

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 28 OCTOBER 1896

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WEDNESDAY, 28 OCTOBER, 1896.

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

FACTORIES AND SHOPS BILL.

On the motion of the HOME SECRETARY, it was agreed—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the advisableness of introducing a Bill to make provision for the supervision and regulation of factories and shops, and for the limitation, in certain cases, of the hours of working therein, and for other purposes.

SANDGATE RACECOURSE BILL.

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Mr. LEAHY presented the report of the select committee on this Bill, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed; and the second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Thursday, 5th November.

SUPPLY.

STATE OF PRIVATE BUSINESS.

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

Mr. GROOM: I rise for the purpose of asking the hon. gentleman whether he can see his way clear to give private members a little more time than they have at present to dispose of the business which has now accumulated on the paper. From the time the session commenced up to the present, private members have had only two hours on Thursday; it is a very skilful piece of engineering to get your motion at the top of the paper for Thursday, and the member who happens to be successful in doing so generally occupies the whole time up to 6 o'clock. As far as I can see, the time for private members' business is now monopolised up to the 19th of November. We are drawing to the close of the session, and there are one or two matters in connection with private business that members would like to dispose of if possible, and I should like to know if the hon. gentleman can see his way clear to give private members a little more time for that purpose.

The TREASURER: I have the utmost desire to accommodate hon. members who have motions or Bills on the paper, but it is difficult to know how to do that, unless we gave up some Government time. As a matter of fact the Government business on the paper is proceeding very slowly; as hon. members will see we are a good bit behind with Supply and other business, compared with what is customary at this stage of the session. If hon. members who have motions or Bills on the paper would agree among themselves which of those are matters of urgency and importance, and which will lead to "business" during the present session, I should be quite prepared, if it would suit the convenience of hon. members, to give up some Government time to facilitate the getting of those disposed of one way or the other. I make that offer in good faith. Probably each hon. member will consider his motion one of the most important, but there may be some means

of members coming to an amicable arrangement among themselves as to which matter is and which is not one of urgency. Of course there is another way of doing it, that is by sitting one more day a week—namely, on Friday—but the experience I have had with regard to that is that we do not get any further forward by meeting on Fridays. That sitting is often abused. We know that on a Friday a large number of members do not attend the House. I am one of them, I admit. The sitting is abused in this way, that it is taken advantage of to snatch a division or a vote on a motion when other hon. members are not prepared for it. A good many motions are looked upon in the light of fireworks, but if I knew which were really intended for business, or were going to result in business, I should be very happy indeed to give up a portion of Government time to facilitate the passing of those motions or Bills.

Mr. CROSS: The hon. gentleman has said that he has the utmost desire to assist hon. members who have business on the paper, but his conduct does not exactly conform to that statement. I have two items on the paper, and the hon. gentleman himself called "not formal" to one of them. He did not even do me the courtesy of allowing the Bill to go through its initial stages, and that is in the face of his statement that he desires to assist private members to get business off the paper. The Attorney-General also was instrumental in preventing a matter going through its formal stages, so that there are two matters which I have asked leave to introduce, and I have not obtained that leave yet. One of these bits of fireworks is now legislation in four of the other colonies, and the speeches made by hon. members on the other side show that they do not regard it as fireworks at all, but of urgent necessity. The Premier himself has admitted in various ways the desirability in some form or another of passing the Bill I allude to.

The PREMIER: Not when introduced by a private member.

Mr. CROSS: In reply to that interjection, I may say that the hon. member was offered by myself, nearly three years ago, an opportunity of introducing the matter himself. I admit that it is not the business of a private member to introduce a State Advances Bill, and the Government have been requested to do so, and they have many supporters in consequence of their promises in that respect. We have a Farmers' Representatives Union, which is supposed to take care of the farmers, but it has taken no steps to induce the Government to bring this matter forward. I hope the hon. member will bring it forward, and when he does I will take the first opportunity of asking him to offer facilities to get these matters a stage or two further forward on the paper. From my experience, Friday sittings have not given the good results which some hon. members anticipated; they have been put to a very bad use indeed. Any proposition that comes from this side of the House has generally been stonewalled by the senior member for Mackay and some of his colleagues. I hope the leader of the House will see his way to offer facilities to carry through some of these matters.

Mr. BROWNE: I can hardly agree with the last speaker or the Premier in regard to Friday sittings. So far as stonewalling goes, hon. members opposite stonewall as much on Thursdays as on Fridays, and the reason given by the Premier that a great many members do not attend on that day, and divisions are often snatched, is not much to the credit of those hon. members who do not attend. A great many hon. members cannot get away to their homes on Fridays; they have to stay in Brisbane as

long as the session lasts, and it is distinctly unfair that they should be kept kicking their heels about Brisbane week after week when they might be getting through business. It seems as if we are not to have any facilities for getting on with business because others do not attend. Private members should have more time to get through their business, whether it is fireworks or not. The Premier seems to be a judge of that kind of thing; let him select the fireworks himself, and fix the 5th November to deal with the lot; that would be a most appropriate day.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

Question—That £5,000 be granted out of the loan fund for immigration—stated.

Mr. GLASSEY: They had been informed by the Treasurer that three gentlemen were to be appointed as lecturers and immigration agents in Great Britain and the South of Europe. Since then Mr. Randall had been reappointed to Great Britain, and Mr. Lyons, from the Education Department, was also to be a lecturer and agent there. In addition, Mr. Finucane, who had held a position in the Police Department for many years, had been appointed a commercial agent and lecturer. Mr. Black, a very able member of that House, was appointed a commercial agent some years ago; but they had never yet had a report from him, and he had never yet been able to see what value Mr. Black gave for the money he received during the two years he was in England. They ought to have some information as to what salaries those officers were to receive, and as to whether they would have a free hand in regard to travelling allowances, and also as to the value they were likely to give for their money. Mr. Finucane might be a man with more commercial knowledge and ability, and might know how to approach people in Germany; and in his case the colony might receive more value for its money than they did in the case of Mr. Black, but if they did not the money would not be well spent. He had not a word to say against any of those gentlemen, but Mr. Finucane had been a long time in the Police Department, and was formerly in the military service, and it seemed rather peculiar that such a man should be appointed a commercial agent. What knowledge could Mr. Lyons have after his many years' experience in the Education Department, unless he had had some experience in his early life that they knew nothing about? What reason could be adduced for the appointment of that gentleman to such an important position, or, indeed, what reason could be given for any of the appointments under the existing circumstances of the colony? If literature concerning the colony was to be distributed, or if exhibits of its products were to be made in various parts of the world, they might prove of some value, but he could see no good to be derived from appointing three gentlemen to induce men of capital to settle in the colony upon tracts of country on which the Committee had no information. They had had no specific information from the Secretary for Lands as to where those people who came to Queensland were to be accommodated. On all those points the Committee was entitled to some more definite information than it had yet received.

Mr. SMITH: When they were discussing the motion brought forward by the hon. member for Bulimba a great deal had been said with regard to the situation of the Agent-General's office. If the colony was to be advertised, it was essential that the Agent-General's office should be in as central a position as possible, and he wished to know whether it was the intention of the Government to shift the Agent-General's quarters to a more eligible site?

The TREASURER: He had received no information from anyone that the Agent-General's quarters were not suitable.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON: You promised to inquire.

The TREASURER: He was inquiring, but he had not yet received any reply. He thought the Agent-General did as much good where he was as if his offices were in the centre of the Strand. With regard to the men appointed to go home and make known the great facilities they were offering and intended to offer to people to induce them to settle in this country, he thought the hon. member for Bundaberg had been somewhat unfair in his observations with regard to Mr. Hume Black. Mr. Black was a man of great capabilities.

Mr. GLASSEY: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: A great deal of his work did not appear on the surface. It did not appear in the Treasury returns. That was never expected. The hon. member might reasonably have considered that Mr. Black went home in the year of the crisis—1893.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He would not have gone home if the crisis had not been coming on.

The TREASURER: If they had known of what was going to transpire in 1893, very likely the House would never have authorised Mr. Black to go home; but, as he had said the previous evening, he did not want to infringe on the privileges of the hon. member for Bundaberg. He did not pretend to know everything, and he really could not tell what would happen next year, or even the year after. With regard to the salaries of the men who had been chosen to go home, in the first place Mr. Finucane was a native of the part of Europe to which he was now being sent, and could speak the languages of all the people along the shores of the Mediterranean. He was a man who had taken a great interest in agriculture, especially in the cultivation of olives, the vine, and other things of that sort. He was a man of great intelligence. It was quite possible that the time he had been pent up in the Police Department might have restrained the full development of his capabilities; but they were now giving him an extended field in which to work, and he believed that the result would be a great success. He was to get the same salary as he had received as chief clerk in the Police Department—£500 a year. Of course there would be travelling expenses.

Mr. DAWSON: That will be another £500.

The TREASURER: He did not know whether it would be, but if Mr. Finucane did all that he expected of him during the next twelve months it would be another £500, or even more. Hon. members should not be so envious of every man who got £500. When he had been a bachelor, working on his own account in 1867 and 1868, he had got £1,000 a year. Men had to be paid for their talents. The other gentleman who had been appointed the hon. member for Bundaberg had rather scornfully sneered at as a schoolmaster.

Mr. GLASSEY: Nothing of the sort. I think he is a very able man.

The TREASURER: He would like the hon. member to express himself in language they could understand, because he had thought the hon. member had referred to Mr. Lyons in a very disparaging manner as being a schoolmaster, who knew nothing but how to teach a school. He had been selected for the business because they believed he had special talents in that direction. The salary he would receive would be the same as he was getting now—namely, £300 a year, with, of course, travelling expenses. All of the agents would have their passages paid to their various fields of operations and back again. He did not know whether the hon. gentleman believed in

Mr. Randall, but at all events the hon. member himself was a standing and speaking example of what Mr. Randall could do, seeing that he was the means of bringing the hon. gentleman to the colony. If he could bring to the colony men of such high talents and abilities as the hon. member for Bundaberg that was the best certificate he could have. He would receive the same salary as Mr. Lyons. He intended to instruct the Agent-General to be in no way stingy in the way of paying all kinds of expenses which those gentlemen might incur. He referred to photographs, lantern slides, etc., so as to show the people of England and the Continent what Queensland was like. Those articles would all be supplied free of cost, and the agents would also be supplied with literature in whatever quantity they might require. He hoped and believed that the steps which they were taking now would result in substantial benefit to the colony.

