a grievance of the fact that the invitations had been bungled. He (Mr. Jackson) knew that the Colonial Secretary had issued a general invitation to the leader of the Labour party, but invitations had not reached individual members. He would have accepted an invitation had circumstances permitted him to go. The members of the Labour party were creating rather a bad precedent in not accepting such invitations, because some day they might be on the other side, and if they issued invitations to hon. members opposite they might follow the precedent set on this occasion by the Labour party. If the trip had been got up purely for electioneering purposes, that would have been a very good reason for accompanying the Colonial Secretary. He was sorry he had not been able to visit Ravenswood when the Colonial Secretary had invited him, because his presence might have prevented the hon. gentleman trying to make capital at his expense, as he had tried to induce a certain gentleman to oppose him at the next election. He was happy to say that the hon. gentleman had not succeeded.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Do you say that I did so?

Mr. JACKSON: Yes.

Mr. GLASSEY said that the hon. member was wrong in blaming him for the bungling which had taken place in connection with the invitations to members of the Labour party. A general invitation had been sent to him as leader of the Labour party by the Colonial Secretary. He had thanked the hon. gentleman for his kind invitation, and had sent him the names and addresses of the members of the party, suggesting that the hon. gentleman might get one of his clerks to invite the members individually. If the Colonial Secretary had not carried out the suggestion, then the fault lay with that hon. gentleman.

Mr. JACKSON had not imputed any blame to the leader of the Labour party. He had blamed the Colonial Secretary for not issuing the invitations to members individually. Had he been in the position of the hon. member for Burke, he would have acted just as the hon. gentleman had done.

Mr. OGDEN said that, so far as electioneering was concerned, the picnic had rather told against the Government. About the only thing missing from the "Lucinda" picnic was a dozen policemen.

Mr. REID could not support the amendment. A parsimonious spirit was always shown in connection with the vote, but he maintained it was the duty of the Government to entertain visitors. As he never went to any of those entertainments, he could speak without any personal feeling. In all the southern colonies they were far more kind to visitors than they were in Queensland, and provided far greater facilities for showing them round. When visitors were well received they not only went away with a favourable impression of the colony, but with a great deal of useful information. The great argument against the vote was that the "Lucinda" was of no use to

the people in the Northern and Central districts; but if those districts should become separate colonies similar complaints would be made by the other towns in those districts that the capitals had a monopoly of such things. He did not believe in cutting down the vote, because, since he had become a member, he had learned what use was made of the "Lucinda" and "Otter." He had gone down several times to St. Helena and Dunwich on the ordinary trips to those places, and on more than one occasion the "Lucinda" had had to be used owing to the absence of the "Otter." If the "Lucinda" were sold, and the "Otter" was being used in some other way, the Government would have to charter some other steamer. The "Miner" was too small, and the Government must have a boat at their disposal rather than be dependent upon hiring boats from private firms. During the last election he was asked whether he would oppose the vote for the "Lucinda," and he said he would not, because they would have to hire other boats if they had not got her, and at the end of the year they were in pocket by it. He agreed with a great deal that had been said about the boat being used for class purposes, but that was outside the question of the necessity of having a boat. There were a certain number of "butterflies," as the member for North Brisbane described them, who hovered round Ministers, and they and their friends went for picnics up and down the river, but, apart from that, the boat was useful and necessary. The hon. member for Bulimba said that the "Lucinda" came in contact with private enterprise. His (Mr. Reid's) opinion was that the Government steamers were not used enough by the people, and that they might well be used in giving the school children and hospital convalescent patients a sea trip or two during the year. There were also other useful purposes to which the "Lucinda" might be put; and although he did not agree that she should be used to enable friends of Ministers to be constantly galivanting about, still he could not support the reduction.

Mr. OGDEN said that the hon. member had made it appear that because the "Lucinda" could not be used in Rockhampton and Townsville that that was the reason for the opposition to the vote. In Townsville they had quite enough legitimate expenses without incurring that expense. He could understand hon. members opposing the vote because the boat was useless, or supporting it on the same plea as the Colonial Secretary, that it was necessary for pleasure purposes or to show hospitality to visitors, but he could not understand any other argument at all. They heard it constantly stated that Brisbane was the capital and for that reason must be supplied with pleasure yachts and all other accessories that went to make up a capital. The hon. member for Toowong represented the capital and the hon. member for Townsville a place that wanted to be a capital. There was a bigger question than that. The North wanted to get rid of Brisbane, but in doing so they did not want to take the "Lucinda."

The CHAIRMAN: I must remind the hon. member that he is not discussing the vote.

Mr. OGDEN said three-fourths of the speech of the last speaker had no relation to the vote. His contention was that if the people wanted pleasure they should pay for it. The taxpayers had paid quite enough for the "Lucinda" already, as she had cost them altogether £50,000. The working people were not likely to use the "Lucinda"; their sick relatives were not likely to use her, or their children either. The vessel was maintained for the convenience of members who supported the Government and a certain class whom they represented.

Mr. FISHER said they had been told that the amount put down for the "Lucinda," "Otter," and "Miner" was a fair amount, and that there had been a great deal of false information circulated as to their cost. In looking at the Estimates for 1892 he found the total cost of the "Lucinda" and "Otter" was £6,057. Over £2,000 had been saved during the last three years, and, as the service was as good now as it was then, it was evident that the expenditure in the past had been beyond what was necessary. One boat would be quite enough for the purpose of taking round distinguished strangers and members of Parliament, and he would support the reduction of the vote by a considerable sum. He believed the Central and Northern districts had a real grievance. Though Brisbane was the capital, there would be other capitals before long.

Mr. CROSS was surprised to hear some parts of the speech made by the hon. member for Toowong, who both advocated the expenditure on the "Lucinda" and disapproved of it. When he talked about the necessity of having the "Lucinda" for the purpose of entertaining visitors, he forgot the particular kind of visitors entertained. Distinguished visitors like the Consul-General of France were worthy of being entertained, but the great complaint of the people was that the "Lucinda" was used as a pleasure boat for a particular class. If any prominent representative of the Labour movement visited the colony for the purpose of acquiring information, he doubted whether the Government would be so ready to give him a free pass over all our railways, and grant the "Lucinda" for a pleasure trip. In the case of an agitator that would be flatly refused; but in the case of any of those butterflies mentioned by the hon. member for Brisbane, the use of the "Lucinda" would be granted at once. One distinguished visitor, the American Consul-General, Colonel Bell, was entirely ignored in an official sense, inasmuch as no offer was made for his entertainment on the "Lucinda." The fact that the work had been done for £2,000 less showed how well-founded were the complaints of the people in regard to the matter. He did not think there was much objection to the "Lucinda" from an economic standpoint, and if the Government would take a fairer view in granting the use of the vessel the complaints would soon be wiped out. There were members who had no opportunity of seeing some of the most important parts of the colony, though they were frequently called upon to express their opinions and give their votes on questions affecting those districts, and he thought it would be well for the Government to take into consideration the question of giving members an opportunity once a year of visiting the Northern ports of the colony by steamer. There was no justifiable reason why the privilege had been abolished. He would like to have gone on the last "Lucinda" trip for the purpose of seeing the Northern portion of the colony, but did not care to go under the arrangements made.

Mr. RAWLINGS would support the amendment upon principle, by way of a protest against the "Lucinda" being used for electioneering purposes. He had no objection to the legitimate use of the steamer for official purposes, even if a Minister wanted to have a picnic; but he did object to anything in the shape of electioneering in connection with her. He was sorry the Secretary for Works was not in his place, as he wished to quote a paragraph from the *Wild River Times* of 25th April, 1895, to show that electioneering did take place on the last "Lucinda" trip up North. The Secretary for Works was reported to have said at Herberton—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What has that to do with this vote? He did not travel by the "Lucinda." He was not one of the "Lucinda" party.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that there is an amendment before the Committee to reduce this vote, and according to Standing Order 311, hon. members can speak to that amendment only until it is disposed of.

Mr. RAWLINGS said he was giving his reasons for supporting the amendment. His principal reason was that the "Lucinda" was used for political purposes, and he wished to prove his contention. Of course if he were ruled out of order he must subside.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must confine his remarks to the amendment only, and not deal with the general expenditure upon the steamer.

Mr. McDONALD pointed out that the amendment was only moved to get a discussion upon this particular matter. If that were not allowed, the hon. member might as well withdraw his amendment, and discuss the matter upon the general vote.

Mr. FISHER thought the proper way would be for the hon. member to withdraw his amendment for the present, and move it later on.

Mr. DUNSFORD thought it right to have a full discussion, and was willing to withdraw the amendment for the present.

Mr. BATTERSBY objected to the amendment being withdrawn if it was to be moved again later on. They might as well deal with the matter now, and have done with it.

Question—That the item be so reduced—put and negatived.

Mr. RAWLINGS said as he had made an accusation he wished to give some proof of it. At a banquet, when proposing prosperity to the district, the Secretary for Works said he was glad to be there, as he had many old friends in the district, and would try to come next year. Then he went on to say it was a pity they were not differently represented in Parliament, and recommended that at the next general election the electors should work together and not have two candidates splitting each other's votes. He also said it did not matter so much if their representative was not a Government man altogether, because the present Government would not be always on the Treasury benches, but if a majority of the electors were in favour of good government, they should endeavour to be so represented. That was a reflection upon his (Mr. Rawlings') character.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What has that to do with the "Lucinda."

Mr. RAWLINGS said as the Minister for Works was not in his place he would say no more about the matter, but if he were present he would speak very plainly about it.

Mr. DUNSFORD moved that the total vote be reduced by £16, as a protest against the use to which the "Lucinda" had been put in the past—competing against outside pleasure boats, and being used for class purposes.

Mr. WILKINSON said he should have voted for the reduction had it been moved on the ground that the "Lucinda" was used for electioneering purposes; but he could not support it on the ground stated by the hon. member. He believed some such vessel was necessary as long as she was used for legitimate purposes.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY must enter his protest against the statement that the "Lucinda" was in any way used on her Northern trip for electioneering purposes. It was a slander which hon. members must know did not contain a scintilla of truth. The Government did not initiate the trip, but members on both sides of the House, who expressed a strong desire to see

the North. He himself did not feel sufficiently well to go. However, he went reluctantly, and he remained unwell nearly the whole of the time. The guests were not confined to those members who generally supported the Government; indeed, there were quite as many from the Opposition as from the Government side. If he had sent invitations to members of the Labour party individually it might be thought he wanted to get them into a trap or something of that kind, and it might be used for electioneering purposes against the Ministry. Therefore, in order that there should be no misconception of his motives, he himself wrote a courteous letter to the leader of the Labour party, inviting him and any of his supporters to accompany the party. The hon. gentleman happened to be away at the time, and the letter did not reach him until some time afterwards, when he replied that he could not go, and asked him to communicate with the members of the party individually. That was a day or two before the time fixed for starting. He thereupon came to the House to see if he could find any members of the Labour party, as the hon. member for Maranoa could bear him out, and there was not one, with the exception of that hon. member, in the vicinity of the building. The Secretary for Works and the Attorney-General were not members of the party. They happened to be at Townsville and Mackay when the "Lucinda" was there, and took advantage of the opportunity to travel by her to Cairns. The trip was partly departmental, and the result of the visit of certain heads of departments, which had resulted in the amalgamation of offices since, had saved the cost of the voyage. He could say, without fear of contradiction, that not a single member of the party made use of the occasion for electioneering purposes at any time.

Mr. KING said he liked to give credit where credit was due. The Colonial Secretary did invite him personally, and at the same time asked him if he knew where any other members of the party could be found. He did not, and there were none of them about the House at that particular time. Whatever objection other members of the Labour party might have to travel by the "Lucinda," he had none, and would certainly have accepted the invitation if he could have afforded it. If the trip was used for electioneering purposes it served the party perfectly right, because they ought to have made up a fairly good number of their own to go, and if the Government side tried a little electioneering they would have been there to refute them. He could not support the amendment, because if passed, the money would be taken from those who could least afford it. He failed to see what use the "Lucinda" was. The Colonial Secretary said her chief use was to show hospitality to distinguished visitors, but if she was done away with altogether it would not cost £50 a year to hire steamers from private individuals for that purpose. Her cost was over £2,000 a year, and if she was given away the country would be the gainer to nearly that amount.

Mr. BELL said the Colonial Secretary had been asked who were the members who had started the idea of the Northern trip. He (Mr. Bell) was one, the hon. member for Bulloo was another, the hon. member for Albert was another, and there were one or two more. They went to the Colonial Secretary and represented to him that several members desired to go North in the "Lucinda." That was the germ of the trip. He had not been able to go himself; but it was quite incorrect to say that the idea originated with any member of the Ministry.

Mr. FISHER could not allow the statement of the Colonial Secretary to go without some explanation. The hon. gentleman had said that

he could not trust the individual members of the Labour party with invitations for fear they would use them against him throughout the country.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I knew you would.

Mr. FISHER said the statement was a gross insinuation against Labour members, and was unworthy of a Minister. The hon. gentleman said he had sent a general invitation to the leader of the Labour party, but he was only using a subterfuge. Had the hon. gentleman sent a general invitation to the leader of the Opposition? Did he not send a special telegram inviting one member for a constituency and ignore the other member for that constituency? Let the hon. gentleman be honest and straightforward and admit that he picked his company. Members on that side objected to the trip because it was an electioneering trip. They objected also to such a trip being under the shadow of a Minister, where the members were dependent upon the arrangements he made. If members desired to see the North it would be better, as the hon. member for Burke suggested, that they should be given passes for one, two, or three years, and let them go electioneering or to see the country as they thought fit.

Mr. LEAHY said he had observed no electioneering on the trip, and during the whole of it nothing could be more courteous than the conduct of the Colonial Secretary to members on the Opposition side. He was one of those who had approached the hon. gentleman about getting the "Lucinda" for the trip, as many questions affecting Northern Queensland came before the House and he was anxious to look into the questions connected with black labour and the sugar and mining industries of the North. People everywhere they went had been most courteous and had provided traps for them to see the country, and on a trip like that members could see a great deal more than they could by taking a trip by themselves.

Mr. PLUNKETT said he was one of those who had interviewed the Colonial Secretary and asked him to let them have the "Lucinda" to go North. The Colonial Secretary did not give a direct answer at first, but told them to see if there were many members who desired to go. To show how little there was in the statement that the trip was an electioneering trip he had asked several members on the other side if they would go and none of them objected to the trip. He asked Messrs. Hardacre, King, Turley, Wilkinson, Reid, Jackson, Dawson, Daniels—

Mr. DANIELS: Oh, no; fair play. You did not ask me.

Mr. PLUNKETT said he did ask the hon. member.

Mr. RAWLINGS: Did you ask me?

Mr. PLUNKETT said he did and the hon. member said he was going North himself to see his constituents. Mr. Turley had said he could not see his way to go, Mr. King had given the same reason for not going as he had given that afternoon, and Mr. Reid said he was going away at the time, but he would be back before the boat left and then he would see whether he could go or not. Mr. Wilkinson had not only expressed his willingness to go, but had asked him to see that he should go. He showed the names to the Colonial Secretary and told him that twenty-one or twenty-two were anxious to go, and the Colonial Secretary then told him to see more members on both sides of the House. He did so and eventually they started, and it was purely an educational trip. From the time they started until they came back he did not hear one electioneering speech, and he believed that that statement would be corroborated by Mr. Groom, Mr. Morgan, and other members of the Opposition who were present. Three or four weeks before they started he told the Colonial Secretary that some members whom

he had asked might not be willing to go unless they had an invitation from himself, and the hon. gentleman said he would see that each one got an invitation. As to the proposed reduction in the vote he could not support it as a protest against the trip.

Mr. DANIELS said when the hon. member for Albert came to him he stated that he would be very happy to go, but was pretty sure that he would not get an invitation. The hon. member said he would take care that he (Mr. Daniels) did get one. He then offered to bet 5s. that he would not get an invitation, and he did not get one, and as the Gambling Bill had not gone through, he thought the hon. member ought to pay up.

Mr. WILKINSON said it was perfectly true that the hon. member for Albert had asked him if he would go, and believing that the vessel would be used for a legitimate purpose in making such a trip, he would have had no hesitation in joining the party were it not that he heard that personal invitations were sent to members on the other side, while only a general invitation was given to members on that side of the House. He did not regard that trip North as an extra charge on the taxpayers, inasmuch as some few years ago a considerably larger sum was paid for free steamer passes for members to visit the Northern parts of the colony and see the country. He did not think that the irregularity which occurred in connection with those passes was so extensive as to warrant the stoppage of the passes, and as it was absolutely necessary, if members were to legislate in the best interests of the colony, that they should know the different conditions under which the people lived in different parts of the colony, he would much prefer to see that system reverted to. The lessons members would learn by visiting the people in that way would be very much better than those they would learn at mutual admiration banquets.

Mr. McDONALD said when members went on a trip like that taken in the "Lucinda," they had not much chance of seeing the country, as they were only a few hours in a place, and that was not long enough to learn much about its conditions or requirements. If it was necessary for members to travel, the proper way was to go on a pass, so that they could remain in a place a week, or a fortnight, if they thought it advisable.

Mr. RAWLINGS said that the hon. member for Albert was quite correct in stating that he had asked him if he was in favour of the Northern trip, but that had taken place about January, while the conversation between the hon. member and the hon. member for Cambooya had taken place before the close of last session. The hon. member for Albert had simply been making preliminary inquiries. He believed the hon. member was quite correct in saying that he had told him that he was going to visit his electorate, but that was long before the trip was organised. He was prepared to accept the statement of the Colonial Secretary that the trip had not been organised for electioneering purposes, but advantage had been taken of it to do some electioneering. The hon. member for Kennedy had told them of the endeavour of the Colonial Secretary to induce some person to oppose the hon. member for Kennedy.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is not a fact.

Mr. RAWLINGS said that the charge had been made; and the Secretary for Works had taken advantage of his visit to the electorate of Woothakata to do a little electioneering.

The SECRETARY FOR WORKS: What did I say?

Mr. RAWLINGS said that he had already read what the hon. gentleman had said.

Amendment put and negatived.

Original question put and passed.

## CHARITABLE ALLOWANCES.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that £56,600 be granted for charitable allowances. The vote was altered in form, but it was the same in substance. In the first column there was an increase of £100 in the item, Holy Cross Retreat, at the Magdalen Asylum, in accordance with the promise made that the institution should be placed on the same footing as the other retreats. There was one additional item—£100 for St. Mary's Rescue Home, which was connected with the Church of England, in the South Brisbane district. There was an addition apparently of £250 to the vote for the Benevolent Asylum, Rockhampton. That institution was practically a Dunwich. He had intended to transfer the patients to Dunwich, and place the institution on the same footing as other charitable institutions, which received an endowment of £1 for £1, but when he had visited Rockhampton, the people had represented to him that those old people wished to remain in the district in which they had lived for so long; and appreciating the sentiment, he had determined to keep the institution as it was. It was worked economically. There was really no increase in the amount asked for hospitals generally, but £2,000 was asked for on account of the Blind, Deaf, and Dumb Institution, which had formerly received a grant of £1 for £1, but which was now placed on the same footing as hospitals, and would receive the endowment of £2 for £1. It was expected that private contributions would amount to some £600 or £700, and the extra £2,000 was asked for that institution. Hon. members would notice that for the last item—Blind, Deaf, and Dumb Institution, Brisbane—£900 was asked for, while £1,000 had been voted last year. That had nothing to do with the ordinary maintenance of the institution. Previously the vote had appeared on the Estimates of the Education Department, and it represented the contribution which Queensland had made on behalf of certain deaf, dumb, and blind orphans at the asylum in New South Wales, and who had now come up to the Brisbane institution. He did not think a farthing of that £900 would be required this year. The management of the institution desired to work it by means of subscriptions, and only take the endowment of £2 for £1.

Mr. RAWLINGS asked if assistance by way of endowment could be given to temporary hospitals? In some of the outside districts, for instance on the Tate, a hospital was conducted in a tent with a wardman in charge, and when a doctor was required he was sent for. The people were perfectly satisfied with that arrangement, but he wished to know if the same assistance could be given to such institutions as to ordinary hospitals.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had had no such applications, but he always desired to treat hospitals in a broadminded spirit and give the endowment of £2 for £1 wherever possible. It was far better to err on the side of humanity than to be parsimonious, and his instructions had always been to be as liberal as possible.

Mr. RAWLINGS: Can you give assistance towards buildings?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That was in another department altogether, but if the residents in an outside locality were content with a tent hospital, and they put down their money, he would endow it with £2 for £1.

Mr. LEAHY asked whether in the case of an institution that got a special grant it would be entitled to endowment on any extra sum raised?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No. When there was a special grant voted by

Parliament, the Auditor-General would not allow of any assistance being given from the general vote.

Mr. LEAHY: Supposing certain institutions were entitled to £100 or £200, and they got subscriptions above that amount, would they not be entitled to endowment?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Not from the general vote.

Mr. DUNSFORD thought that blind, deaf, and dumb institutions should be placed on the same footing as hospitals, and instead of trusting to charity for maintenance should be maintained absolutely by the State.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They do not ask for it.

Mr. DUNSFORD: They should be treated in that way whether they asked for it or not, but where relatives could afford to pay for patients they should be compelled to do so. He believed the Brisbane institution had sometimes to turn patients away through want of accommodation, and had not the means to supply it. The institution was an excellent one, and should not be dependent upon charity for its support.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was the opinion of the committee of management that if the system were altered there would be a great lack of public interest in the institution. Apart from the question of money, there was a greater assistance given to the blind people by going amongst them and talking to them, and if the State took entire control, that nice kind feeling, which was generally displayed in privately managed institutions, would disappear. The hon. gentleman's argument would apply also to the hospitals, and there would be a lack of that human sympathy that now existed. Under the new arrangement there was sufficient accommodation, and would be, he hoped, for some years. It was proposed to make two storeys to the building, so that the services of many of the blind might be utilised in profitable work.

Mr. DUNSFORD had not a word to say against the committee or against the management. He believed that they were doing splendid work; but when he visited the institution last year it struck him that the buildings were not sufficiently commodious. He still held that the institution should not depend on charity, but should be provided with the necessary funds by the State.

Mr. CROSS was glad to hear of the prosperity of the institution, also that owing to the amount of subscriptions it was probable that the whole of the £900 would not be wanted. A good many of the inmates made baskets, ropes, mats, and various other articles; and while it was a very good thing that those persons should be able to maintain themselves as far as possible, it was not right that it should be carried to the extent of reducing persons engaged in similar work outside to a low level—persons who had embarked their capital in their business, had their wives and families to keep, and their taxes to pay. It was all very well to talk about being kind, humane, and generous; but in practising those qualities, it was not the function of the State to be unjust to individuals outside. If he thought the remarks he was making would do harm to the institution, he would say nothing; but from the facts supplied to him, it appeared that it was endowed to the extent of £2 to £1, and was competing with basket-makers, who had to buy their material for cash. It was stated that the work done by a blind person could not be equal to that done by a person in full possession of all his senses. It appeared that a few months ago the local basket-makers were asked to tender for the supply of a number of baskets, and they would have done the work for £60 or £70, but the institution received an

order to do it for £50. All the work of the Government departments was done by the institution, and it was stated, though he did not know whether it was a fact or not, that the institution had been employing other than blind persons. For the last three years only one journeyman had obtained employment at the trade in Brisbane, and he was earning only from 15s. to 30s. a week. It was suggested that the institution should be prohibited from competing with men by tendering or displaying basketware for sale retail or wholesale, and that the work should be stamped and disposed of by public auction. This objection did not apply to this particular institution only. It was a well-known fact that the laundry work done in some institutions had brought the business so low that the earnings of women who had been engaged in that occupation had been reduced to such a miserable pittance that it was with great difficulty they were able to maintain themselves. He wished to make no complaint, nor should he vote for a reduction in the amounts paid to these institutions, but while the State assisted those who could not help themselves it should see that it did no harm to people outside.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY thought the arguments of the hon. member hardly applied to the deaf, dumb, and blind asylum. While there might be certain reasons why particular institutions should be allowed to manufacture articles and sell them outside, as a general rule that was not allowed. The custom was to allow them to make things for their own use and for the use of Government institutions; but this asylum, so far as regarded that phase of its operations, could not be considered a State-endowed institution. It was simply a co-operative concern, worked in the interests of suffering humanity; and the rule which the hon. member would apply to other institutions could never be extended to cases of this sort, in which the law of necessity would be greater than the law of economy. With regard to rescue homes, they were State-endowed, and by their work they did come into competition with the ordinary public; but a great good resulted to the community by the very existence of these homes in raising up those people who had been submerged, unfortunately, in many instances, through no fault of their own. If the system erred from an economical point of view, it was certainly upon the humane side.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON was very sorry this institution was not to receive an endowment of £2 for every £1 subscribed. Their sympathies had always been with this institution, and, although the Colonial Secretary had made some provision for it, he hoped the liberality of the State would not be confined to the £900 mentioned in the vote.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It has all been explained.