The Hon. G. THORN: In his opinion the site of the Agent-General's office was the best that could possibly be procured, as it was close to the House of Commons and very central. With regard to the agents who were going home, in his opinion it would be sheer waste of money to send them. No doubt they were all excellent men, but he was quite sure the colony would reap no advantage from the work of those gentlemen. What they wanted was a proper Agent-General, a man of the stamp of the late Mr. Jordan. Some hon. members were under the impression that Mr. Jordan sent a great many paupers out to this colony. No doubt he did send some poor people, but he also sent a number of small capitalists who were established all over the colony, some in his own electorate and some in the Rosewood, and very successful colonists they had proved. Those persons were living examples of the excellence of Mr. Jordan's work. He was sorry to see such a small sum put down for immigration, and thought a small sum should be voted for assisted immigration. A few shiploads of females should be brought out here, especially for the North. Hon. members representing Northern constituencies would know there were very good reasons for that. He hoped, therefore, the Government would at once set in motion the Acting Agent-General, so that that class of immigrants might be sent out here. It was time that they appointed an Agent-General. Mr. Dicken was a lawyer; perhaps that was the reason for keeping him in the office for so long, but the time had come when they were due for a really good man who would render some substantial service to the colony.

Mr. GROOM did not think they should form too sanguine an opinion as to the successes which would be accomplished by the agents who were being sent from the colony. The Secretary for Public Instruction the other evening referred to the large number of immigrants who were leaving Great Britain and the continent of Europe for the United States, and he said the number was something like 1,000,000 a year. Those figures were inaccurate. He had before him a copy of the *Weekly Times*, which gave a return of the nationalities and destination of the passengers leaving the United Kingdom for places out of Europe during August, 1896, and the eight months ending 31st August, 1896, compared with the corresponding periods for the previous year. Those who went to the United States were 6,947 English, 2,157 Scotch, and 3,915 Irish; a total of 12,619. The foreigners who left during that time were 6,668, so that the total was only 19,182, as against 19,004 for the corresponding period of 1895. To British North America the total number of emigrants during the same month was

2,397. To Australasia, which included also Tasmania and New Zealand, the emigration amounted to only 814 as against 1,000 in the corresponding month of last year. The number who left for South Africa was 4,024 as against 2,792 in August, 1895. To all other places the number was 1,252. The gross total for August, 1896, amounted to 27,745 as against 37,451 for August, 1895, or a falling off of nearly 10,000. During the eight months of the present year 108,704 went to the United States as against 135,269 in 1895—a falling off of nearly 27,000. To British North America the number was 17,075 as against 15,924 last year; in that case there was an increase. To Australia the total number this year was 5,606, as against 6,095 for the corresponding period of last year. To the Cape of Good Hope the increase was 7,000, the numbers being 21,000 in 1896 as against 14,000 in 1895. The total for the eight months was 161,759 in 1896 as against 179,000 in 1895, or a decrease of 18,000. What he wished particularly to call attention to was the fact that during August last only 800 persons left Great Britain for the Australasian colonies, and it would be no exaggeration to assume that the majority of those were returning colonists. He knew some of the difficulties an immigration agent had to contend with in 1892, and he did not suppose the circumstances had materially altered since then. The Canadian Government at that time were extremely liberal as far as their agents were concerned. They had any amount of means at their disposal for advertising the attractions of the country, not the least effective of which were travelling caravans containing specimens of what the country was capable of producing. And the lecturers could say, what Mr. Randall was never allowed to say, "If you go to Canada, I undertake to offer you on behalf of the Government 160 acres of land as a free gift." They also offered a sort of pre-emptive right to 160 acres more land adjoining on certain easy conditions at a dollar an acre.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Two dollars and a-half.

Mr. GROOM: Perhaps the hon. gentleman was referring to the terms offered by the Union Pacific Railway Company, who also had lecturers employed on their behalf at that time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; those are the terms offered by the Government.

Mr. GROOM: There might have been an alteration in that respect since 1892. He believed it was quite right to send someone home to make known the attractions of Queensland. No doubt the present Agent-General was doing as effective work as he could with the means at his disposal, but he had not the same means to make the colony known that were at the disposal of the Agents-General of Canada and of New Zealand.

Mr. CHATAWAY: The cellars at the Agent-General's office are full of pamphlets.

Mr. GROOM: There might be plenty of literature; he saw some of it himself. He also saw a minute plan of the Wallumbilla village settlement, the attraction of which was that the settler should have half an acre of land on which to establish his home, and forty acres for cultivation. What they wanted in London was an Agent-General who was more in touch with the colony than the present occupant of the office, who knew exactly the state of the colony and its requirements. He did not think the Agent-General's office should altogether resolve itself into an ambassador's court. The Agent-General should do more substantial work for the colony than attending functions. With regard to the position of the London office, he did not know that any great objection could be taken to it. It was not far from the House of Commons and Westminster Abbey, where there was a constant

stream of people pouring in and out, and anyone wanting to know where the office was could easily find it. A suitable office in the Strand, where more people passed to and fro, would be very expensive, and perhaps it was not worth while paying an extravagant price for what, after all, might not be a very great advantage. What he rose particularly to say was that they should not expect too much from the efforts of the gentlemen who were going home to induce people to come to the colony, because the position of the agricultural labourer in England at present was considerably better than that of the agricultural labourer in Queensland, and the position of the artisan and labouring classes in England had wonderfully improved during the last few years in consequence of the great activity in the shipbuilding and other trades.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON did not intend to enter into a general discussion on the question of immigration, because his motion dealing with that subject would soon come on for discussion again. Like the hon. gentleman who last spoke, while he was glad to see the Government doing something to encourage immigration, he did not expect that much would result from the limited encouragement given. He questioned very much whether the limited remuneration given to the gentlemen appointed was sufficient inducement for them to exert themselves much, because they could not do very much effective work without incurring a considerable amount of expense. It was to be hoped, however, that what they did might prove to be the small beginning of better things. He contended that in order to reach the farming classes of Great Britain it was advisable to send home men who had worked themselves up from the position of farm hands to that of farm proprietors out here. He entirely dissented from the opinion that there was no demand for farm labourers or for additional labour in the colony, because he learned from all sources, especially from the farmers, that there was a great demand for increased employment.

Mr. DAWSON: What wages?

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON: That would regulate itself. Let people understand the conditions of agricultural life in Queensland, and they would ultimately rise to a position of independence. But he did not want to be led into a discussion on wages. If they wanted to bring out an agricultural class, the agents sent home should be men who by their own industry and perseverance had risen from the ranks, who could tell people the difficulties of soil and climate, and other conditions affecting agriculture in the colony, so that they might not be entrapped by being led to imagine they were coming to an El Dorado, where they would only have to tickle the soil in order to produce a harvest. Let the people at home know all the conditions from men who had gone through the fire and had achieved success. He trusted that the Premier would not fail to make inquiries as to whether the Agent-General's office in London was in the most convenient position. He did not say that the Strand would be an improvement, but he thought it would be well to follow the lead of South Australia, and have the office located in one of the great avenues of commercial life in the city of London, east of Temple Bar. Coming to another matter, he had often considered that it was a mistake for the Agent-General to be deprived of the efficient services of the board of advice, which was composed of business men in London occupying high positions. With a view to facilitate business, he would ask hon. members when the immigration motion was again debated to address themselves to it as briefly as possible. He would of course support the vote before the Committee.

Mr. DANIELS: The Treasurer had told them that the agents going to Europe were going to tell the people there the inducements Queensland had to offer immigrants, but he had not said what inducements the agents would be authorised to offer. He did not believe that they were going to offer any particular inducements at all; that the vote was simply to enable three gentlemen to go to Europe for a kind of picnic—to satisfy them and their friends. One of those gentlemen especially had many friends and was pretty high in the social scale in Brisbane, and to compensate him for certain injustices he had suffered recently, he was to get a twelve-months' tour to get rid of him. Hon. members, when before their constituents, had plainly said that Mr. Hume Black was sent home because the Government were afraid of him, and wanted to get rid of him. If the agents were to be authorised to offer intending immigrants free land as an inducement they need not be sent home at all, as they could give the free land to the young men here already. The Secretary for Lands might laugh at that, but the day would come when they would have to do that or else refuse free land to new arrivals.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We do not propose to give anything of the sort to anybody.

Mr. DANIELS: That might have been inferred from the speeches of members supporting the Government. He would like to know whether any offer of free land was to be made. With regard to farm labourers, their wages were as low as they could possibly be if they were to live. The hon. member for Bulimba said there was a great demand for agricultural labourers, but there was nothing of the sort. In any farming district they would find farmers' sons, who could do any farm work, getting no more than 10s. or 15s. a week when they could get work at all. It might be said that a man could live on 15s. a week, but when he could only get work for six months in the year; that meant 7s. 6d. a week. He was asked if they could keep a family on that, but the young men on the Downs had too much sense to think they could do anything of the kind, and they consequently remained single. If the agents were to go home to tell the people that Queensland was a good place for the farm labourer, that any number were required, and that they would get good wages, they would only be telling a lot of lies, to induce people to leave what might be comfortable homes to come to a country in which they would have a lot of misery and trouble. He was not prepared to support anything of that kind.