Mr. CROSS recognised that the Government were actuated by benevolent motives; but, in keeping up one section of the community from submersion, they should not submerge another section.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Not equally deserving.

Mr. CROSS contended that it was very questionable charity when the State, in doing that kind of thing, set up the very conditions which tended to increase the number of destitute and unfortunate people. He had investigated cases in which certain persons had been forced into the ranks of the unemployed, and if this continued they would soon have to apply to the Colonial Secretary for admission to Dunwich, or some other place where they would be taken care of.

Mr. GLASSEY shared to some extent in the desirability of protecting outside persons engaged in those particular trades, but they could not

lose sight of the fact that blind, deaf, and dumb people must live by some means; and if there was one class more than another who demanded their special care and attention, it was those who were unable to protect themselves. It would be neither prudent nor wise for the Committee to do anything that would make those persons more dependent than they really were. That the goods made at the institution should come into competition with those produced outside could hardly be avoided under present social arrangements; and although it was possible some slight injury might be done in the manner stated, they were erring on the right side in helping the helpless. He hoped some day to see shops established in various centres of population where, under some organised system, their goods could be disposed of. If anything were done to injure the institution, it would mean absolute dependence and destitution to those poor people, and nobody would like to see that. By taking any other course than the one now adopted, there would be far more persons injured, and persons who deserved the Committee's best consideration.

Mr. BROWNE said the Colonial Secretary had referred to the subject of the municipalisation of hospitals. He believed that, or the nationalisation of them, was a thing that ought to be done. The present system was eminently unfair. For all charitable purposes the same class of persons were always taxed—namely, those who were willing to give; and they also had to contribute towards the endowment as general taxpayers. Members of hospital committees went to a great deal of trouble in collecting subscriptions, and they were expected to put their hands into their own pockets more than the rest of the community. It was time some fairer scheme was devised. He believed that in one of the colonies a scheme was under consideration to grant certain sums every year to each hospital, to which was added all that could be collected. Any excess at the end of the year was to be put into a sinking fund, on which the colony paid interest, until sufficient was accumulated to maintain the hospitals without the necessity to go about begging subscriptions. Again, the present system was very unfair to small outside goldfields, where there was, perhaps, not another hospital within 150 or 200 miles. The sick and destitute from all parts made for it. Very likely the community supporting it was a very poor one, and unable to get more than a very small share of the Government subsidy. The next community supporting a hospital might be fairly well-to-do, and in a healthier climate, and they could get a bigger share of the subsidy because they were able to give more themselves. If, instead of abolishing certain forms of gambling, the Government had levied a tax on them for the support of hospitals and charitable institutions, it would have been a great improvement on the existing system.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was merely a question which system would bring about the best results. In one colony a charge had been made on the land. In another they had tried throwing a portion on the land, a portion on private charity, and a portion on the State by way of endowment. But it was admitted that in neither case had they got such good results in the management of the hospitals as they were getting in Queensland. With reference to the question of persons living at a distance becoming a charge on outside institutions, it had been found necessary, in connection with the larger towns, to establish base hospitals. The hospitals at Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville, and Cooktown were base hospitals, and they were allowed a contribution in addition to the £2 for £1. No doubt as time went on they

would get to another phase of it, but the present system, by giving people a direct interest in those institutions, worked economically and well. He hoped the time would not come when the hospitals would be handed over to the mere automatic management of State officials, who would look after their salaries and not after their patients.

Mr. BROWNE said that need not follow from municipalising the hospitals. They were semi-State institutions now, and if they were wholly supported by the State they could still be managed by local committees as they were now. Under the present system many of them were controlled by cliques, who retained the management by keeping up the subscription entitling a person to a vote in the election of the managing committees. The principal objection to the present system was that under it those who were charitably inclined were doubly taxed, while the skinflints got off.

Question put and passed.

#### MEDICAL OFFICERS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that £2,300 be granted for Government medical officers. There was a reduction of £50 on the last item, which last year stood at £350, but for which it was found that £300 only would be required.

Question put and passed.

#### MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that £20,660 be granted for miscellaneous services. There had been £500 voted last year for the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, and £370 was asked this year to finish up the printing of the association's papers. The amount might have been included in the Printing Office vote, but he thought it right to inform the Committee that the total cost incurred on account of the association would be £870.

Mr. FISHER: They were to make up the balance. That was the agreement.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The agreement was that they were to get £500 and their printing, and the vote was simply to recoup the Government Printing Office for the work done there. The extra vote of £150 in addition to the amount asked last year for European telegrams was in order that they might pay their share and not be blacklegging on the union. They were outside the union before, but now they were in it, and they had to pay their way. In connection with the relief of aborigines, it had been thought advisable to ask for another £1,000 to carry out the system begun in the North of trying to get at the aborigines by providing them with food. The vote for expenses under the Elections Act was £7,000 as against £600 for last year, but it was really a new vote for the general elections next year, which it was estimated would cost that much. The ordinary yearly expenditure under the Elections Act was made up chiefly of amounts paid to returning officers in connection with the revision and completion of the rolls, and for that work they were paid at the rate of 10s. per 100 names, and 12s. 6d. per 100 in places where the work was heavy. The work of erecting pounds had to be left in abeyance last year, and this year it was necessary to erect a few, and they asked an additional £100 for the purpose. The vote for allowances to officers stationed in distant parts of the colony for extra cost of provisions was only an estimate last year, but, worked out on the scale allowed by the Civil Service Board, it was found that £400 would be required. The £16 was the contribution of Queensland to the International Patents Union. By joining that union they obtained the same protection

with regard to that matter as other colonies. The next item, £500 for the National Art Gallery, was a new one. The gallery was established during this year. There was a gift by will made by the late Mr. Murray-Prior of certain pictures, which were valued at a considerable sum by persons who knew the value of those things; and it cost about £100 a year to carry on the gallery. The £500 was to enable the trustees of the gallery to purchase for the colony such works of art as would assist in maintaining the gallery. Offers were now coming in from persons in the mother country to endow the gallery with further beautiful pictures, and it was hoped that during the year pictures to considerably more than the value of £500 would be added to the collection. The item of £185 was Queensland's share of the contribution agreed upon between the Governments of the colonies and the Imperial Institute authorities for carrying on the Imperial Institute. They had some very valuable property in the institute, and that money went towards the cost of advertising, cleansing, and keeping their own rooms in proper order. The last item in the vote was £99 for costs in the case of Peat *versus* McDonald. Mr. McDonald was a doctor practising at Rockhampton. He was called upon to give a certificate, as required by statute, in reference to a man who was insane, and, in conjunction with another doctor, he gave that certificate. The man was sent to a lunatic asylum, and after being there some time he got better, and went out. Not being satisfied that he ever was a lunatic, he brought an action against the doctor on the certificate he gave. The jury found that the man was insane, and the court ordered him to pay the costs of the action, but he had no money, and the department in charge of institutions for the insane now came forward to indemnify the doctor, who, though not a public officer, was performing a statutory duty when he gave the certificate. The only doubt in the matter was whether the doctor ought not in the first instance have come to the Government, instead of defending the action by his own solicitors; but as he only did his duty in giving the certificate, it was considered right that the country should pay the costs.

Mr. GLASSEY would like a little explanation about the item of £5,000 for incidental and miscellaneous expenses. He presumed that the spies who were employed to attend association and political meetings in Brisbane and suburbs, and also those persons who were employed to give information—sometimes false information—with regard to the removal of certain names from the different electoral rolls, were paid out of that vote. How many such persons had been employed recently to furnish the very large number of names which appeared in the newspapers in different parts of the colony of men who were supposed to have "left," to be "dead," or otherwise disqualified, and what amount of money was paid out of that vote for the purpose?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied that nothing came out of the vote for miscellaneous expenses for that purpose. The cost of obtaining information *re* the electoral rolls up to date was £84 9s. 11d., but that came out of the expenses under the Elections Act. There were, of course, certain claims yet to come in, but they would be charged to the present year's expenditure. The vote last year for expenses under the Elections Act was £600. £330 6s. 7d. had been expended in the compilation of the rolls, and £114 11s. for clerical assistance. Then there had been an expenditure of £6 9s. 1d. in connection with the late Moreton election, £59 10s. 1d. in connection with the Aubigny election, and £49 8s. in connection with the Toombul election.

The hon. gentleman had asked him from what vote spies were paid. Spies were not employed, and certainly that vote did not include one farthing for any such purpose.

Mr. DANIELS said that he had complained on a previous occasion to the Colonial Secretary about the ballot-papers, which were so thin that anyone holding the paper up to the light could see the number of the voter, and was thus in a position to know how a particular vote was recorded. All ballot-papers should be sent out from Brisbane, and they should be of a uniform quality and thickness, making it impossible for the numbers in the corners to be read when the corners were gummed down.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that he had mentioned the matter to the Government Printer, and in future all returning officers would be supplied with papers of a uniform quality, so as to preserve the secrecy of the ballot.

Mr. TURLEY said that the Elections Act required the returning officers to provide ballot-boxes, but the Act said nothing about providing boxes with glass sides. It was impossible to maintain the secrecy of the ballot-box when they had such boxes. In one Brisbane district at the last general election, when an elector had represented the matter to the returning officer, that gentleman had considered the objection so valid that he had put a sheet of paper round the glass sides. Electors had to be very careful in dropping in their papers to see that the corners were pressed down, or else it was possible for those in the room to see how they had voted. He believed that in the outside districts they had wooden ballot-boxes, and they should have the same sort of thing in the Brisbane electorates.

Mr. GROOM said there was a reason given in the House some years ago for having the sides of the ballot-boxes of glass. Hon. members would remember what occurred at California Gully, where there were thirty-five or forty electors, and on the box being opened it was found that 200 votes had been cast for one candidate, and very few for the other. It was then arranged that the ballot-boxes should be constructed of wood on three sides and glass on the other, so that the scrutineers could see that boxes were empty before the poll opened. That arrangement had been departed from, and some electors had refused in consequence to record their votes, believing that it could be discovered how they voted. The question raised was well worthy of consideration, because they ought to have elections so conducted that it would be impossible for anyone to tell how a particular person voted.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it seemed to him that the meaning of the legislature was that the boxes should only be sufficiently open to admit of the ballot-papers being inserted. The returning officers provided their own ballot-boxes and sent in their accounts, and they were consequently not of one pattern. His reading of the Act was that it was not contemplated that there should be any glass at all, although it might be a convenience to have one side of glass. He would see what the regulations said, and all the necessary arrangements for providing for the secrecy of the ballot would be carried out.

Mr. TURLEY said he knew of four different booths where exception was taken to the present system, and in three cases the returning officers declined to put paper round the boxes, but one did so.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON said one reason assigned by returning officers to him why the sides of the ballot-boxes should not be opaque was that some evil-disposed person might insert a match or other deleterious substance with the

object of destroying the papers, and the returning officer could not observe it. He was quite as anxious to preserve the secrecy of the ballot as anyone; but that danger might arise through the returning officer not being able to detect something that might have been put in the box with the object he had stated.

Mr. DRAKE thought the practice should be uniform all over the colony, and they should not have some boxes of wood and others of glass. The arguments that had been used in favour of having ballot-boxes with glass sides were not sufficiently weighty to justify a practice which certainly gave rise to a feeling in the minds of many people that the secrecy of the ballot was not preserved.

Mr. CROSS thought the use of any box which was liable to destroy the secrecy of the ballot should be avoided. The Colonial Secretary should insist that boxes should be so constructed that nobody except a clairvoyant could see how a person voted. The greater number of ballot-boxes he had seen had been constructed wholly or partly of glass. There were two reasons for that. The most charitable one was that it was a natural curiosity on the part of those in the booth to ascertain how the votes were going, and, secondly, it was a deliberate attempt on the part of some returning officers to ascertain how people voted. In some cases the papers were so thin that when gummed down the numbers could almost be seen through the paper. In two or three instances of that kind the attention of the presiding officer had been called to it, and in the most supercilious manner he had told the objector to mind his own business. Any Government that wanted to maintain a reputation for honesty and straightforwardness would give immediate instructions that the boxes should be made of wood, so as to prevent, even by accident, the disclosure of the manner in which any person voted.

Mr. PHILLIPS was not interested in the material of which the ballot-boxes were made, but was very much interested in the intelligence of the electors of the colony, and he thought it was a most serious charge to make against them that they could not take a piece of paper, fold it, and put it into a box so that the names could not be seen.

Mr. DAWSON said it was not a question as to the intelligence of the electors; it was a question as to the electors folding their papers in such a way that the names would not be exposed when the papers were dropped into the ballot-box. On Charters Towers a wooden box without any glass at all was used, and everybody was thoroughly satisfied, but he had heard a considerable number of complaints about the glass boxes used in Brisbane. The use of glass destroyed the confidence of the people in the secrecy of the ballot, and that was a matter that deserved very serious consideration.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY knew that there was the greatest confidence where the papers in the boxes could not be seen, and he would have the glass frosted so that it would be impossible to see the papers inside.

Mr. REID said he had been a scrutineer and had seen persons as intelligent as the hon. member for Carpentaria take the sheet of paper in a hurry, mark the names they did not approve of, fold it twice, and slip it into the box. In dozens of cases he had seen the paper open out as it was slipped into the box so that one could tell how the elector had voted. Instead of having the glass frosted, it would be better to have it replaced by a thin wooden panel. He also suggested that before the polling commenced the box should be opened by the presiding officer in the presence of the scrutineers so that they could

start fair and square. After that the scrutineers would see that nobody put more than one paper into the box.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS pointed out that the 60th section of the Act provided for the opening of the ballot-box for inspection by the poll clerks, candidates, and scrutineers previous to its being locked for receiving the ballot-papers. With regard to the conduct of the voter, if he wanted to comply with the law he would fold up the paper in such a manner as to conceal the names.

Mr. BOLES understood that in future the presiding officers would have to find their own ballot-boxes, but he did not know how that was to be carried out in the outside districts. He believed that if the glass was frosted that would be sufficient to meet the difficulty as to the names being exposed. With regard to the remarks made by the hon. member for Carpentaria, the presiding officer at one place had told him that the way in which every vote was recorded was known to him and to the scrutineers on account of the miserable paper used.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that was precisely what he said. The returning officers had ballot-boxes, and he would have them altered so that there would be no interference with the secrecy of the ballot.

Mr. DRAKE wished to make a few remarks in regard to the working of the Elections Act, and it was right that he should say something in regard to the answer the Colonial Secretary had given him earlier in the day. He would admit that in that case he was drawing a bow at a venture, and the shaft went where he did not intend it. The electoral registrar who decided the claim was a most careful officer, and he had no doubt that he took every pains to ascertain that the claim was a good one. He believed also that the police magistrate who constituted the registration court was a most reliable officer, and he might add that it would be a good thing if it were the general practice everywhere that the police magistrate should constitute the court. It would prevent a great deal of the cavilling that took place when justices occupied the bench. He was not sorry that he had brought this matter before the Committee, because it illustrated a very great defect in the present system. This was a case in which a name was put upon a roll upon a qualification which was manifestly bad, and it occurred in this way: The registrar had confidence in the gentleman who was making the claim, and because of that confidence he accepted the statement, and attested his claim without further inquiry. Then it went before the police magistrate, who apparently at once accepted the claim, because it had been accepted by the registrar, and so the claim went through. This was a case in which a name got on the roll very easily; but it was an astonishing thing that week after week complaints were made to him by people that they could not get their names upon the roll. They had told him that they sent in their names quarter after quarter and they were rejected, and all the information they got was a circular telling them that their claim had been rejected on account of informality. That occurred in dozens of cases, and the same thing occurred the next quarter. He was not in the habit of scrutinising the roll of his electorate, and it was only within the last few weeks that he had done it at all, and the first thing he saw was this qualification of a freehold at Fiveways, Milton. He happened to know that this was about three-quarters of a mile out of his electorate, and yet the claim was allowed. He would like to have some promise from the Colonial Secretary that inquiry would be made into the matter, to see whether by legislation

something could not be done, even before the next general election, to ensure that persons qualified to vote should get upon the roll. At present hon. members were debarred from taking part in any proceedings in connection with registration, and he thought it a very good principle. He had always been particularly careful not to go near a court, or to make any inquiries with regard to rolls or claims to be put upon them, but some impartial person ought to do it. The duty should not be entrusted to party organisations; but some functionary or person who could be regarded as impartial ought to be charged with the duty of seeing that people entitled to be on the rolls had an opportunity of being put there. Unless some alteration were made before the next general election, a great number of persons qualified to vote would be unable to get upon the rolls, simply on account of the difficulties put in their way by the present system. It was not too late for the Government to recognise the justice of the case he was putting before them, and introduce legislation to prevent a very great injustice being done.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY contended that there was no fault in the system, but the hon. member had really dealt very lightly with the officers who made this blunder. The process which had to be gone through seemed to provide all the machinery for purifying the rolls, and making these mistakes impossible. First, the elector has to sign a form, and he was supposed to know his qualification and the district in which he resided. The second check was, that the magistrate had to certify that he had made full inquiries, and was satisfied. Then that claim had to be sent to the electoral registrar, whose duty it was to see that there was no informality. That was the third check. Then it had to go to the registration court, and be revised by the registering officer, which was the fourth check. After it was registered it had to be advertised, and the public had an opportunity of objecting, which was the fifth check. Then the electoral registrar had to ascertain and report whether the stated qualification was really possessed by the applicant, which was the sixth check; and when it went to the revision court it was the duty of the magistrate to see that it was looked into, which was the seventh check. That paper went through all these checks, and yet there was a blunder at the very threshold. Mr. Cribb did not know in what particular electorate this parish of Enoggera was. He went in to seek information, and he noticed that in the top of the form Mr. Boyce, who witnessed it, first wrote "Ithaca." Then he evidently thought that that was not right, and there must have been some communication between him and Mr. Cribb, because "Ithaca" was struck out and "Enoggera" inserted in its place, whereas if he had only looked at the map which he had there for his information he would have seen at once that it was right in the middle of Toowong. There was not a shadow of a reason for any officer or justice making such a series of blunders. The only excuse he could make was that at that particular time Mr. Boyce, who was one of the best electoral registrars in the colony, and who had a multitude of duties to perform, was transferred to another department. It was on the last day of his holding that office that Mr. Cribb came in and asked him to put his name on the roll. On Mr. Boyce leaving the department he handed over his work to the clerks in the office until the next registrar came, and it was just at that interregnum that the unfortunate blunder occurred. He regretted that such a thing had happened. It ought not to have happened, and he had no excuse to offer for it beyond what he had stated. It was an isolated

case, and now that a new electoral registrar had been appointed he did not think such a thing was likely to occur again.

Mr. FISHER said he was in the Western part of the colony last April, and was present at a revision court. There were six or eight justices on the bench, including the police magistrate. An applicant was there in person, and after his claim had been carefully inquired into, and the police magistrate was satisfied that it was a perfectly sound one, one of the justices asked him where he had slept the previous night. It seemed as if the bench wanted to prevent him from prosecuting his claim, and any sensitive person would rather have foregone his right altogether than be subjected to such a series of cross-questions as that person was subjected to before he got his name on the roll. He was pleased to hear the Colonial Secretary say that every care would be taken to safeguard the secrecy of the ballot. He could cite instances where, if it was known that certain persons had cast their votes in a particular way, it would be as much as their work was worth; and only a few days ago a man who took the liberty of expressing his political opinions had to sacrifice his employment for his principles.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said hon. members on the Government side were constantly being charged with trying to keep names off the rolls. He might mention an instance or two which told in another direction. Only that day he had been told by a gentleman, well known in the colony, that in four instances, where he had abundant property qualifications, he had been objected to and marked as disqualified. He had also heard of another case where a gentleman, perhaps better known than himself, had been marked in the same way, although he had property worth thousands of pounds. How did that information get to the electoral registrar? It showed that there was another influence at work besides what was supposed to be exercised by the Government side of the House. If hon. members would run their finger down the published lists they would see that almost every name was marked "disqualified"; and in nearly every instance that applied to persons possessing the property qualification.

Mr. REID said that could be easily explained. Either the electoral registrar did not make proper inquiries or else he employed incompetent persons to do so. In his district he knew at least a dozen people who had been wrongly objected to, and when they went to see the electoral registrar about it they could get no satisfaction beyond the statement that they could get their names reinserted on the roll. He hoped the Colonial Secretary would see that there was an electoral registrar appointed for Brisbane alone.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Morris was appointed about six weeks ago.

Mr. REID said he was not aware of that, but he knew that the officials had for years been endeavouring to persuade the Colonial Secretary to make such an appointment. To show the intelligence of some of their freehold voters, there was one who had resided in Toowong with his family for over twenty years, and wanting a vote for a property he could see from his front door, he had to go to a stranger from the Downs to find out what electorate it was in.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said the hon. member's explanation was not sufficient to meet the cases to which he had referred—one of which was a case in which a gentleman, whose political opinions might be pretty well guessed, had had the word "disqualified" marked against his claim under a freehold qualification in each of four different electorates, one being in the North, one in the Central, and two in the Southern divisions of the colony. Who gave

the information which set the electoral registrars in motion in those widely separated electorates to object to those claims?

Mr. BOLES said there was a class of political jackalls who went about on the eve of an election, and if the Colonial Secretary possessed all the liberal principles he spoke of the other night the hon. gentleman would frame some regulation under which those persons would be compelled to make a declaration under the Oaths Act. The real difficulty was in the case of persons objected to in the outside electorates, and not in places like Brisbane, where electors could personally correct mistakes. In the outside places, where a voter would have to come in fifty or one hundred miles to an electoral registrar, he sometimes waived his right to a vote sooner than go to the trouble of putting the matter right. It was upon the strength of that objections were taken to the claims of persons whose political earmark did not suit the opinions of the objectors, and in that way sometimes two-thirds of the *bonâ fide* voters in a place were found to be disfranchised when an election took place.

Mr. DRAKE said he could not help thinking when the Secretary for Lands was speaking how sorry the hon. gentleman must have been that he did not support the amendment which he had moved in 1892, to provide that when the electoral registrar was marking his list with the words "dead, left, or disqualified," he should state in the margin the source of his information. He intended at the time to follow that up by another clause imposing a severe penalty upon any person who was found to have wilfully given wrong information which led to the removal of a name from a roll; but he could get no support at all from the hon. gentleman to get that into the Act. If he had done so the hon. gentleman would have exact information as to the person who had given the information about which the hon. gentleman complained that evening. So far as he was personally concerned, he had never objected to any name on any electoral roll.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: I know you are far above it.

Mr. DRAKE thought he would have to begin very soon.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said he had not the slightest intention of imputing anything of the kind to the hon. member for Enoggera, who had always behaved like a gentleman in the House. He did not think the discovery of the objector would be of any use, because, though they might discover the objector, the vote would be lost.

Mr. DRAKE: If you punished the scoundrel, you would stop him.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said he had been endeavouring to deal with the suggestion—that the tampering with the rolls was the work of one side. So far as he knew, the political association had endeavoured to get every name on the rolls that ought to be on them, and to keep off every name that ought not to be on them. In consequence of the taunts continually thrown across the House that that side was always the objector, he had produced a concrete case, for which he was prepared to vouch, in which there was evidently preconcerted action to object to a gentleman in four different places.