Mr. STEWART: The Treasurer's replies to the hon. member for Bundaberg were not likely to be satisfactory to members on his side. In the present condition of affairs they were opposed to sending any agents to Europe, but if they did send any they should be the best men procurable. The hon. member for Toowoomba had shown the difficulties which Queensland agents would have to surmount. Australia was the most ungettable portion of the globe so far as emigrants were concerned, and to divert any of the stream of emigration to it they must offer very decided advantages. They must be able to say that higher wages were obtainable here than in any other portion of the globe, that land was freer, and that the advantages here were greater in every way; but that was not the case. Take Mr. Finucane, who was to be appointed commercial agent for the colony in Europe, what training had that gentleman had for such a position? The hon. member for Bulimba said he was a native of the Ionian Islands, and was acquainted with vine-growing,

and took a great interest in agriculture. The Ionian Islands were about the most barren portion of Europe, and though it was no discredit to be a native even of the Ionian Islands, a young man could gain very little commercial knowledge there. Mr. Finucane had been over thirty years in the police service, and as he was barely fifty years of age he must have been under twenty when he left his native Ionian Islands. What knowledge could he have of the commerce of Southern Europe? And he could have no knowledge of the commercial affairs of Queensland, for during the thirty years he had been in the colony he had been cooped up in an office in the Civil Service, and they had it on the authority of a man who ought to know that nothing so "cribbed, cabined, and confined" the mind of a man as work in the Civil Service, where they worked only thirty-seven and a-half hours a week, and all they troubled about was how they could get promotion and an increase in their screw. Mr. Finucane had got on in the service, but how was he going to serve Queensland in his present position? Whether Mr. Hume Black had failed or succeeded in his mission he was not going to say; but he contended that there could be no comparison between Mr. Black and Mr. Finucane so far as their qualifications for that position were concerned. The appointment of Mr. Finucane was ridiculous, and a sheer waste of money, for he was not competent for the position into which he had been pitchforked by the Government. He did not know anything about Mr. Lyons, except that he was a schoolmaster, and a man who devoted all his time to teaching children from year's end to year's end could have little or no opportunity of making himself acquainted with the industries of the colony, and he was not likely to be able to promote the interests of the country in the position he now occupied. With reference to Mr. Randall, he had not a word to say about that gentleman. If he had done nothing as immigration agent but, as the Premier had said, persuade the hon. member for Bundaberg and leader of the Labour party to come to the colony, he had fully justified his appointment.

Mr. CROSS would like to know what were the inducements those immigration agents were going to offer the people of the various countries they intended to visit. They certainly could not offer them proper facilities for acquiring land and for progressive development. It was no use for the Secretary for Lands and others, who knew very little about the struggle people had in acquiring land, to say that land could easily be obtained for settlement. The hon. member for Cambooya, who had been a shearer and a farmer, and the hon. member for Fassifern, who supported the Government, expressed a very different opinion; and the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, the father of the House, who had conducted a newspaper for about a quarter of a century, and who had rendered such excellent service to the farmers on the Darling Downs and in other parts of Queensland, had also assured them that the inducements in the way of land settlement were not such as would attract people from the old country. Of the quantity of land available for settlement no one could doubt, but the difficulty was how to obtain that land. The resources of the colony were not known yet, and the country would not be developed as it should be until they got many more millions of population. The sooner they got that population the better, when the conditions of the colony justified such an increase, but the question was, what facilities would they have, if they did come, to carry out their plans and assist in developing the resources of the colony. Take the farming industry. The

farmers in the old country would tell these agents that they could get money for 1½, 2, or 3 per cent., and the agents would have to admit that here the farmers had to pay 10 per cent., and often much more. They would also have to tell them about the system of storekeepers lending money, which necessitated the farmers dealing with those storekeepers. The whole banking system demanded reform.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Some storekeepers do not charge interest at all.

Mr. CROSS: There were very few.

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. member not to go into that question now. He has a motion on the paper dealing with it, and I must ask him to confine his remarks to the motion now before the Committee.

Mr. CROSS: Other hon. members had dealt with the inducements these agents would be able to offer, and he was trying to show that if they told the truth no farmer would be anxious to come to Queensland. The present circumstances were a disgrace to the colony and a greater disgrace to the Government. The other colonies had put these things upon a better footing, and were therefore able to offer greater inducements to immigrants.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Plenty of farmers lend money.

Mr. CROSS: There were very few; it was no use the hon. member talking in that strain. Some farmers were not paying interest because they could not do so, and if the mortgagees forced it they would have the farms left on their hands.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You admit that sometimes interest is not charged.

Mr. CROSS: In some cases the farmers could not pay it, and it paid the mortgagees to keep the farmers there. These were notorious facts. The Government had done nothing to facilitate land settlement, or provide facilities for getting to markets. They had spent hundreds of thousands of pounds in developing the meat and sugar industries, but the agricultural industry was left severely alone. The appeals of hon. members on his side had been treated with utter contempt. The industry had been neglected simply because it was carried on by men who struggled on without the assistance of syndicates. Cold storage, shipping facilities, and attempts to organise markets were in an embryo state, and certainly the farmers were in a worse position than anyone else. If the Government offered the farmers cheap money, it would be the greatest inducement to immigrants. The agents might tell English farmers that there was plenty of land available, but they would have to confess that it was 500 or 600 miles from a market, or else the roads were so bad that it was impossible to get to a market.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you know how much land was selected last year?

Mr. CROSS: A large amount, but it was mostly for grazing farms. The amount selected for farming was very small.

The HON. G. THORN rose to a point of order. There was a noise of firing outside which made it very difficult for everyone in the Chamber to hear. He hoped the Chairman would order it to be stopped.

The CHAIRMAN: I can only keep order within the precincts of the building.

Mr. CROSS: He thought there should be millions more people here, and there would be a great stream of immigrants if the Government would only make the colony attractive. There were things such as droughts that the Government could not deal with, but the matter of offering cheap money was one they could deal with, and if they did not make the colony attractive, sending home these agents would be only a waste of money. He agreed with the

hon. member for Toowoomba that these agents would have a hard task before them, and if they were not able to offer greater inducements this money might be more profitably spent in another direction.

Mr. KEOGH was sorry that the hon. member for Bulimba was not with him the other day at Sandgate, when the hon. member would have seen the nucleus of a grand body of young colonists. The only thing that would be of lasting benefit to the colony would be to give each of those children 160 acres of land free; that would be an inducement to people in the old country to come to Queensland, and do the same as parties already here were doing—that was, to populate the country in a proper way. The Secretary for Railways had interjected, when an hon. member on that side had been speaking, that farmers were not being charged 10 per cent. interest. He was aware that during the last two or three years the farmers had not been able to pay interest; but they were in the hands of the storekeepers, who gave them what they liked for their produce, so that if they did not pay interest directly they paid it indirectly.

Mr. DAWSON: That is not so in the West Moreton district, is it?

Mr. KEOGH: Yes; in the Rosewood Scrub.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Don't they get the market price for their produce?

Mr. KEOGH: The price was fixed by two or three individuals, and the farmers had to take what was offered or leave it. He could give an instance of a German settler who had been two or three years in the Rosewood Scrub, who had written to his friends in Germany, "Yes; Queensland is a very fine country. You get two crops a year. The sun comes out and burns the first, and a flood comes and takes away the second. Oh, yes, Queensland is a very fine country indeed."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is a very old story.

Mr. KEOGH: It was quite applicable to many farmers in West Moreton. He had no hesitation in saying that farmers could not make both ends meet. A few nights ago the Secretary for Public Instruction had taken him rather severely to task for advocating the advance of cheap money to farmers, but if the Government did not propound some scheme for giving assistance to the farmers they would not be able to repay their indebtedness.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that the question before the Committee is a vote for advertising, commission, and contingent expenses in promoting the emigration of full-paying passengers to the colony. The hon. member is discussing the position of farmers already in the colony.

Mr. KEOGH: He was only trying to show that no good would be done by voting that £5,000 for sending home immigration agents. He did not think that the agents would be able to induce people to come from the old country, where they were better off than they would be in Queensland. It would be better if, instead of sending home those men, they appointed a proper Agent-General with a full knowledge of the requirements of the colony. The present officer was only a stop-gap until someone else was appointed. He did not wish to call in question the appointment of Mr. Lyons, with whom he was not acquainted. Of course he had filled a very arduous and honourable position as a school teacher, but he could not know much of Queensland.

Mr. FINNEY: He knows a lot about it.

Mr. KEOGH: He might know a lot about Queen street, but he could not know much about Queensland or about agriculture in Queensland. Nothing had been said to show that he did,

any way. Until it was shown to him that Mr. Lyons knew something about agriculture and farming it was no use gentlemen on the other side interjecting that he was a smart man. As to Mr. Finucane, if he came from the Ionian Isles he must be a countryman of the hon. member for Toowong.

Mr. CALLAN: Is that anything against him?

Mr. KEOGH: He doubted whether Mr. Finucane knew much about agriculture, and he thoroughly agreed with the money proposed to be spent upon those agents might be better spent in other directions. The Treasurer had referred to Mr. Hume Black, and he (Mr. Keogh) certainly thought that the £1,400 a year spent in sending that gentleman home had been wasted. He hoped his prognostications in reference to the new departure that was being made would prove wrong, and that a good class of immigrants would be induced to come to the colony.

Mr. SIM thoroughly endorsed the remarks of those who were opposed to this vote, first, because the spending of the money was unnecessary, and, secondly, because the men chosen were not properly qualified. He was satisfied that the Committee would recognise the cogency of the arguments of the hon. member for Rockhampton North, that a man like Mr. Finucane, who had spent thirty years of his life in the Civil Service in Brisbane, and who was now returning to the Ionian Isles, or Italy, or Spain, could know very little about the conditions of life even in that part of the world, and hardly any more about the conditions of life in Queensland and Australia generally. So long as there were in this colony a large number of unemployed natives of the soil, who were unable to settle on the soil because facilities were not offered to them, he should oppose the spending of more money to bring people to the colony. He was not opposed to advertising the colony judiciously; he was willing to vote a reasonable sum for that object, but in sending home agents he maintained they were not taking the right course. The Treasurer implied that at one period of his life his special business abilities enabled him to earn as much as £1,000 a year. He (Mr. Sim) had known persons to get a great deal more than that for their business capacity, but it was scarcely businesslike on the part of the hon. gentleman to invite Mr. Finucane to spend the money of Queensland to any extent he liked. It would certainly have been more businesslike to have fixed a definite sum beyond which that gentleman's expenses should not go.

The TREASURER: Have we not got Civil Service regulations?

Mr. SIM: The hon. gentleman invited him to spend money lavishly; he said he hoped he would spend more than £500 a year in expenses. Speaking as one who knew Italy, Spain, and the Ionian Isles, he maintained that a man who spent £500 a year in travelling there would spend too much.

The TREASURER: Have we not an Audit Office?

Mr. SIM: An audit office was attached to every business house, and the practice was to make a fair or even a handsome allowance to travellers for mercantile firms and to expect them to keep within their limit. The Premier in inviting Mr. Finucane to draw from the public purse at his own sweet will committed a grave error of judgment.

The PREMIER: I did not do so.

Mr. SIM: You said you hoped he would spend more than £500.

The PREMIER: That is quite a different thing. He will have to account for every pound he spends.