Mr. BELL was glad to see the sum of £500 put down on that vote for a national art gallery. It was probable that the full importance of a vote of that kind might not be presented to individual members, but he believed that there was no item on that particular vote which was more calculated to do them credit as a Parliament, or as a colony, than that item. In the matter of provision for art, Brisbane was not merely the most backward of the capital cities of

Australasia, but it was absolutely behind some of the provincial towns in Australasia. That was not a condition of things which should be allowed to exist. Whether they considered the matter from a mere utilitarian point of view, or from an educational or artistic aspect, it was their duty, as representing the whole community, to make some provision for art; and he was very glad that in the last year of that Parliament they had taken some step towards that. The Government of New South Wales had for nearly twenty years made ample and liberal provision for giving the people of that colony an opportunity to look upon the highest productions of art, and the same might be said of Victoria and South Australia. In New South Wales the sum of £5,000 was voted annually towards the continuation of the national art gallery, and, in addition, a sum varying from £200 to £400 was annually voted towards a society known as the art society, which held an annual exhibition, chiefly of the works of painters of New South Wales. In Victoria they made provision which, though not so liberal, was liberal enough for their art gallery and local society of artists; and the same might be said of South Australia. Those colonies had their financial embarrassments just as Queensland had, and yet they did not disdain to attach that importance to art which belonged to it. Some members might think, though they might not have the audacity to say it, that in voting £500 as a provision for art they were doing something which was rather beneath their dignity as a practical and business-like Assembly. If any hon. members did think that, he would say to them that in cities of both the new and the old world, where they found business habits and commerce in their highest development, the most ample provision was made for the establishment of art galleries. Not only did the Government of Great Britain make the most liberal provision for the purchase by the State every year of the masterpieces of art, but the great municipalities in the provinces had within the last few years devoted a considerable proportion of their income towards the purchase of the best specimens of English and foreign artists for the delectation of the municipal ratepayers. Anyone who had visited, as he had done, the art galleries established and controlled by the municipalities of Manchester and Liverpool and other provincial cities could not have failed to have been struck by the liberality of those local bodies in making provision for an element which played a most important part in the functions of every human being. In any civilised community the contemplation of pictures must play a large part in the happiness of their daily lives, and he was sure that if they voted a sufficiently substantial sum annually for the purchase of the best specimens of art to put in the gallery in Brisbane they would make a definite and material contribution towards the happiness of the people. The Government of New South Wales spent £5,000 every year in the purchase of pictures, and that expenditure received the ratification of the people, their approval being shown by their attendance at the gallery. Although New South Wales had not a large population, and although a considerable portion of it was remote from the capital city, yet last year over 300,000 people visited the gallery. Although the gallery had only been established in 1876, the collection was now valued at £90,000, and was one of which any community might well be proud. Although the National Gallery of Queensland had only been in existence for six or eight months, and although the works in it were not particularly distinguished, though it was not well advertised, and was not very accessible,

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yet over 13,000 had already visited it. That proved that if they gave the people something worth looking at they would go and look at it, and would derive advantage from it. They heard a good deal of socialism. Well, he believed that as a beginning towards socialism in our time they could not make a more beneficial advance than by establishing art galleries. Considerable support was being given to the apology they had for an art gallery, but he wished to impress on the Government the necessity for more sapience than they had shown in the appointment of trustees. Some of the trustees, from an artistic point of view, were a very "scratch" lot. He could name two or three who did not find their very highest function in life in acting as trustees of an art gallery.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Whom do you object to?

Mr. BELL: The hon. member for one, and to two others. He was a great admirer of the Colonial Secretary in many respects; but not when he took his place as a trustee of a national gallery. While the Government deserved credit for placing £500 upon the Estimates as a beginning, he hoped that in future years larger sums would be voted, with an agent in England to purchase pictures of the first quality. At present they had a gallery which was not worthy of the name of national. Many private people, in the most benevolent spirit, had tendered pictures on loan. As instances of benevolence, no doubt, they should cherish those works of art, but from the artistic point of view, 90 per cent. of the pictures in the gallery had no right to be in any gallery dignified by the name of national. Even if they only had one picture in the gallery to start with, it should be of the first water. In the galleries of New South Wales and Victoria they had a sort of room of "outer darkness" to which all pictures by local artists were consigned, whilst the best room—the "holy of holies," as it were—was reserved for pictures of undoubted excellence. When they voted larger sums, they would have to depart from the present haphazard system, and make distinctions in excellence in the same way. Even if that Committee did not sufficiently appreciate the matter, they would yet find men in that Chamber who would devote considerable attention to artistic matters. When he visited Sydney or Melbourne, one of the first places he went to was the Art Gallery, and if those places did not exist the attractions of those cities would be largely diminished. From a mere material point of view, they should establish a national gallery, as it would induce people to live here, because visitors largely gauged the value of a place by the artistic opportunities it held out to them. But beyond that, if a gallery was established here, there would not be that feeling of isolation and remoteness which undoubtedly this community suffered from. They should do all they could to keep in touch with what was going on in the highest centres of art and civilisation. They should, if they had the money, do something to enable the people to look upon the best works of the painters of Europe, and they could do that if the Government made up their minds to buy pictures painted by the best men in Europe, and in doing that they would have done something to make Queensland a better place to live in.

Mr. RAWLINGS said there were many more important matters to spend money upon than art galleries—such, for instance, as buying books and endowing their schools of arts. He wished to ask the Colonial Secretary how it was possible to have polling-booths proclaimed? Many persons were disfranchised through not being able to travel long distances to polling-booths. For instance, there was Fossilbrooke, where there

were thirty or forty people who did not take the trouble to get on the roll because they were so far from a polling-booth. He made application to the department to have a polling-booth declared there, but was told that there was no one on the roll from that locality; and he desired to find out how he was to get such places created polling-places.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, so far as last elections were concerned, the polling-places were fixed, but any locality where there were ten or twelve voters would be created a polling-place. The application would be referred to the police magistrate and the returning officer, and if they said the population justified it the place would be gazetted. The object was to make things easy for electors, and he did not remember any application for a polling-place having been refused for the last six years.

Mr. RAWLINGS: The request will not be refused on the score of economy?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; it does not cost much.

Mr. GROOM, referring to the case quoted by the Secretary for Lands, did not think it was so bad as some cases in his electorate, where 530 electors had been marked off as dead, left, or disqualified; and then policemen had been employed to go round and interview persons, even on Sunday when they were coming out of church, and producing a roll ask them if they were such-and-such persons. He left it to others to judge whether that was creditable or not. He knew a man in Toowoomba who had been in the employment of a cabinetmaker for sixteen years, and who had been living on his freehold for many years, and yet he had been knocked off the roll as disqualified, and would have to spend a whole day in defending his claim, and thus lose a day's wages. When he went to the clerk of petty sessions and asked who was responsible for disqualifying him, he could get no satisfaction. He could give scores of such cases in Toowoomba where people had been knocked off simply because they might have shifted from one street to another. Many of them were poor labouring men who could not afford to lose a day's work in establishing their rights, and, not having done so, they had sacrificed their right to vote. Yet at the same time he saw the names of two left on the list who had been dead three years. The prime mover in this matter was a Brisbane gentleman.

Mr. GLASSEY: Does he belong to the Labour party?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Labour party have not been idle.

Mr. GROOM assured the Attorney-General that during the whole of his public career he had never objected to one elector on the roll, though he had assisted hundreds and thousands to get on the roll. The system which allowed this kind of thing was radically bad, and the police authorities had no right to be employed in going from house to house asking inquisitorial questions as to a man's qualification. It was well known during show week in Toowoomba that while the police were doing this work, several houses were robbed, the extent of one man's loss reaching £70. The police ought to be confined to their own duty, protecting the property of the public. There was no other colony under the British Crown where there were so many obstacles placed in the way of a man getting on the roll as in Queensland, and when he got his name on the roll he was not certain that it would remain there six months. All this trouble had occurred since 1892, and there was no necessity for it. The more simple the matter was made the better it would be. He was not going

to blame the electoral registrar, but there were other persons behind him who were the mischief-makers, causing all the trouble, setting father against son, and creating dissension where there was no dissension before. He would pledge himself at the coming election to amend the law in such a way that when a man was objected to he should know by whom the objection was made, and if he had to lose a day's wages, the person who objected should make good the loss.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the last session of a Parliament was generally marked by electioneering, and the speech just delivered was the best sample he had heard for a long time. Nobody had yet gratified his desire to have one case brought before him in which he could find that the electoral registrar had marked a person erroneously.

Mr. REID: I will bring you a list.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had received none till half-past 2 to-day, when he had got one from Mr. Sydes. He was inquiring into that case now. If there were men behind the electoral registrars who endeavoured to do this kind of thing he did not want the electoral registrars sheltered. The registrars had been told by him that they were to be influenced by nobody, and were to take their instructions from nobody but the statute. If it could be proved that they had allowed themselves to be influenced by anybody outside they would not remain an hour longer in the office of registrar. In connection with the North Brisbane roll he had heard that both sides were very active, and he asked the electoral registrar upon what grounds he went in marking the names. To his surprise he found that the registrar never got the slightest assistance from the Trades and Labour Council in marking the rolls. Persons complained to the registrar of having been marked as disqualified because they had moved a few doors down the same street. They were told that the qualification was household, that the house had been identified, and that it was found that they had removed. Nobody had yet gone to the registrar and convinced him that his name had been erroneously marked. All he could say was that the system, if they acted up to it, was all right. The 14th section of the Act told them what to do. Between the 1st and the 31st of August they had to make the inquiries defined by the statute. In the case of property qualifications they had to look at the rate-books, and make inquiries from residents and others. He had told them plainly that he had provided machinery for them to carry out the duties cast upon them, and that they were only to employ reliable persons to get the information the Act required. If they got any information they did not know to be reliable they must check it, and they could have the assistance of the police, whose duty it was to assist in administering the law. If a man were on the roll, and had no right to be there, he was robbing another person of his vote, and the police had as much right to prevent cases of that sort as they had to prevent any other crime. He would be glad to inquire into any charges; but he could not blame an electoral registrar who went into a district and found that a man who had a specific address had left it, and, after making inquiries, marked him "left." He could do no more than that; and if a person did not take the trouble to inform the electoral registrar, the registrar had to do his duty. The hon. member for Toowoomba misunderstood the electoral law. There was no need for this man to go to the trouble the hon. member said. The matter was more simple than had been attempted to be made out. If a man were marked "disqualified," but had another qualification, there was no necessity for

him to do more than fill up a claim and send it to the electoral registrar, and the matter would be corrected.

Mr. DRAKE: That is contrary to law. He must prove upon oath.

Mr. GROOM: This freeholder received from the registrar a notice telling him that he was disqualified, and that he must appear before the court and prove upon oath that he was qualified.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he need not appear himself in that case, but might appear either by himself or his agent.

Mr. GROOM: What did he give notice for?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had to give notice, and the information he received would be correct in ninety-nine cases out of 100. If a man had a qualification, all that it was necessary for him to do was to inform the electoral registrar, who would himself see that the qualification was corrected, and the notice of objection would be practically withdrawn. But if a man was a householder, and lived in Queen street, and moved to Albert street, that would be another qualification, and the 7th subsection of clause 23 would apply. That said that when a person whose name appeared on a roll had ceased to hold the qualification stated on the roll, but had another qualification, he might attend at the court and prove that other qualification, or make and send to the electoral registrar a claim in the form thereafter prescribed for making claims, and every such claim should be produced to the court, and the court should correct the statement of the qualification of any such elector accordingly.

Mr. FISHER: If it is advertised.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Whether it was advertised or not. It was not a matter which had been lightly considered, and he could not understand the hon. member trying to controvert the statement he had made, which was so manifestly in favour of the elector. There was no question but that this clause and the amending Act ran together, and therefore there was nothing that a man had to do but make out a claim and send it to the registrar. He would not have to go through the form of registration or advertising or revision. The registrar should make no mistakes, and he should look upon a registrar who made more than one mark in 100 as careless. Even then the 100th man would only have to send a statement to the registrar saying that the marking was wrong, and it was the duty of the registrar to see that inquiries were made. If he found he had made a mistake he must take care to correct it, and see that the claimant was not put to any inconvenience in going to the court by reason of being wrongly marked. So far as the system was concerned it was right. He admitted that there had been unusual activity in regard to the duties cast upon the electoral registrars, but that activity had been safeguarded against any injury resulting from it by the machinery provided to the electoral registrars from his department. He had it on independent testimony that there had never been in Queensland a more impartial marking than there had been on the present occasion. He should be glad to inquire into any complaint that came before him, with the view of ascertaining whether there had been any unfair play on the part of the electoral registrar or whether he had gone outside his work. Nobody had yet attempted to prove that. The inference from the statement of the Secretary for Lands about one man having been objected to in four places was that there were four electoral registrars in that conspiracy.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: No; but false information had been given them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that if they had been acting on outside information without sifting it to the bottom, they had committed a grave dereliction of duty. He had a list of all the names that had been objected to on the electoral rolls, and he intended to find out, by observing whether those objections were sustained, whether the electoral registrars had done their duty.