Mr. SIM: He was not averse to spending money in order to make known to the world the

advantages offered by the colony. He believed Queensland to be one of the best colonies under the British flag, and he said that deliberately, with a knowledge of all the other colonies of Australia. At the same time he did not believe that Queensland offered to the immigrant the same advantages that were offered elsewhere. What was mainly wanted was greater liberality in the matter of land. In Canada, for instance, not only did the immigrant get 160 acres of land on paying a survey fee of £2 10s., but he was protected in it against all creditors, and to the extent of 500 dollars in money also. The result was that Canada not only got immigrants, but kept them for the rest of their lives, and made them into good and useful citizens. What did they offer in Queensland in comparison with Canada, which could be reached from England for £2 2s. as against £12 to Queensland. They were sending agents to the English people and offering them nothing. If the Government were sincerely desirous to bring in immigrants they should offer them free land. The Government, in appointing those agents, were evidently under the impression that the country round about Brisbane was the whole colony. The three gentlemen going home knew nothing whatever of the Northern portion of the colony.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Quite wrong. Two of them have lived in the North. Mr. Finucane was in the Gulf for years.

Mr. DAWSON: I suppose he took a holiday trip there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He was stationed at Burketown for many years in the Lands Department.

Mr. SIM was glad to hear that; it removed one difficulty from his mind. He trusted they would be fair to the colony as a whole, and not echo the remark once made in London by an ex-Agent-General that the North of Queensland was only fit for blackfellows and wallabies. If they were going to spend money in advertising the colony he would suggest that that money might be well spent in sending home a deputation of members of the House during the recess, chosen from all parties, and representing different industries and different portions of the colony.

Mr. LEAHY: And each contradicting the other.

Mr. SIM: It would at least be an advantage to the members of the deputation. They would see Europe, which some of them had not seen. They would be clothed with the authority of Parliament; they would make an impressive appearance, and they would be able to air their eloquence in illustrating the advantages of settling in Queensland. He threw out the suggestion, and hoped the Premier would adopt it.

Mr. CRIBB: If the proposal to spend money on immigration meant the bringing out of labourers, he should strongly oppose it. There were many of those classes at present without employment, and not a few cases of destitution requiring relief. He would be a party to nothing which would encourage a further influx of that kind of population. Before anything in that direction was done there ought to be a reasonable prospect of constant employment at remunerative wages as soon as they arrived. There was at present nothing to justify them in assuming that men of the labouring class coming from the old country could get anything in the shape of permanent employment. At the same time, Queensland was a large colony full of undeveloped resources, and the immigrants they wanted were men with money in their pockets who would settle on the land. He did not mean altogether in the shape of agricultural settlement. The best agricultural land in the vicinity of towns was already taken up. People in England should be able to go to the Agent-General's office and obtain the fullest

information with regard to land available for settlement, and certain areas should be set apart for selection by people in the old country, so that they might be sure of securing land when they arrived in the colony. People coming here to settle on the land should also have the privilege of travelling free by rail as far as practicable when proceeding to their selections. The encouragement of that sort of immigration would tend largely to develop the resources of the colony.

Mr. SMITH agreed with the hon. member for Carpentaria that we did not offer certain inducements to people to come and make their homes here; but there was no parallel between Queensland and Canada, which had one of the most inhospitable climates in the world. He was thoroughly in accord, however, with those who thought that more inducements should be offered to people to settle in Queensland. Many young men in the old country, after passing through the agricultural colleges there, went to Canada and the United States; and if that kind of immigration could be diverted to Queensland it would be greatly to the advantage of this colony. It would be a mistake to bring out people who were without money. They wanted people with capital to help to develop the resources of the country, and that was the class the Government aimed at bringing out. He considered that the gentlemen who were being sent to Europe were fully competent to explain the resources of the colony, and he might mention that in the early days Mr. Finucane spent a number of years in the North.

Mr. GROOM said the hon. gentleman was not right in referring to Canada as a country with a most inhospitable climate. It was one of the finest countries in the world.

Mr. SMITH: One of the coldest climates.

Mr. GROOM: It might just as well be said that the climate in some parts of Australia was inhospitable. Only the other day, on his arrival at Vancouver, Li Hung Chang expressed his astonishment at the millions of acres of wheat he had seen in Canada; and at Manitoba this season the excess over the demand would amount to 20,000,000 bushels. We wanted to attract people to our own colony, not run down another country. If a man on going to Canada found that things there were not as they had been represented to him, he could easily raise enough to go back to Europe, but it was not so here, and really what they should try to do was to make the bridge to Queensland as easy as possible. He hoped the mission of these agents would be successful, but it could not be so if they went home empty-handed and had no special inducements to offer to immigrants.

Mr. DAWSON had listened with patience and with an even temper to the debate, to try to discover the qualifications of the three agents who were to go home to represent Queensland as immigration agents. Hon. members had tried to ram down their throats that those gentlemen were well qualified to fill their positions. He wanted to know from the Secretary for Lands what was the special qualification of Mr. Finucane? When the hon. gentleman said that Mr. Finucane was well acquainted with North Queensland he challenged the statement, and he challenged it again now. How long was it since Mr. Finucane had lived in North Queensland? He might have been stationed at Burketown ten or fifteen years ago, but what did he know of North Queensland now? If he went to Europe and represented Burketown to the people of any country there as he knew it ten or fifteen years ago, he would not be representing it as it was now.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There is no use in sending newchums to that part of the country.

Mr. DAWSON: Then what was the use of sending that man to Europe to introduce new-

chums on the ground that his special qualification for the position was that he knew North Queensland. The Secretary for Lands, interrupting the hon. member for Carpentaria, said that the particular qualification of Mr. Finucane was that he was acquainted with North Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are quite wrong. I absolutely deny it.

Mr. SM: I accepted the statement in that way when it was made.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS explained that when the hon. member for Carpentaria said that Mr. Finucane had never been in the North, he interjected that Mr. Finucane had been in the North—that he had been employed in the lands office at Burketown. That was all he said.

Mr. DAWSON: If, as the Secretary for Mines said, North Queensland was not a place for newchums to go to, what qualification was it for an immigration agent to say that he knew North Queensland as it used to be ten or fifteen years ago? What other qualification had he?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He knows the Mediterranean.

Mr. DAWSON: He knew it when he was in knickerbockers—did he know it now? Take the other man, the school teacher. The question was whether Mr. Lyons knew enough about Queensland to qualify him as an immigration agent. What qualification had he for such an appointment at £300 a year?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will allow me for a moment. I trust members of the Committee will keep order. All this afternoon I have tried to keep order, but it seems to have no effect, as hon. members will keep talking one to another inside the Chamber.

Mr. DAWSON: With regard to Mr. Randall, the only thing they had heard about him, and it was a good one, was that he had induced the hon. member for Bundaberg to come to the colony. But while that was evidence that he had the faculty of selecting good men, and men of probity, he believed that if he had time he could pick out a very large number of men whom Mr. Randall had induced to come to the colony who were not so good. He was quite sure that the present Government had not been satisfied with the work of Mr. Randall for many years, and could remember the time when they recalled him because he was not doing his duty satisfactorily as immigration agent. What was the reason for the sudden confidence they now showed in that gentleman? There was nothing specially remarkable in Mr. Randall's work to justify his appointment now, not as an ordinary immigration agent, but as a special commissioner representing the colony, and they had absolutely no evidence that he, or Mr. Lyons, or Mr. Finucane had any special qualifications for the positions to which they were appointed. He would very much like to see the whole vote negatived, because it was absolutely a farce. The Government knew that it was all fudge, and they knew that members on that side knew that it was all fudge. It was merely a little bit of a vote put on as a compliment to the hon. member for Bulimba, a persistent supporter of the Government, who had persisted, in season and out of season, in bringing up the question of immigration. If any hon. member called for a division on the question, he (Mr. Dawson) would give his vote against it with more pleasure than he had given any vote this session. Now, he wanted to make an explanation, and to ask for an explanation. On the last occasion when that vote was before the Committee, he fell foul of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, very much to that hon. member's injury. The hon.

member then, speaking about the labourers who it was stated were walking about unable to obtain employment, said—

"That was the case a year or two ago, but there were not many really good labourers walking about now. There was a certain class of men who would walk about, and nobody would ever persuade them to do anything else; but it answered the purpose of the other side to hold them up as genuine working men."

He interjected, "Do you mean to say that every man out of work now is a loafer?" It appeared from *Hansard* that the hon. member replied "No." He (Mr. Dawson) denied at that time that he said "No," and he now took this opportunity of apologising to the hon. member for contradicting him when he was correct, and asked the hon. member to be as candid and frank, and explain what he meant by saying that "It answered the purpose of the other side to hold them"—the loafers—"up as genuine working men."

Mr. MOMASTER: What he had stated was that there was a certain class of men who were walking about; that no person could persuade them to do anything else but walk about, and he said that members on the other side held that class up as being genuine working men. They were a class of men who would not work when they got work.

Mr. BROWNE did not think much could be added to what had been said to try to prevent these lecturers going home, but he thought there were better ways of advertising the colony. One of those gentlemen had been home before without any good results, another was an ex-schoolmaster, and a third an ex-policeman, and how they were going to advertise the colony he did not see. He had lately met three or four people who had been home and had listened to these lecturers telling the people yarns which were very amusing to them as old residents. They read up some of the old books which told them that Australian birds did not sing, and Australian flowers had no smell, and then they posed as authorities. To induce immigrants to come here they had to overcome distance and other natural obstacles, and the only way to do that was to make the colony attractive. He might also point out that there was now a continuous stream of colonists going backwards and forwards to the old country; possibly some 400 or 500 every year, and they would advertise the colony much better than any paid lecturers.

The TREASURER: I agree with you; I always give them letters of introduction if they ask for them.

Mr. BROWNE: The Treasurer was quite right in that, but he might refer hon. members to a letter which appeared in a Brisbane paper a few weeks ago from a doctor who went to the Agent-General's office for some information, and the only person he found there was the office boy, who said he could tell him as much as the other fellows could.

The TREASURER: Do you believe that?

Mr. BROWNE: Yes; because I know how things go on there.

The TREASURER: That shows the credulity of the other side of the House.

Mr. BROWNE: It did not show his credulity, because he had been home, and knew how men who went home were treated, unless they happened to pose as authorities. People came out and were pitchforked into positions, and got the name of being very good fellows; then they went home and made a laughing-stock of the colony instead of advertising it in the way it should be. There was one way of advertising the colony, but the Ministry and the Press were not patriotic enough to try it; that was by advertising its mineral resources. If the leading papers had half as much in them about the

Queensland mines as they had about the Western Australian mines, Queensland would be advertised to some purpose; but that would not pay certain brokers and commission agents. No doubt there was gold in Western Australia, but it did not come from under the surface. It came from about two feet above it—out of the pockets of the British public, and the Queensland mines were left severely alone.

The TREASURER: You want a "wild cat" column.

Mr. BROWNE: He did not want it, but some people did, judging by the way they advertised the "wild cats" and left the tame ones alone. The Treasurer was doing a good thing by giving letters of introduction to Australians who were going home, and even if part of their expenses were paid he did not think his side of the House would object. They heard a great deal about professional politicians, but to send home professional lecturers was the worst thing they could do. There was room for millions of people in Queensland, and he had no hesitation in saying that it was the very best colony in Australia, if not the best under the British flag, and there was no man more anxious than he was to see it progress, but still these lecturers would do it no good. The Secretary for Railways interjected while the hon. member for Carpentaria was speaking that they did not want to send newchums to the North, but he would point out that the Northern people contributed their quota to the taxation of the colony, and he protested against the North having to pay money to bring immigrants into South Queensland. There was plenty of room for more people in the North, but there could not be much room in the South, seeing that they had had to pass a Bill the year before last to enable the Government to buy back lands for people to settle upon. There were any amount of ways in which the colony could be well advertised. They might send home Mr. Sellheim's reports of the Mines Department, and also reports of the Agricultural Department and other departments. Those reports would attract more people than all the lectures that could be delivered in the next five years. If the Government spent money in that way he would not object, but he intended to vote against the proposed expenditure, and if any reduction was moved he would support it.

Mr. HAMILTON: No doubt every hon. member had his own particular fad as to the best way to advertise the colony and induce immigrants to come out, but the question was whether they approved of the proposal of the Government to send lecturers home. If they approved of that course, then the onus lay on the Government of choosing suitable men. He did not think it was fair to speak of the lecturers as going home on a picnic. He assumed that the gentlemen who were to be sent were just as patriotic as hon. members, and, just as hon. members wanted money for what they did, those gentlemen wanted money for what they did. He had never heard before that Mr. Randall had been an unsuccessful lecturer. Year after year they had heard him boomed in that House. He had known Mr. Finucane for a long time, and he knew that he took a great interest in agricultural pursuits. The hon. member for Croydon had suggested that Mr. Sellheim's reports might be sent home, but there were other departments to which people's attention should also be drawn.

Mr. BROWNE: I mentioned the Agricultural Department.

Mr. HAMILTON: The way in which the Mines Department was worked gave great satisfaction, and Mr. Sellheim did his best to advertise the mineral resources of the colony, but they might follow the example of Victoria and have the reports epitomised in a nice readable

form, and sent to the Agent-General for distribution in the old country. If anyone wanted information on matters of fact about any mine that was being floated in Victoria, he could go to the Agent-General's office, when the Agent-General would wire to the Mines Department in Victoria for the information required. That gave people in the old country who were inclined to invest in Victorian mines confidence in their mineral resources. If something of that sort were done in this colony it would be productive of good.

The TREASURER would like to give a flat contradiction to what had fallen from the hon. member for Croydon, who seemed to think that nothing was done in the way of advertising the mining resources of the colony. If he would only call at the Mines Office and ask what was done he would change his opinion. The Mines Department was doing all in its power to circulate all the reports of the Government Geologist, whose equal was not to be found in Australia, or, perhaps, the world; but, apparently, what the hon. member wanted was that the Government should take up some particular mine, and put it before the public in London. If the hon. member knew what he was talking about—which he very much doubted—he would not make such an observation, which could not be substantiated. He also wished to give a flat contradiction to the statement of the member for Carpentaria, who said that Mr. Finucane had been invited to draw as much as he liked by way of travelling expenses. The hon. member apparently did not understand the rules of the service. Mr. Randall and Mr. Lyons were in a very different position to Mr. Finucane. He was an old public servant and came under the 1863 Act.

Mr. DAWSON: A pensioner.

The TREASURER: Not a pensioner. A pension was a grant of money by the Crown, which was a very different thing to the right to certain retiring allowances acquired by long service and contributing to a fund. Mr. Finucane's travelling expenses would be confined strictly within the limits of the Civil Service regulations. He would have to account for every shilling he spent; and when he (the Treasurer) said earlier in the evening that he hoped Mr. Finucane would spend more than £500 in travelling expenses, he meant, of course, that so long as the money was spent in the service of the country legitimately he was not going to cavil at any expenditure that might be incurred.

Mr. BROWNE: When the Treasurer ventured to give a flat contradiction to an hon. member he should repeat the assertion that he was contradicting. He had never said that the Mines Department did nothing, and in the words of the Treasurer he gave that a flat contradiction. If the hon. gentleman could not teach them anything else he might set an example of courtesy and civility. It would be better for the country if the hon. gentleman knew as much of the subjects he spoke upon as he (Mr. Browne) knew of mining. The hon. gentleman was under the impression that because he was not continually trotting round to his department asking for favours that he never visited other departments.

The TREASURER: You come sometimes.

Mr. BROWNE: Not often.

The TREASURER: You came about the costs of that action.

Mr. BROWNE: That was what they might call chivalry! He went to the hon. gentleman and showed him his schedule that he was going to file with his insolvency, and asked him what he was going to do, and the hon. gentleman asked him not to file his petition—that he would bring a motion before the House so that he need not go insolvent.

The TREASURER: No; I said I would refer the matter to the Speaker.

Mr. BROWNE: He could assure the hon. gentleman that he was proud of the action he took on the occasion of the suspensions. One of the proudest moments of his life was when he took the stand he did.

The TREASURER: Had you a mandate from your constituents to do it?

Mr. BROWNE: Had the hon. gentleman a mandate from the people of Murilla to remove from the House members he knew nothing about? The people of Murilla never gave him a mandate to insult men on the floor of that House, and he for one declined to be insulted by the hon. gentleman. After that digression which the hon. gentleman had been mean enough to cause, he wished to say that no hon. member took a keener interest in the Mines Department than himself or appreciated it more; but he repeated that a great deal more information might be circulated by the department.

The TREASURER: You are wrong.

Mr. BROWNE: If he was wrong, then the hon. gentleman did not believe in the resources of the colony. He might be wrong, but it appeared the Premier thought it was better to keep things dark.

The PREMIER: No. The hon. member accused the Mines Department of neglecting its duty.

Mr. BROWNE would give that, in the hon. gentleman's own words, a flat contradiction. He gave the Mines Department credit for what it had done, but said it could do a great deal more. What he said was that one of Mr. Sellheim's reports, well circulated all over the United Kingdom, would do more good than five years' lecturing by those gentlemen on subjects that, in many cases, they knew nothing about.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES could assure the Committee that the Mines Department were advertising the mining resources of the colony as much as any of the other colonies were doing with regard to their own. Mr. Sellheim's reports were sent to every mining centre and leading journals throughout the world—to England, to the United States, to Germany, to Africa—and they were putting them on board steamers going to Western Australia. Mr. Jack had just written a report on the Hodgkinson Gold Field, and it was proposed to print 50,000 copies of it and scatter them broadcast. Mr. Jack was of opinion that if the colony's mining resources were well advertised it might not only be the means of stopping people leaving Queensland for Western Australia, but of inducing a lot of people to come from other countries to Queensland instead of to Western Australia. If our mining resources were properly known they would attract not only people but capital. He would like to have seen some competent men engaged to go home and lecture on the mining resources of Queensland, and it was just possible that might be done. Mr. Rands was going home on leave of absence, and one of the conditions on which he obtained his leave was that while in the old country he should give lectures on the subject. Perhaps with the exception of Mr. Jack, Mr. Rands knew as much as anybody in the colony about Queensland mining. It might be advisable to make their mining laws more favourable to capitalists, and in many ways a great deal more could be done to make mining more attractive to investors than had hitherto been done. When the Mining Act was passed in 1872 there was no notion of sinking shafts 500 feet, certainly not 2,000 feet, and men would not spend large sums in sinking deep shafts on a 25-acre lease. It was intended to appoint a Mining Commission during the recess, and no doubt they would bring up suggestions which would make the industry more attractive

to investors. There were greater inducements in Queensland for mining investors than in any of the other colonies. He would be very glad at any time to receive suggestions on the subject from mining members. At present mining was holding its own notwithstanding the great exodus to West Australia. He believed the returns would be as great as last year, but he would like to see them greater, and with that view they would have to offer much more liberal inducements to capitalists in the old country than was now the case.

Mr. DAWSON: No doubt the hon. gentleman would like to receive suggestions from mining members. But what had happened just now? No sooner did one of the oldest and most experienced mining members in the Chamber offer a suggestion than he was deliberately insulted by the Premier. What encouragement was there for any mining member to offer suggestions if he was to be deliberately insulted by the leader of the Government, and told that he did not know what he was talking about.

The PREMIER: In that case he did not know what he was talking about.

Mr. DAWSON: The Premier does not—

The CHAIRMAN: I trust the hon. member will see that this matter has been sufficiently dealt with. It will lead to no good if this kind of recrimination is continued. I hope the hon. member will now address himself to the question before the Committee.

Mr. DAWSON wished to know whether he was in order in replying to statements made by a Minister of the Crown? If the Chairman ruled him out of order, he would say no more.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member would be following the practice of Parliament if he would allow the reply to be made by the hon. member to whom the Premier referred. He would be showing more good taste by allowing the hon. member for Croydon to reply himself.

Mr. DAWSON said he was not there to take suggestions on good taste from the Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. gentleman asked me a question, and I answered him civilly. He should take my suggestion in good part.

Mr. DAWSON: He was quite willing to bow to the ruling of the Chair with regard to the Standing Orders and rules of practice, but was not going to take lectures on good taste from him. He wanted to know if it was competent for any hon. member to reply to statements made by Ministers of the Crown.

The CHAIRMAN: I have no hesitation in ruling that the hon. member will not be in order at present in referring to the Mines Department on this vote.

Mr. DAWSON would take care to remember the ruling. He would follow up the remarks made by the hon. member for Croydon about the money proposed to be spent by the Government in advertising the resources of the colony. He agreed that the Mines Department spent a lot of energy and money in advertising the mineral resources of the colony; but the reports prepared by the department were sent only to the various Government offices.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They are sent to schools of mines.