Mr. DAWSON said the Colonial Secretary had stated that out of all the objections raised he had never, on investigation, found a legitimate cause of complaint, and he had challenged the Committee to show that any man had been marked wrongly by an electoral registrar. It was the audacity of the challenge that allowed the hon. gentleman to escape. If there was one case there must have been thousands during the current year in the various electorates of the colony, and the hon. gentleman must know it as well as he did. However, he would give one or two specific instances for the hon. gentleman to inquire into. In 1892, John Byrne, member of the Dalrymple Divisional Board, and justice of the peace at Charters Towers, was wrongfully marked; so was Father Comerford, of the same place. The same year, at the November court, W. Hill, of Charters Towers, appeared as agent for about 300 electors of that constituency who had been wrongly marked, and got their names restored to the roll. At the last court, during the present year, the same W. Hill appeared as agent for a number of others who had been wrongly marked by the electoral registrar of Charters Towers, or by some person employed by him. The end of 1892, just before the last general election, was also a period of great electioneering activity, no fewer than 1,964 names having been marked on the Charters Towers roll alone. At that revision court, too, there was one gentleman well known to him who had been marked as "dead," and when that man dropped across the person who was responsible for having his name marked in that way he gave him satisfactory proof that he was very much alive, and that he should never have been marked as "dead." If the hon. gentleman was not satisfied with the 300 odd cases to which he had referred, he would be happy to give him more information to investigate. He had been glad to hear the hon. gentleman state that if a man had a freehold qualification and lost it, but had another qualification, he could get his name on the roll without losing his status.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, by sending in another claim.

Mr. DAWSON said he had frequently applied to legal gentlemen on that point but could never get an opinion from them in that way. Supposing a man had a freehold qualification and the freehold became encumbered to such an extent that its unencumbered value was not equal to £100, could he get his qualification altered to a residence qualification without losing his status on the roll?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes, if he resides there.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: After it is advertised?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Whether it is advertised or not.

Mr. DAWSON: And he would not lose any time at all?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

Mr. DAWSON was indebted to the hon. gentleman for that opinion, which would give satisfaction to many people. He had known numbers of people who had lost a previous qualification, and who found they could only then

send in another application in the ordinary way, and thus lose three months, during which an election might take place.

Mr. DRAKE said the activity of the registrars was the justification of hon. members for referring to the subject. It was always an important matter that people should not be deprived of the franchise, and no member who spoke on that subject should be accused of electioneering. They were not concerned so much with the instructions which the Colonial Secretary gave the registrars as with the law on the subject. In the case of a person who was objected to on the ground that he had lost his qualification, and who sent in a fresh claim on exactly the same qualification, did he understand the Colonial Secretary to say that the electoral registrar would appear before the bench and give evidence on oath in support of the claim in accordance with section 14 of the Act? With regard to the hon. gentleman's challenge, he had already given cases, and he would give a fresh case—that of a man who had been disqualified, though he had for six or seven years possessed the same household qualification, and there was absolutely no ground whatever for challenging his right to remain on the roll. In that case he understood that an application had been sent in on exactly the same qualification, and as it was necessary under the Act that, in such cases, someone should give evidence upon oath, he wanted to know if the Colonial Secretary would give the Committee an assurance that the electoral registrar would in such a case give the necessary evidence on oath to comply with section 14?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied that machinery was provided whereby an electoral registrar could, when supplied with information which satisfied him that the marking was erroneous—and certainly a claim or declaration was some evidence—send out one of his officers to verify that information; and if he found that the marking was erroneous, that officer would attend the court and give evidence to that effect.

Mr. MORGAN asked whether it was necessary that the information should be supplied by the person marked, and that person only?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The electoral registrar would be the judge as to whether the information supplied to him was reliable. Some person might supply the registrar with information which he might doubt, and in that case the registrar would not be asked to testify to that which he did not know was correct. But if the registrar was satisfied from the evidence of the elector, or otherwise, that he should not have made the mark against his name, and that his qualification existed, the officer who was sent out to verify the matter would attend the court and say that he found that the marking was erroneous.

Mr. BOLES said the speech of the Colonial Secretary was very encouraging, and if it were published in leaflet form and sent round to the electoral registrars it would not only assist the registrars but also those persons who sat on the bench and adjudicated in revision courts. The usual advertisement of names which were challenged was in this form—"Lists of names of all persons appearing on the electoral roll now in force, and the July quarterly lists, against which I have placed the word 'dead,' 'left,' or 'disqualified.' The names of any person included in the list, and whose qualification is not proved on oath to the satisfaction of the annual revision court to be still subsisting will be omitted from the electoral roll." He took it that a person whose qualification was challenged must attend and furnish the necessary evidence of the existence of his qualification; but if, as the Colonial Secretary had said, he could furnish the

information in writing attested by a justice of the peace, that would do away with a great deal of the disabilities existing in outside districts.

Mr. REID said the practice of the electoral registrars in Brisbane for some years past had been exactly as stated by the Colonial Secretary. He was glad to hear the hon. gentleman say that on inquiry he found that the electoral registrar had not been supplied with information by labour representatives, or members of the Trades Hall Council, for the removal of names from the roll. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. McMaster, made a statement a few days ago to the effect that Mr. Hinchcliffe had furnished the electoral registrar with a certain list, and the next day he corrected that misstatement, but in doing so made another misstatement by saying that the list was supplied by Mr. Bowman. He (Mr. Reid) denied that then, and had subsequently given the hon. member a letter from Mr. Bowman denying it. Mr. Bowman had not even taken his own claim to the police court, and had never objected to anybody on the roll. He made those remarks now to give the hon. member an opportunity of withdrawing his statement.

Mr. McMASTER said the hon. member for Toowong had stated that a certain gentleman had taken his claim to the electoral registrar, when he ought to have known, from his long residence in the district, that his qualification was not in Enoggera, but in Toowong. He believed that a great many of those mistakes arose from want of knowledge, and members opposite tried to make people believe that they did not know how to fill them up, though he was afraid that they knew only too well. He was not going to withdraw the statement referred to by the hon. member for Toowong. The name of Mr. Hinchcliffe had been given to him in the first instance as the person who had lodged a list of forty names with the electoral registrar. After the hon. member had challenged the statement he had asked his informant as to the correctness of the information with which he had furnished him. That gentleman told him that he had made a mistake if he had said the list had been lodged by Mr. Hinchcliffe, as it had been done by Mr. Bowman, whom he had met in the office. He (Mr. McMaster) had received a letter from Mr. Bowman, asking him to withdraw the statement. When he had found that he had made a mistake before, he had taken the first opportunity of rectifying it, but as the person who had given him the information would not withdraw one iota of the statement, he was not going to withdraw it. A great deal had been said about roll-stuffing and marking names.

Mr. GLASSEY: Are you aware that Mr. Bowman has taken counsel's advice on the matter?

Mr. McMASTER did not care whose advice he had taken, but he believed the hon. member for Burke was going to law with the Colonial Secretary. He had known the registrar in North Brisbane for many years, and Mr. Morris was as anxious to have a pure roll as his predecessor, Mr. Boyce, had been. When the Colonial Secretary was speaking the hon. member for Charters Towers interjected that the Labour party did nothing towards getting names off the rolls. The statement of the Colonial Secretary was made in good faith, and no doubt that the registrar believed in the truth of what he had told the hon. gentleman; but within the last week or ten days the tout of the Labour party in Fortitude Valley had told a friend of his that before the list of objections for Fortitude Valley was published he had got a list of twenty-five names which were to be objected to, and he had had fresh claims filled in and sent to the registrar before the list was published. He had wondered why the list was so late in being published, and he

could not understand how that information had been got unless through the registrar's office. It ought not to have been obtained from the registrar.

Mr. REID : Yes ; according to the Act.

Mr. McMASTER said that notwithstanding all the names objected to on the Fortitude Valley roll, he could tell the registrar of some names not objected to that ought to have been marked. The hon. members for Burke and Toowong and two or three others had attended a meeting in Fortitude Valley a week or so ago, and, in seconding a vote of thanks, the hon. member for Burke had said that his son had been transferred to Roma, but he would like to know what registrar had power to take the young man's name off the roll. He had also said that although he had lived in the same house for seven years he had received a form to fill up, and he said that he was not going to fill up the claim, and defied any registrar or anyone else to take his name off the roll. Why had the registrar not taken the hon. member's son off the roll? He hoped the Colonial Secretary would take notice of the matter. He knew how the rolls were stuffed, and hon. members opposite need not, therefore, lay claim to all the purity, and charge his side with all the villainy. He knew a large property-holder in Fortitude Valley who had been on the rolls for thirty years, and whose name had been knocked off, and he was invited to send in a new claim. That showed that the registrar was doing his utmost to purify the roll; but he was satisfied that as long as hon. members opposite tried to carry on their work as they did now, the rolls would never be much purer. It was a well-known fact that there were magistrates who certified to applications to be put on the roll who had never seen the applicants, and he hoped the Colonial Secretary would inquire into those matters.

Mr. CAMERON said it had been suggested by hon. members on the other side that there had been undue activity on the part of registrars in marking the rolls. He thought that activity was very largely due to the wholesale roll-stuffing that had taken place in many electorates, and the want of due care on the part of attesting justices when the claims were made. He knew that had taken place very largely in the outside districts, and particularly in the electorate of the hon. member for Barcoo.

Mr. REID was sorry for the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, who had always been manly enough hitherto to withdraw a statement when he found it incorrect. He said again that Mr. Bowman had never been inside the police court with a list of names either to put on or to strike off the roll, and if he had assisted the registrar to purify the roll there was no objection to it. He was sorry the hon. gentleman would not withdraw the statement, or apologise for the statement he made against Mr. Hinchcliffe. He did not know who the hon. member had referred to as the Valley tout.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER : We have had enough of this.

Mr. REID did not think they could have too much of it. They had been treated to an hour's speech on art—

Mr. BELL rose to a point of order. Were the hon. member's remarks applicable to the vote before the Committee?

The CHAIRMAN : The question before the Committee is the expenses under the Elections Act. That covers a very large amount of ground, and up to the present nothing has occurred that I could step in and stop.

Mr. REID thought the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, as an old political warrior, ought to know that as soon as the roll had been

marked off after the 1st September, and before the names were advertised, any person could get a copy of the roll and mark his copy in the same way as that of the registrar. That was the law, and the registrar could not refuse it.

Mr. LEAHY said he had been waiting patiently to ask a question upon another matter, and hoped hon. members who had devoted so much time to the electoral rolls would allow the few remaining minutes before the House adjourned for the discussion of other subjects. There was a vote of £3,000 down for aboriginals; an increase of £1,000. In what direction did the hon. gentleman intend to spend the money?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was contemplated to bring in a Bill, if time allowed, this session, providing for the appointment of three unpaid boards to control the expenditure. If so, money would be placed at the disposal of the boards for the purpose of giving the best help that could be given, either by way of food or otherwise.

Mr. LEAHY said it was too late now to follow the hon. member for Dalby in reference to the art gallery, but he congratulated that hon. member on the able speech he had delivered on the subject, and hoped the Colonial Secretary would take note of it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had already taken note of what the hon. member for Dalby had said, particularly where he referred in scathing terms to the selection by the Government of the trustees. If the hon. gentleman had known the circumstances under which the appointment of the trustees was made, he would not have objected in the interests of art.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON also congratulated the hon. member for Dalby on his able speech, and regretted that the evening had been so much occupied with electoral business as to preclude a little attention being given to the dawn of art as shown on the Estimates. The subject was too large to touch to-night, but he trusted that the housing of the present pictures in a more convenient position would be considered, also the desirableness of having the gallery supplied from time to time with first-class paintings. The question was one which should appeal to the liberality of people who had made their money in Queensland, but were residing in the old country; and if they could obtain even one good picture per annum, it would be a good thing for the colony.

Mr. FISHER could not allow the statement made by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley to go without contradiction. He (Mr. Fisher) had advised Mr. Bowman that a certain statement was in a provincial paper, and Mr. Bowman immediately wired back to say that there was no truth whatever in the hon. gentleman's statement. And if the hon. gentleman would be honest enough to say out of doors what he said here it would be contradicted in a place where the hon. gentleman could be got at.

The CHAIRMAN : I think the hon. member for Toowong has replied to that question, and the hon. member for Gympie is simply using repetitions.

Mr. BROWNE said that for the last couple of hours hon. members had been talking about Brisbane, but the Brisbane people had far less reason to complain than the people in other parts of the colony. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley had made a statement concerning the magistrates in Brisbane. Only a short time ago the senior member for Gympie made a reflection on magistrates, and there was immediately a howl of indignation. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley, who was a magistrate himself, said there were magistrates signing claims without seeing the men or knowing anything about them. He (Mr. Browne) happened to be a

magistrate too, and if a man made a statement like that about his brother magistrates he should make it to the Colonial Secretary, with the view of having them removed from the commission of the peace.