Mr. DAWSON: There were not many places where schools of mines existed. The reports were not sent to the libraries or to the leading newspapers, but were confined mostly to official circles.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They are sent to the leading newspapers.

Mr. DAWSON: If our leading newspapers took up those reports, and paid the same atten-

tion to Queensland mines as to West Australian and South African mines, they would help to develop the colony better than now. The hon. member for Croydon did not say that nothing was being done; he said there was a great deal done; and taking the Mines Department as an illustration he pointed out that a great deal more might be done by the Agricultural Department and other departments by sending their reports to places where they would reach a larger circle of people. Documents showing the resources and prospects of the colony should be sent broadcast throughout the world. More good would be done in that way than they could hope to accomplish by sending home three dozen officers like the three gentlemen who had been appointed.

The HOME SECRETARY: We have a valuable year book in the press now.

Mr. DAWSON: The average man did not read a year book.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Does he read a report?

Mr. DAWSON: He would read the best portions of a mines report as published in a leading newspaper. The hon. gentleman might draw up an elaborate report of his department, but though the average man would read the portions culled into the newspaper, he might not read the hon. gentleman's elaborate report. The hon. member for Cook misunderstood the discussion when he said that members on the Opposition side should not raise any objection to the three men selected as agents, because it was only fair, when the House decided on that line of action, that the Government should select the men. They never disputed that, but they objected to the line of action, and when the House, in defiance of their objection, determined to go on with it, they questioned the qualifications of the men selected for those positions.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He had no wish to prolong the debate on the Mines Department, but he wished to say—

Mr. DAWSON: If the hon. gentleman introduces anything at all about the Mines Department, I shall hold to my right to reply to him.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He only intended to reply to what the hon. member had said. The hon. member had inferred that the Mines report was not advertised. Did the hon. member not say so?

Mr. DAWSON: No.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If the hon. member did not say so, of course he would not reply.

Mr. DAWSON: If the hon. member spoke upon the Mines Department, he should hold to his right to reply.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You have been speaking all night upon it.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: It was very awkward to find the same arguments adduced and prolonged to a degree that would suffocate a laughing jackass. He understood that Mr. Lyons, Mr. Finucane, Mr. Randall, and Mr. Rands were to be sent to Europe as agents for immigration, and he entirely objected to the policy of sending four gentlemen to Europe for such a purpose. He came to the kernel of the question by asking what the Agent-General was doing, and what he had been doing for the last few years? He could go back to the immigration work of Dr. Lang and Mr. Jordan to speak of men he knew, and he again asked the question, What had they an Agent-General for in London? Queensland and some of the other colonies were the laughing-stock of Britain on the strength of the Australian easy chairs

of their Agents-General. Why did not their Agent-General and his secretary travel through Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and England, and tell the people what they knew about Queensland? One member had said in that Chamber that a man required to be three or four years in London to fit him for the post of Agent-General, but a man should be fully fitted for it for some years before he started for London. He had a great personal regard for Mr. Dicken, but he said they should bring him back and send from this country one, two, or three men up to date upon mining, pastoral, and agriculture enterprise, as well as upon the ticks and the financial "tick" which had led to so much disaster. He rose to respectfully expostulate against the appointment of anybody as an immigration agent so long as the Agent-General lay dormant.

Mr. GLASSEY: He thought members generally were in favour of the distribution of literature concerning the resources of Queensland, and as he thought £2,000 would be sufficient for that he moved the reduction of the vote by £3,000 to cover the salaries and expenses of the three agents proposed to be appointed.

Mr. HARDACRE was rather sorry that the vote was not divided into three items, so that they might deal with them separately, for while he had no sympathy with the proposal to send agents to Great Britain for the purpose of promoting immigration, he had no objection to advertising the resources of the colony. Mr. Finucane was in an entirely different position from that of the other two persons appointed. He was not going to Europe so much for immigration as for commercial purposes, and although he might not be the very best man that could be got for the position, he believed he was the best man the Government knew of at the present time. He had entered enthusiastically into matters connected with sub-tropical agriculture, and was an intelligent active man who would do the best he could for the colony. The climate of southern Europe was similar to that of Queensland, and there were a large number of agricultural products grown there suitable for cultivation in Queensland. The value of the export of olives from Sicily and other parts of southern Europe to Great Britain and elsewhere amounted to over £1,000,000 annually. Mr. Finucane was thoroughly acquainted with the cultivation of that fruit; and if he was successful in introducing that industry into Queensland, which was said to be more suited for it than the places he had mentioned, that would be worth more to the colony than the small amount of his salary. Then they were told that the climate of Queensland was suitable for the culture of grapes and other products, and there was also the question of finding markets for their meat on the continent of Europe. In those matters and others a reasonably good agent in Mr. Finucane's position would be an advantage to the colony. He felt bound to make these remarks on the question, so that his action should not be misunderstood. He was sorry that the vote had not been divided into three; but as it was not he should be compelled to vote for the proposed reduction, because he did not believe in sending home immigration agents.

Mr. DANIELS: They had been told that Mr. Finucane was a great expert in olive cultivation, and that he was able to show that fortunes could be made at it. Why did he not take up land himself and give them ocular demonstration of that? That would be a great deal better than lecturing to other people on the subject. It was a good deal easier to exhibit a row of figures showing what a tree would produce and how many acres a man could attend to than to give a practical demonstration. If Mr.

Finucane gave the matter a trial, and proved it a success, then give him the £1,000 instead of sending him home.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON asked the Treasurer how long they were to be without an Agent-General, and how long they were to have an acting Agent-General who had been so long absent from the colony?

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that the vote for the Agent-General has already been passed; that question is not now before the Committee.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: The question before the Committee was "Immigration—advertising, commission, and contingent expenses in promoting the immigration of full-paying passengers to the colony." He objected to the term "full-paying passengers" because the free passage system was dead, except in the case of nominated immigrants. Immigration had always been considered the special department of the Agent-General—far more so than the indenting and export to this colony of steel rails and telegraph wire. They had spoken about the unwisdom of having a mere ornament as Agent-General in the old country.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member will look at the Estimates he will see that the Agent-General's Department is on page 12. The question now is that £2,000 only be granted for immigration.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: No one could say that the question of immigration had no connection with the office of the Agent-General.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the hon. member understood me. A few minutes ago he complained about the waste of time upon this vote, and if he will look at Standing Order 311 he will see that when an amendment is proposed a speaker shall strictly confine his remarks to that amendment. At present there is an amendment before the Committee that £2,000 only be granted.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: The waste of time he referred to was on other evenings. He was not in favour of granting £50,000 or even £500,000 for immigration. He did not want this £5,000 to be absorbed in the payment of three or four aides-de-camp to the Agent-General, who did nothing. He noticed in the *Courier's* London letter that the Agent-General's office was very busy in getting out steel rails and locomotives, a thing that would take Smellie and Co.'s chief clerk a very little while to attend to. They might rub out the Agent-General's Department except for this question of immigration. As the hon. member for Toowong said some weeks ago, they should have a real live representative in London who would advocate immigration.

The CHAIRMAN: I think I may claim the assistance of the hon. member in passing this vote. He must see that in discussing the Agent-General's Department he is not confining himself to the amendment before the Committee.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He hoped the amendment would not pass, and that next year the Government would propose a much larger sum to be spent on immigration. So far as Queensland was concerned, the Agent-General and his assistants were mere cyphers; they were doing work that was not worth £5 a week to the colony.

Mr. GRIMES: He did not wonder that hon. members opposite should object to this vote, but they should not speak disparagingly of those gentlemen who had been appointed to these positions. He was sorry to hear the hon. member for Croydon say something to the effect that

Mr. Randall had been a failure as a lecturer, and had been withdrawn upon that account, because that was not true. He was one of the most efficient and enthusiastic lecturers ever sent to England, and his only reason for returning to the colony was that there was no more money to spend in immigration. His efficiency had been recognised by three past Governments, and he had been the means of inducing some of the best men from the midland counties to come here. Those men tackled farming as labourers, but they were now successful farmers. He was surprised to find that Mr. Randall's salary was only to be the same as that proposed to be given to Mr. Lyons, who had had no experience whatever. In former years Mr. Randall received £500 a year. The Treasurer had said that Mr. Finucane was to get the same salary as he had got in the Police Department, and he could not see why such a difference should be made in the case of a man of considerable ability and experience. During the two years Mr. Randall had been in Queensland since his recall he had not been idle, but, believing that he would be sent back to England again, he had been looking up matters while in the colony. Certainly his salary ought to be something approaching that which he had formerly received.

The TREASURER thought it was hardly fair of the hon. member to bring up such a question in the Committee. He would have done more good for his friend by bringing the matter before the Government, because the Committee was not fixing the salary. That question was not before them. The complete answer to the hon. member was that Mr. Randall had accepted the position.

Mr. GRIMES: He would not have referred to the matter had it not been alluded to during the debate. The Treasurer had himself given them the information, and it was because no difference had been made between the tried man and the new appointee that he had said what he had. He had done so in good faith, and he trusted that his statement would be accepted.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON asked whether the vote was to be under the management of the Agent-General in any way?

The TREASURER: Certainly.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He was very glad to hear it. He also asked how long it would be before an Agent-General would be appointed, and when Mr. Dicken would be brought back to Queensland? He did not ask who was to be appointed Agent-General, but how long the vacuum was to be allowed to exist?

The TREASURER: They had got a very good acting Agent-General, and he was quite satisfied with him.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Mr. Dicken was a very capable office man; in that respect he was one of the very best men they could get; but he was sorry to hear the hon. gentleman say he was satisfied, because the hon. gentleman was the keystone of the Government of this colony. Mr. Dicken was a charming man, but at the same time he was not half as good a man as the Treasurer himself would be for the post. He did not say that the Treasurer even was up to date in Queensland knowledge; but he said emphatically that the public were entirely dissatisfied with the condition of the London office. They wanted a man who was up to date.

Mr. SIM said that the Treasurer had left the Chamber immediately after informing him that he had made a statement in ignorance. In advocating that the expenses of Mr. Finucane should be definitely fixed, he had only pointed out what was the usual custom in regard to commercial agents all over the world. The fact that Mr. Finucane was under the Civil Service

Board was no reason why he should be at liberty to dip his hands into the public purse with impunity. The hon. gentleman had distinctly encouraged Mr. Finucane to indulge in lavish expenditure by saying that he hoped he would spend even more than £500. It would be more businesslike and more satisfactory if his expenses were fixed on a handsome scale. He would like to know whether Mr. Finucane's washerwoman's account would be checked by the Auditor-General, or whether considerable sums would not be put down as "sundries"? If he had not misunderstood the Secretary for Mines, the hon. gentleman had stated that it was not intended to send any newchums to the Gulf. He protested strongly against the expenditure of public money for the purpose of bringing out immigrants none of whom were to be allowed to go to that part of the country.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There are none coming out at all yet.

Mr. SIM: A newchum could live in the Gulf country with perfect impunity, and was likely to enjoy as good health and to get employment at as good wages as he was likely to get about Brisbane. He came here a newchum, went to work in the Gulf country, and lived there for years without being any the worse in bodily health or strength. No man could wish for a finer opportunity of advancing his interests and living in comfort than in that portion of the colony.

The TREASURER wished to assure the hon. member, who seemed to have some doubt on the subject, that if Mr. Finucane sent in a bill for his washing it would be disallowed. All the remarks they had heard from the other side, with the exception of those which came from the member for Carpentaria, had been in disparagement of the colony. They had been told the colony was not fit for a white man to live in, and after the famous speech made by the member for Burke a month or two ago, he had simply said that that hon. member would be the worst man in the world who could be employed as an agent to send to the old country.

Mr. GLASSEY: Where did the Treasurer get his information with regard to hon. members on that side always defaming the colony? He challenged the hon. gentleman to produce any proof of that statement.

The TREASURER: Night after night. Look in *Hansard*.

Mr. GLASSEY: They had heard from the other side that white men could not live in certain places, and that black men had to be got to do the work. He had combated those statements time and again. He challenged them in 1892 and many times since, and no one had yet been able to refute his statements. He had contended again and again that white men could do the work in the cane fields of Queensland.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will see that it is not in order to discuss the black labour question. He should confine himself to his amendment.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Why didn't you stop the Premier?

The CHAIRMAN: He never referred to black labour.

Mr. DUNSFORD: He hurled accusations at this side.

Mr. GLASSEY had no desire to pursue that argument, but it was unfair and untrue of the hon. gentleman to use the words he had used.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What about the 90,000 unemployed?

Mr. GLASSEY: Neither the Premier nor Secretary for Railways had ever disproved his figures; and if those hon. gentlemen chose to come with him into the country districts, he could show them vast numbers of young men, able-bodied

and willing to work, for whom there was nothing to do. To say that he had decried the colony was not a fact. On his return from America he had said that so far as his observations went there was no finer country in the world than Queensland.

The TREASURER: New Zealand is your pet country.

Mr. GLASSEY: There was no country in the world that was so misgoverned and cursed by incompetent fossils as the colony of Queensland, and the fossil of fossils was the Prime Minister of the country; a conservative of conservatives, who had made his dollars, and who, by pure accident, had become Prime Minister. No progress, politically or commercially, could be expected in the country so long as that gentleman occupied his present position. He wished it to go forth once and for all that the hon. gentleman, when he accused that side of constantly disparaging Queensland, was not stating what was a fact.

Mr. BATTERSBY rose to a point of order. Was the hon. member not bound to speak to the amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: I think it would facilitate business if the hon. member for Bundaberg would confine himself to the amendment which he has moved.

Mr. GLASSEY: He had on two or three occasions spoken favourably of New Zealand, and he did so now, for the reason that there had been a party in power there during the last six years who were attempting to do something for the country. He was sorry he could not say the same for his own colony, which would not, and could not, progress so long as they had the present head of the Government blocking the wheels and preventing them going round. Reference had been made to Mr. Randall having nominated him to Queensland as an immigrant. He had never heard that it was a degrading thing or a crime for a person to come there as an immigrant. He certainly came out at the instance of Mr. Randall. During Mr. Randall's travels in the north of England he had many opportunities of viewing his work, and took the chair at several of his meetings, and he could safely say that a more energetic, honest, genuine servant Queensland could not possibly have. He would go further, and say that if the colony was in such a position as to require an active, energetic agent to go to the old country to make its attractions and requirements known, the Government could not get a better man than Mr. Randall.

The PREMIER: He cannot bring you out again.

Mr. GLASSEY: He did not want any sneers from the Premier, and would not take them. He had no doubt the Premier and some of his kidney would be very glad if he had never come out, and would be still more glad if he was sent back again. To return to the question, he would ask how and where it was intended to absorb the immigrants when they arrived? Not in the agricultural districts, nor in the pastoral districts, and certainly not in the manufacturing districts. He knew the colony well, and he must confess he did not know where they were going to be located. There were vast tracts of agricultural land, but they were not put to the best possible use; and large numbers of people could be absorbed, usefully to themselves and profitably to the country, if those lands were in the hands of a progressive party.

Mr. MCGAHAN: If they could get an influx of immigrants of the right sort the money asked for, or even twice as much, would be money well spent. He believed the Government were sincere in their desire to settle people on the land, but in his own district, and it was the case

in many others, and equally so in the Central and Northern districts, there was at present very little land open for occupation. It would be impossible to get close settlement without a further repurchase of estates for that purpose; and it should be done at once.

Mr. GLASSEY: They purchased an estate at Rosewood which they cannot sell.

Mr. MCGAHAN: If the land repurchased was not fit for close settlement it was a bad bargain, but he knew nothing about the Rosewood estate. He considered that the Government performed a gracious act in repurchasing the Clifton estate. Hon. members on the other side blamed the Government for repurchasing that land—they said there was any amount of Crown land—but there was not any fit to settle on.

Mr. DANIELS: Who is running Queensland down now?

Mr. MCGAHAN: He was not. Where there was land fit to settle on it was the duty of the Government to repurchase it and settle the people there.

Mr. KEOGH: There is plenty of Crown land fit for close settlement if they like to throw it open.

Mr. MCGAHAN: There was none in his district. Not long ago the applications for a number of selections there overlapped ten times over, which proved that the people were anxiously looking for land. He believed it was better for agricultural labourers coming here to get employment two or three years with farmers until they knew what to grow and how to grow it, instead of going on the land at once and learning by themselves. It was thirty years since he first went farming; and if the young men who might come to the colony did as well as he had done they would have no need to complain. The country was good enough; it only wanted developing; and the Government intended to develop it to the best of their ability.

Mr. CROSS hoped the colony would read the hon. gentleman's refutation of the statement of the Premier. The hon. gentleman, who was one of the few prosperous farmers in the colony, said there was no land available for farming.

The PREMIER: In his district.

Mr. CROSS: In the colony. He said there was no land available except for grazing, and said the Government would have to repurchase it. Another thing, the hon. gentleman said it was of no use asking farmers with capital to come out here, because they would not know the conditions of the colony, and would not know what to grow—they would have to come out and take 7s. 6d. a week to get colonial experience.

Mr. JACKSON wished to know whether the scheme suggested some time ago by the Agent-General had borne fruit. He referred to the keeping of a register in the Agricultural Department, to be sent to the Agent-General at home, containing the names of planters and farmers willing to give instruction in farming to young men. The information would be a guide to hon. members in voting on the question. He did not think there was very much in the idea of sending Mr. Finucane to Southern Europe, because he had been informed that it would be impossible for people here to compete with the inhabitants of Greece and Turkey in the dried fruit trade; but he thought there was an opening in the colony for men who would produce butter and cheese for the English market. The hon. member for Cunningham spoke of the scarcity of land, though it was but fair to the hon. member to say that he referred chiefly to his own district. The speech of the hon. member was more opposed to immigration than many of the speeches which had come from the Opposition side of the House. There was no scarcity

of land in the Central and Northern districts. There was plenty of room for immigrants of the right stamp in those districts, whether there was room for them in the Southern district or not.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON was sorry that the hon. member for Cunningham should have displayed such grievous ignorance of the Central and Northern district as to say there was no land there except what was fit only for pasturage settlement. There were in the Central district millions of acres still in the hands of the Crown that were as eminently fitted for agriculture as any in the Southern district. He rose to call the attention of the Committee to a matter which he hoped would be noticed in *Hansard*, and that was that he had asked the Treasurer a question concerning the Agent-General. The hon. gentleman admitted that the vote would be under the control of the Agent-General, and he asked the question: "When the Government intended to appoint an Agent-General?" There was a very marked evasive reply to that question—that the hon. gentleman was personally satisfied with the Acting Agent-General. No hon. member with a scintilla of common sense would regard that as a reply which should come from a gentleman occupying the dignified position of Prime Minister of Queensland. The reply, "I am satisfied with the Acting Agent-General," was undignified and unworthy of the hon. gentleman's position.

Question put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 21.

Messrs. Glassey, Kerr, Cross, Dunsford, McDonnell, King, Daniels, Jackson, Turley, Fitzgerald, Hardacre, Fogarty, Dibley, Hoolan, Sim, Dawson, McDonald, Browne, Stewart, Kidston, and Keogh.

NOES, 37.

Sir H. M. Nelson, Messrs. Tozer, Foxton, Dalrymple, Philp, Hamilton, Collins, Bartholomew, Dickson, Fraser, Newell, Finney, Macdonald-Paterson, Leahy, Thomas, Chataway, Story, McGahan, McMaster, Cribb, Bridges, Bell, Stephenson, Drake, Smith, Stodart, Armstrong, Grimes, Castling, Callan, Crombie, Battersby, Stephens, G. Thorn, Smyth, W. Thorn, and Stamm.

Resolved in the negative; and original question put and passed.

MARINE DEPARTMENT.

The TREASURER moved that £70,950 be granted for harbour works, Marine Department. The vote included £1,250 for the Broadsound wharf. Then there was £24,000 for a new suction dredge. Five thousand pounds was voted for that purpose last year, but only part of it had been spent up to date, and the amount now asked for would cover the whole concern. The dredge was not to be paid for out of the harbour dues at Brisbane, so that it would be available for the whole colony as might be required. The vote for miscellaneous services was the same as last year—namely, £3,000—when they spent £2,729. With regard to the £15,000 for dredging the channel to improve the entrance to Broadmount Harbour, that would add to the indebtedness of the colony as no provision had yet been made for the work. There was a vote of a very large sum for improving the Fitzroy River years ago, but the whole of that had been exhausted. With reference to the Townsville breakwater, when the harbour board for that port was brought into existence at the beginning of the present year, the breakwater, both eastern and western, was in a sound condition; but a short time after that a very unusual gale, called "Sigma," came along and broke down the breakwater. It was only fair to the harbour board there that they should have the harbour put in the same condition as it was when the Act was passed, and he had had careful estimates made as to what amount would be required to restore it to that condition, and the amount was exactly that put down on the Estimates. He did not propose that the money should be

spent by the Government; but that it should be handed over to the harbour board to expend, because it was possible that the design of the breakwater might not have been a good one in the first instance, and the board might require to alter the design. The amount of the vote was £27,700; but the whole of that would not be added to the indebtedness of the colony, because there was a credit of about £5,000 to Townsville in the loan balances.