The PREMIER: Quite right.

Mr. BROWNE: It was an unfair charge to make against magistrates generally. He had listened to the Colonial Secretary, who had pointed out a great many ways in which a man could get back upon the roll; but still he found fault with the system. He did not think the law was carried out in any place more fairly than it was at Croydon; but with all the safeguards alluded to by the hon. member, the system was no use to men at a distance, where there were no justices of the peace, and a man had to go a long way to get at the electoral registrar. In Brisbane persons were put down as residing in a certain street, but in the North they were put down as residing at particular camps. They shifted about from place to place, and because the police could not find them when trying to collect their names they were marked out. Their names were supposed to be advertised, but the papers in such places had very limited circulations, and a man would not know for a month that he had been notified. Even if he happened to get word, he would have to ride 100 miles, perhaps, to have his name put on the roll. The registrars did their best to administer the system, but these men were often unjustly dealt with, and had no proper chance of being put on the roll.

Mr. JACKSON said if the Southern members had so many grievances they could imagine what the Northern members had to put up with. He could substantiate all that had been said by the hon. member for Croydon. In his own electorate there were half a dozen goldfields, and the men were continually moving about, and it was impossible for them to keep themselves qualified. He suggested that it would be a very good thing if provisional school teachers were authorised to witness signatures. The hon. member for Woothakata had referred to the appointment of polling-places, and the Colonial Secretary stated that during the last six years no application had been refused.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I said I remember none.

Mr. JACKSON said they generally found that the hon. member had a very good memory, but at the last general election he applied for a polling-place on the Upper Cape River, where there were some twenty voters, distant twenty miles from the nearest polling-place. He did not even get an answer to his application, which he made to the Colonial Secretary some three weeks before the day of nomination.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I would not refuse an application unless the returning officer advised me to.

Mr. JACKSON said he would rather trust the Government than the returning officers, who did not always give impartial reports. Police magistrates certainly should do so, but he would rather trust the hon. member at the head of the department.

Mr. HARDACRE said that all that had been contended by the Northern members applied equally to the Central districts, where there were a large number of shearers shearing at different stations, besides men in the railway and surveyors' camps. Something might be done in the way of providing justices to witness claims. Reference had been made to the inferior quality of ballot-papers, and he might also refer to the cheap and nasty sealing-wax supplied, which was so bad that there was nothing to prevent anybody opening the packet. He had another matter to complain of. The

Colonial Secretary ought to send instructions to returning officers not to allow blankets to be placed on the table as a place for electors to mark their ballot-papers on. He knew of three places where that was done, and the result was in many cases that the pencil went right through the paper, and anyone could see from the back of it who the elector had voted for. Those might seem small matters to the Government, but they were not small matters to voters who got it into their heads that they would be boycotted if they voted in a particular way. He hoped the Colonial Secretary would carry out his promise to make some allowance to the returning officers, and that he would not refuse to pay any legitimate expenses they had incurred, as he did on the last occasion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: All reasonable expenses are paid.

Mr. KERR said the Colonial Secretary had stated that no applications were made for polling-places at the last election. As a matter of fact applications were sent from the Barcoo, and they were not granted, although there was one polling-place in the electorate where only two persons—the presiding officer and the person residing on the station—voted. As to the alleged roll-stuffing in the Barcoo electorate mentioned by the hon. member for Mitchell, he might state that when he came here from his electorate he had occasion to interview the Colonial Secretary, who informed him that there was a charge against him. He asked the hon. gentleman to supply him with the charge; but up to the present time he had not done so. He would ask the hon. gentleman now, if he had that charge, to supply him with it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not remember any application for an extra polling-place coming from the Barcoo electorate. The course he adopted with regard to such applications was to send to the returning officer and ask him whether, from his knowledge of the locality, it would be a convenient place. If the returning officer said it was not, and gave his reasons, he did not comply with the request. As to the charge of roll-stuffing in the electorate of Barcoo, he had that day received a letter from the electoral registrar at Isisford, forwarding eleven electoral form claims handed to him in March last by Mr. Kerr, M.L.A., and registered in April. The electoral registrar said, "For my own information, before completing the annual revision of the electoral roll, I have made inquiry about them and several others on the roll; and I find that the nine who gave their abode as Bimerah were not qualified when they made the claim. As you will see from the attached slips from James Wiley, James V. Hogan is not even known on Bimerah. Cox, Lynch, Muller, Murray, and Yates have not resided in Isisford, as stated in the claims."

Mr. KERR said he ought to have been treated with courtesy in the matter. He knew nothing of the charges brought against him. The hon. member for Mitchell had been put up as a tool to make them. The whole of those men had made the declaration before he signed the claims, and, as he read the Act, he held that he was not liable. If the men made a declaration before a justice of the peace, he considered that the justice of the peace was only fulfilling his duty in signing it. If the claims were looked up, it would be found that the men said they were one month on one station, two months on another, and so on; and they satisfied him that they had fulfilled the condition of residence for six months in the electorate. The Colonial Secretary had those charges some time ago; and if he had been a gentleman, he would have treated him (Mr. Kerr) as a gentleman, and have made him aware

of them, instead of showing them around to other members, and putting the hon. member for Mitchell up as a tool to make those charges and insinuations against him. He had the claims before him, and he found that the men all claimed to have been resident for the preceding six months in the district of Barcoo, as follows:—Charles Mitchell, two months in Isisford and four and a-half months on Bimerah; James Hogan, one month at Bimerah and five months at Ruthven; James Harrison, three months at Albilbah and three months at Bimerah; Thomas Flynn, three months at Bimerah and three months at Isisford; Henry Mueller, four months at Bimerah and two months at Isisford; William Moss, three months at Warbreccan and three months at Stonehenge. He put the questions under the Act to the men as they appeared before him with their claims. He was living in the district, and knew some of those men as men who lived in the district.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is very unfortunate that you should have witnessed claims in your own electorate which turn out to be wrong.

Mr. KERR said the next was Daniel Murray, three months in Isisford and three months in Bimerah; Thomas Neilson, six months on Albilbah Station; Jacob Fugh, four months at Warbreccan, one month at Stonehenge, and one month at Bimerah; J. Yates, one month at Isisford and five months at Bimerah; J. Friethwald, Isisford.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He never was there.

Mr. KERR said he knew that young man to be living in Isisford for six months. Those men satisfied him, by declaration, that they had a qualification as residents in the Barcoo electorate, and he signed their claims.

Mr. BOLES said the letter read by the Colonial Secretary disclosed something which should be taken further. If those forms were strictly in order, the registrar's duty was to put them before the bench and let them deal with them. He had no right under the Act to refuse them, and for the registrar to take it upon himself to refuse them showed that there was something very fishy about it. He did not know anything about the merits of that particular case, but certainly no registrar had power to refuse claims strictly in order and properly attested by a justice of the peace.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. member did not understand the facts of the case. Those forms were made out by certain persons claiming to be electors for the Barcoo, and they had been witnessed by a gentleman who was a magistrate of the territory and sat in that House as member for the Barcoo.

Mr. FISHER: Quite right, too.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, but in violation of a principle of the Elections Act.

Mr. FISHER: What clause is that?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He did not say that the hon. member had done anything that was illegal, but it was contrary to the spirit of the Elections Act, under which there were certain disqualifications. Candidates and members of Parliament were disqualified from sitting on the revision courts, and it was unwise for a member of Parliament to give certificates of satisfaction in respect of a large batch of claims for his own electorate which afterwards, upon inquiry, turned out to be inaccurate. The electoral registrar had done his duty, for he had presented the claims to the registration court, and the names were on the roll. Then the registrar had another duty—to make inquiries as to the status of any person who was on the roll. In exercising that duty he discovered that certain persons who were on the roll were not now qualified, and never were, and he sent the infor-

mation to the department. Hon. members had been charging the electoral registrars with undue activity in marking the rolls, and he had taken those papers out of his box, to show that there was some reason for that activity—that there were persons in the Western districts who had sent in claims witnessed by a magistrate who knew nothing personally of the qualifications. If the hon. member for Barcoo thought that when a man made a declaration and he attested his claim that was all that was required of him, he had an entirely incorrect view of his duty. The duty of the magistrate, after having witnessed a signature, was to satisfy himself by full inquiry that the elector possessed the qualification alleged in his claim, and not to sign the certificate till he was so satisfied. If the hon. member did that, then he had been deceived, and it was an unfortunate thing that a magistrate of the territory should witness signatures to claims in his own electorate in a wholesale manner, which on investigation by the electoral registrar proved to be improper.

Mr. HARDACRE: Don't you accept the statement of a member of the House that the statement in the claim is correct?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member did not state that. He stated that he took the statement of the applicants, and the registrar had written down, stating that, on inquiry, he had found that the men were never qualified. He had not heard the hon. member for Barcoo say that the statement of the registrar was incorrect, but the hon. member said, in justification of his certificate, that they stated to him that they possessed those qualifications. If the hon. member made full inquiry, then that statement was a complete answer, but at the same time it was most unfortunate that he should have been deceived in so many cases lodged at the one time.

Mr. GLASSEY: He says he knew that one of the men lived for six months in one place.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That might be, but the question was whether the statements made by the claimants as to their qualification was correct. They stated their abode as Bimerah, but the registrar had sent down documents from the person who was on that station stating that that was not the case, so that they must have deceived the magistrate.

Mr. KERR said the hon. gentleman had read them a homily on the duties of magistrates, and told them that members of the Assembly had no right to sit in revision courts. There was not a member of the House who did not know that. He might tell the hon. gentleman that one of his own officers, an acting police magistrate and electoral registrar at Tambo, had sent a notice to him to go and sit on the bench in a revision court, trying to catch him, and he had to show that officer that a member of the Legislative Assembly could take no part in a revision court.

The PREMIER: You don't mean to insinuate that he tried to entrap you?

Mr. KERR: I do.

The PREMIER: How do you know?

Mr. KERR: If he did not send for him in order to entrap him then he was ignorant of the law. He maintained that when he attested those claims he stuck to the letter of the law as stated in the 6th section of the Elections Act. But there was something behind that business. He had occasion at one time to speak against the electoral registrar on account of the way he was performing some of his duties, and that was the reason he had sent that letter to the Colonial Secretary. The hon. gentleman had said that he had no right, as the member for Barcoo, to sign any claims in the Barcoo electorate.

The PREMIER: No; he did not say that.

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman said that he had no right according to principle. He never asked for the honour of being appointed a justice of the peace, and if he was not allowed to do that, his duties should have been clearly laid down when he was appointed. But this business was a concoction. The registrar at Isisford had failed in the execution of his duty, because the Act required him to make "full and careful inquiries with respect to the qualifications of all persons who claim to have their names inserted on the electoral rolls." He had delivered the claims into the hands of the registrar at the courthouse at Isisford, so that there was nothing of the "back door" about the affair. He had satisfied himself that the claimants had a right to be on the Barcoo roll, and if that did not satisfy the Executive, they knew what they could do.

Mr. FISHER submitted that if the registrar had failed to make inquiry as to the qualifications before the men got on the roll, either he had neglected his duty or he was incompetent. Now, when probably those men had left the district, and it was impossible for the hon. member for Barcoo to substantiate his statement by calling on the men, the case was trumped up and sent down to the Colonial Secretary. If the case had been a genuine one, it was the duty of the registrar to immediately transmit copies of the claims to the Colonial Secretary, and it was the duty of that hon. gentleman to have at once communicated with the hon. member for Barcoo. The hon. gentleman had been kind enough to inform the hon. member for Barcoo that certain charges had been made against him, but, although over two months had elapsed since the hon. member had asked for information regarding those charges, no further information had been given to him. Those papers had been passed round to hon. members opposite, and the hon. member for Mitchell had risen and stated that certain stuffings had been carried on in the Barcoo district. The hon. member for Barcoo had not been courteously treated as a magistrate. The matter had not been dealt with in a judicial manner at all, but rather in a political sense, to discredit the hon. member for Barcoo; and in trying to discredit the hon. gentleman as a politician they had destroyed the judicial nature of the charge.

Mr. HARDACRE: After having looked over the papers, he defied the Colonial Secretary to prove that the men were not qualified. They proved that the registrar had not discharged his duties, and also that an attempt had been made to discredit the hon. member for Barcoo. The whole of the evidence assumed that the men had not been six months on Binnerah run, but the station manager merely said that one man had never worked on the run, but that he had camped there, and in the case of another he had said, "Hogan, I do not know." Did that prove that the man had never been qualified? He sent the names of all the men on the station, except the rouseabouts, to the registrar, and the fact that he did not know Hogan was not even a proof that the man was not working on the run, because there were many men in the West who were forced to bear assumed names, lest they should be boycotted on all the stations. The evidence did not show that the men did not possess the qualification claimed, whilst they had the evidence of the hon. member for Barcoo that some of them lived there up to his knowledge. The whole thing was trumped up.

Mr. GLASSEY said that it was rather unfortunate that the Colonial Secretary had not furnished the hon. member for Barcoo with those papers prior to that evening. From the fact that they had been in the hands of hon. members on the other side that evening, it was evident that there had been a concocted plan to injure the

hon. member for Barcoo. He had known the hon. member for Barcoo for twenty-six or twenty-seven years, and, from his knowledge of the hon. member and his family, he knew that the hon. member was incapable of doing a dishonourable act. If the Colonial Secretary discharged his duty, he would have a searching investigation into the matter, and put those persons on oath. The whole thing was a concoction in order to damage the hon. member for Barcoo, and enable a puppet of the Premier's to take his place in the next Parliament. They talked of members doing the wrong thing if they signed claims. It was well known that a member of the other Chamber signed numerous papers, in addition to other duties he discharged as secretary to an institution of which the Premier was head. He did not object to that, but when the hon. member for Barcoo was impeached for doing the same thing then it was undoubtedly wrong on the part of the member of the other Chamber. If the hon. member for Barcoo had done wrong, it was the duty of the Colonial Secretary to appoint a small commission to take evidence on oath on the spot, and have the charge thoroughly sifted.

Mr. FISHER had omitted to mention that he had seen his hon. colleague, the member for Gympie, sign an electoral claim.

Mr. SMYTH: You never did; never in your life.

Mr. FISHER said he had seen the hon. member attest a claim in the registrar's office in 1892 under the new Act, and he did what was quite right. In spite of what the Colonial Secretary said, he considered it to be the duty of a justice of the peace to attest claims, whether he was a member of Parliament or not, and in doing so he was acting in accordance with law.

Mr. BOLES was astonished to hear from the Colonial Secretary that the principle of the Elections Act was against a member of Parliament attesting claims. If it were wrong, then he had sinned very often. He had frequently filled in claim forms, because the applicants said that some magistrates were not competent to fill in the forms in such a way as the bench would accept.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not wish that there should be any misunderstanding on the matter. The clause of the Act he referred to said, "Any justice or other person who signs any such certificate without personal knowledge or full inquiry from the claimant or otherwise shall be liable on summary conviction to a penalty not exceeding £50." That laid justices open to a charge, and what he meant was that certain charges similar to the one that had been made had been brought under his notice, and when the claimants had been put into the witness-box they had stated that it was not their fault—that it was the fault of the magistrate. Therefore, it was not wise for a member of Parliament to witness in a wholesale manner claims for his own electorate, because one of the principles of the Act was that no candidate for election or member of Parliament should take any part in any proceedings in a revision court, and the magistrate's certificate was the foundation of such proceedings. It was wise, therefore, that a member should not witness claims, because he rendered himself liable to a charge being brought against him of connivance or neglect. The outcome of the matter was that probably an investigation would be held. As to the statement that the papers were brought here to discredit the hon. member for Barcoo, he gave that a most unqualified denial. The papers were sent round in the ordinary course of his departmental business, so that he might, if he got a moment's rest, be able to look through them; and he found that they furnished a complete answer to the charges made by hon. members that there was unusual activity amongst the

registrars of the colony. This case did not stand alone. There were others out of which he could have made political capital, but he had no wish to do that. The remark that there had been stuffing of the rolls was not connected with the hon. member for Barcoo, but with the electorate of Barcoo; then the hon. member got up and called upon him to substantiate a statement he made some time ago. Having the papers before him, he gave the hon. member the information. As soon as he got word that there had been an accusation made in regard to certain claims witnessed by himself, he mentioned it to the hon. member by way of information and not as a charge. It was a pure coincidence that the papers were here to-day.

Mr. GLASSEY: What is the date of the letter you read just now?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The letter is dated the 29th August; but, with my many duties, it takes some time for any but the most urgent papers to reach me. There has never been any desire on my part to be discourteous to the hon. member or to any other man in an official position.

Mr. KERR was glad there was to be an investigation, because he was sure he would come out with clean hands. There was no need to bring his character into the question at all. He would not go to any hon. member for a character; but if he ever did want one he would as soon have it from the hon. member for Burke as from any man in Queensland. The reason why he challenged the Colonial Secretary to produce the claims was because he overheard the remark, "He is not to be drawn." He had done nothing to be ashamed of since he had been a member.

Mr. MORGAN was not going into the merits or the demerits of the dispute between the hon. member for Barcoo and the Colonial Secretary further than to say that anything in the nature of an accusation based upon an *ex parte* statement levelled against a member of that Chamber should have been presented to him out of the Chamber. He should, as a matter of courtesy, have received notice that it was to be brought up in this Chamber.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What answer was I to give to the question put by the hon. member for Barcoo?

Mr. MORGAN said he got up to refer to what the hon. gentleman had said about members of Parliament witnessing claims for registration. The hon. gentleman said it was an act of impropriety; but he would like the hon. gentleman to offer some evidence in support of the doctrine that magistrates who had signed claims for registration had been guilty of any impropriety, or would be guilty of any breach of the law, in continuing to exercise their duties as magistrates in connection with witnessing those claims if presented to them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In his own electorate.

Mr. MORGAN said the electorate did not matter, and if a person asked him to witness a signature in such a case he would consider it his duty to do so.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: And then go on the bench?

Mr. MORGAN said certainly not. The hon. member was carrying the argument beyond reasonable limits, and he knew it. There was no connection between witnessing a signature and going on the bench to exercise judicial functions. The hon. member knew that the person making the claim was responsible for misstatements, and had to bear the punishment, unless there was some collusion. If the magistrate accepted the statements of the claimant in good faith, he was absolved from all consequences. The hon. member should give some

ground for his statement that magistrates were overriding the principle of the Act in exercising their functions as magistrates in this matter.

Mr. HARDACRE said the letter quoted by the Colonial Secretary bore a very different construction when the whole of it was read, and it bore out what had been stated. If such evidence as this came before the hon. member in a court he would treat it with ridicule. The very fact that those claims stated that there had been three months' residence in one place, two months in another, and one month in a third, was internal evidence of the truth of the statements contained therein. It looked as if the magistrate had made careful inquiry, and that those applying had the necessary qualification.

The PREMIER: We do not require this defence. The hon. member for Barcoo has been quite absolved.

Mr. HARDACRE said if there was any bluff in the matter it came from the Colonial Secretary and not from the Opposition side.

Mr. TURLEY said that when the Elections Act was in committee the questions that had now come before them were practically laughed at. The then hon. member for Toombul pointed out cases where a job might be put up upon a magistrate by his political opponents, who would be able to secure a person to answer the questions in connection with one of these claims, and then afterwards say that the questions had never been put to him or that he had never answered them. The magistrate would then be put into a corner, and might have a charge made against him. The Colonial Secretary said a magistrate should not attest a claim in his own electorate, but if a man was entitled to have his name upon a roll for South Brisbane, why should he have to get his claim attested by the hon. member for Burke for instance? An hon. member who was a justice of the peace had the same rights as any other justice of the peace. It was ridiculous that a man should have to go to a justice of the peace who knew nothing about him, but who had to take his word, as had been said by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley.

Mr. RAWLINGS said that at the last election instructions were issued to the presiding officers that they were not to count the contingent votes, but only the primary votes. Was it the intention of the Colonial Secretary to issue similar instructions at the next election? If the presiding officers were allowed to count the contingent votes as well before the boxes were sealed, it would prevent any tampering with the ballot papers before they reached the hands of the returning officer.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that when the primary votes were counted the papers were sealed up in the presence of the presiding officer and the two scrutineers, so that there was no possibility of tampering with them. They could not be touched by anybody until they reached the returning officer, who broke the seal in the presence of the candidates or the scrutineers. It was impossible to begin to count the contingent votes until it was known in whose favour they were counting them.

Mr. BOLES said the question of presiding officers was a very important one. As a rule, the returning officer appointed to that position persons who had the same political earmark as himself. He did not think it a good system that the returning officer should be an officer of the Crown. It would be far better to appoint some impartial individual in the centre of the electorate quite outside the Government service.

Mr. PLUNKETT had always found returning officers thoroughly impartial. With respect to a member witnessing claims, he had often done it, and he would like to know if there was anything wrong in it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: You run a great risk.

Mr. PLUNKETT: He had been told the same thing by Sir Samuel Griffith when the Bill was going through. He thought a member of Parliament who was a magistrate could better witness a claim than a person who was a stranger to the applicant, but he had no desire to do it if it was wrong.

Mr. DANIELS thought the contingent votes ought to be counted. The ballot-papers were sometimes in the charge of one man from Saturday to Monday; and though he did not say a returning officer would do it, he could, if he liked, open the papers and put a contingent vote to a man he liked. It was nonsense to say that all returning officers were impartial. He knew one that was not—the returning officer for Cambooya.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said a list of the contingent votes could be made; and as soon as the ballot-papers were counted, he presumed that they were sealed up by the returning officer. The scrutineers could put their seals on them too, and then nobody could count them.

Mr. PLUNKETT said that after the papers were sealed up they were sometimes given to a man to take 100 miles to the returning officer, and if he was rogue enough to do it there was nothing to prevent him opening them and putting on contingent votes and then sealing them up again.

Mr. RAWLINGS contended that the department had no right under the Act to issue instructions to prevent a count or the taking of a list of the contingent votes. The whole thing was illegal, and he wanted to know if the department intended to issue such instructions for the next elections. They wanted the returning officers to be allowed to count or take a list of the contingent votes where the scrutineers desired it.

At nineteen minutes to 1 o'clock,

The CHAIRMAN: I call upon the hon. member for Woollongabba, Mr. Stephens, to relieve me in the chair.

Mr. STEPHENS thereupon took the chair.

Mr. DAWSON said he had always found returning officers kindly, courteous, and conscientious, and he had not found them appointed for their political opinions in any way. Considering that they had debated one item in that vote for nearly the whole of the evening, he thought hon. members should now be satisfied, and let the vote go.

Mr. FISHER said if those severe restrictions were placed on magistrates it would be a very difficult thing for persons who were entitled to be enrolled to get their names on the roll. The discussion had made it clear that their present electoral system was wholly wrong, if not rotten to the core.

Mr. JACKSON had witnessed a good many claims, and it would be a very great hardship to electors in small mining camps where they were forty or fifty miles from a magistrate, if he could not witness their claims when he was passing through their camps. As to the contingent vote, he thought it should be counted before the ballot-papers were sealed up, as there were some returning officers who were not impartial.

Mr. HARDACRE said if the Colonial Secretary would not answer the question which had been asked, he would advise candidates to instruct their scrutineers to have the contingent votes counted in the first instance.

Mr. DANIELS said one of his scrutineers wanted to count the contingent votes as they were going through the ballot-papers, but the presiding officer refused to allow it.

Mr. RAWLINGS said what he desired was that the Colonial Secretary should give instruc-

tions that no obstacles were to be placed in the way of a list of the contingent votes being taken at outside polling-places when the primary votes were counted at the next election.

Mr. JACKSON asked whether candidates or their scrutineers could not insist upon having the contingent votes counted under the principal Act?

Mr. RAWLINGS urged the Colonial Secretary to give an answer to his question.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the returning officers had to deal with that matter. All that the Colonial Secretary's Department did was to issue instructions to the registrars and returning officers, elucidating the Act. If they acted wisely they would follow those instructions; but they did not need to do so if they did not choose. The scrutineers could take a copy of the votes recorded on the ballot-papers; but he would point out that the primary votes were only counted when they all got to the returning officers. The preliminary count was merely for information. The wisest course would be not to count the contingent votes until after the returning officer had made his count of the primary votes.

Mr. HARDACRE said that under the Act of 1885 the scrutineers could insist on counting the votes, and the Act of 1892 only spoke of "votes"—it did not mention "contingent votes."

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; and the ACTING CHAIRMAN reported progress.

The Committee obtained leave to sit again at the next sitting of the House.

Resolutions from Committee of Supply were ordered to be received on Wednesday next.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at four minutes to 1 o'clock.