Mr. DAWSON: Is this amount a gift?

The TREASURER: It was compensation to the Townsville Harbour Board, to put them in the position they would have been in if that gale had not come along. He considered that a fair thing to do.

Mr. GLASSEY: Will you do a fair thing all round?

The TREASURER: He always did that. There was a harbour board at Bundaberg, but he did not think the hon. member was aware of the fact. It was the best harbour board in existence in the colony, judging from the fact that it had not given him any trouble at all, but had done its business in a businesslike way.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON had always advocated that if local authorities such as harbour boards were created they should receive every reasonable encouragement, for they could in fact do no good work without assistance from the Treasury. At the same time they should consider the principle which was involved in giving to local authorities which had not had any experience in the construction of marine works the expenditure of large sums of money without any supervision, inspection, or control on the part of the Government. Even the Government themselves, with the best advice at their disposal, had made mistakes, and the harbour at Townsville was one which would tax the ability of the most skillful marine engineers in the world. Sir John Coode himself in his report expressed the opinion that they had some of the most difficult ports in the whole of Australia to deal with, and the Government should not part with this money unless they were assured that the Townsville Board would procure the best professional advice. The matter might not stop here, because on the loan votes there were unexpended balances in connection with the Pioneer River which had taxed the skill of the ablest engineers.

The TREASURER: About £40,000.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: The money was unexpended because the Treasurer would not part with it on account of the possibility of losing it in attempting to form a harbour either at Flat Top or on the Pioneer River. He did not object to the reconstruction of the Townsville breakwater, but judging from reports he had read of interviews with the Treasurer by the board, the board were trying to grasp a great deal more administration than they could successfully conduct. They wanted to take the control of the pilotage out of the hands of the Government, but he was glad to see that the Treasurer resisted the request, and he hoped he would continue to resist it. That showed how a local authority, without knowing its exact functions, wished to obtain a large amount of administrative power, particularly in the direction of spending money in directions attended with very great risk. He would like to know if the Government had given any consideration to a matter which attracted a great deal of attention at the beginning of the year regarding the obstacles which prevented shipping coming to this port. Brisbane was not very far from Sydney, where the charges were much lighter than here; and, although the latter had great natural advantages, there were charges at Brisbane which might be reduced. The charge

for towage, for instance, was almost prohibitive, and was a matter of constant complaint. The "Advance" had been recommissioned, but she was not available for towage, as she had the pilotage to attend to; but some arrangement ought to be made by the Government with the owners of the tugboats here. There were many charges which it might not be convenient to remit; but this charge for towage had grown to such an extent that he was justified in asking the Government whether there was any chance of a measure being introduced with the object of improving matters, either by taking over the tugboats or by making arrangements with their present owners?

The TREASURER: What he had advocated was that Brisbane should do as other ports had done, and form a harbour board for itself. It should not always be depending upon the Government, and telling them that the Brisbane was a national river, because there were other rivers besides the Brisbane. He had to-day had an interview with the Chamber of Commerce, which was at last in favour of forming a harbour board. He had asked them to submit their ideas, and when he received them he hoped to be able to pass the necessary Bill this session. When a board was formed the matter of towage could be dealt with by the local authorities; he did not consider that it was a matter for the Government. The "Advance" had instructions with regard to towing vessels in distress, but beyond that they left towage to private enterprise. He had called for tenders, knowing that there was a monopoly in regard to towage, but there was no satisfactory result. However, it was a matter that affected Brisbane alone, and Brisbane ought to settle it for itself.

Mr. KIDSTON was very pleased to hear the Treasurer refer as he had to the formation of a harbour board at Brisbane, because it was time there was an end to the talk about Brisbane work being national work. There was £24,000 down for a new dredge. Was he to understand that that was only part of the cost?

The TREASURER: Last year £5,000 was voted, but none of it was spent in that year. Since the 30th June, however, a certain amount had been spent because a contract had been entered into for £18,070, and payments were being made on certificates. The terms of the contract were that the vessel should be delivered in Brisbane within eleven months from the date of the contract—that was to say, she would be here by the end of next March. The dredge was not being paid for out of the harbour dues because she was not to belong to the port of Brisbane or any other port. She would go to Cairns or anywhere else where she might be required. It was intended that she should commence by trying to make a cutting through Freeman's Channel. If that could be done the port of Brisbane would be made, as vessels could then round Cape Moreton in the teeth of the heaviest gales from the south or south-east, be in smooth water, and able to come right up the river. That was the reason why the dredge was approved of last session. At the same time it must be clearly understood that she would not be the property of the Brisbane Harbour Board, and would not be included in their endowment. She would be the property of the whole colony, and might even be sent in the first place to the Fitzroy River to clear the cuttings at the mouth of the river, so as to allow vessels to get up to Broadmount at any state of the tide. The dredge was to be a national dredge.

Mr. KIDSTON quite approved of the money being spent for such a purpose. What he wished to point out to the Treasurer was that at Bundaberg, Rockhampton, and Townsville, harbour boards had been formed, and all improvements

were made a charge on the local revenue of those boards, so that they were limited in their operations to the revenue the Government had appointed to them; but it appeared that ports such as Brisbane, which had not yet formed boards, in addition to getting their harbour dues to carry out harbour improvements, were to have the further advantage of the use of that dredge. In the statement furnished to hon. members showing the apportionment of loan expenditure, he noticed that in connection with harbour works some expenditure was put down as local, whilst other items were put down to the general account, and included in the general account were all the dredges, so that if the new dredge was paid from the loan fund account it would be charged to the general account, and those ports which were restricted to their local revenue would be at a disadvantage as compared with, say, the port of Brisbane. Judging by past experience, although the dredge was to be a national dredge, it meant that she would be used in the Brisbane River.

The TREASURER: No.

Mr. KIDSTON: It was desirable that all the ports of the colony should be treated alike. It was of great importance to the trade of the colony that the ports should be made as good as they could be made, and it would help them if their local revenue was supplemented by a grant from the loan fund. He hoped that when a harbour board was formed for Brisbane, the £24,000 spent on the new dredge would be counted in as a grant to those ports which were getting the benefit. It was quite proper that he should ask for some kind of assurance from the Treasurer that that was his intention; to deal in the same manner with those ports which had harbour boards and those which had not.

The TREASURER: They had just listened to the most extraordinary argument on a vote that he had ever heard. There was £15,000 put down for dredging a channel to improve the entrance to Broadmount Harbour, and the hon. member wanted places that had harbour boards to be treated in the same manner as those which had not. That was a place which had a harbour board, and the Government proposed to give them £15,000, and yet the hon. member contended that they were ill-used. He had no objection to omitting the amount, except for the reason that he did not believe the hon. member wanted the £15,000, and he would tell them why. The producers of Longreach and out west wanted to get their produce to deep water; they did not want to go to Rockhampton. The hon. member, on the other hand, wanted everything to go through Rockhampton. Rather than see this vote on the Estimates he would force every little bit of traffic to go through the Rockhampton station. Did anyone ever hear such an argument? The Government were bound to support the producers of the colony, because it was they who kept Rockhampton going. They had been trying for years to make Rockhampton a good and respectable place against the wishes of the people there, and they were going to do it now.

The HON. G. THORN was astonished at the member for Rockhampton. He must be aware that they would be consummate asses at Rockhampton if they expended any trust money in making a port at Broadmount. He had no doubt the Rockhampton people would make a port of Rockhampton in spite of everything. A good port would have been made there twenty years ago but for the hon. member for Bulimba, and, as predicted, his scheme proved a failure. Fifteen thousand pounds would not be anything like sufficient to dredge the port at Broadmount, and he would like to know what it would ultimately

cost. Besides dredging there was a lot of blasting of rock to be done. If all the money required was spent on Broadmount, then either Rockhampton would be a thing of the past or Broadmount would be a white elephant. The only use for the railway to Broadmount was in connection with the meatworks, and he was afraid the meatworks would end in smoke. It was utterly impossible for meatworks to be carried on at the present price of meat in the home market. The port of Broadmount, therefore, would never be used. The Treasurer talked about the vote for the Fitzroy having been expended, but the reason for that was that the then Premier wanted another port at Port Alma. Something like £100,000 had been expended upon that place, and he would like to know what was the use of that expenditure now? Were the buildings and wharves to be shifted to Broadmount? He thought the Committee ought to have all that information before they passed the vote. There was no fear of the Rockhampton people spending a penny out of their harbour trust to make Broadmount a port. If they did they would be committing suicide.

Mr. O'CONNELL was glad to hear the Premier speak of the Bundaberg Harbour Board as a businesslike body. They were still looking after their own interests. With regard to the £15,000 for Broadmount, that was understood to be a distinct grant to the Rockhampton Harbour Board after it had been formed. He had a telegram from the Bundaberg Harbour Board, requesting him and the hon. member for Bundaberg, to ask the Treasurer to grant a sum to the board for removing some rocks well known to persons cognisant of the navigation of the Burnett River, so that the board might have a reasonable start. Those rocks were an absolute detriment to the port, and a grant for the purpose would enable the board to start with some reasonable chance of being able to carry on its work successfully afterwards. All they asked for was that whatever liberality was meted out to other harbour boards, that at Bundaberg should receive similar treatment.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CALLAN: The hon. member for Musgrave seemed to be under the impression that the £15,000 was a gift by the Government to the Rockhampton Harbour Board. That was not the case. It was well known that the Government took upon themselves the work of making a waterway from Sea Hill to Broadmount for large steamers.

Mr. O'CONNELL: Is it not inside the Rockhampton harbour trust?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. CALLAN: At present the lowest water between Sea Hill and Broadmount was two and a-half fathoms. Large boats like the "Arawatta" drew about five feet more. The interruption to traffic was only found in four or five places, and the dredging alone would not, he thought, cost more than £15,000. The hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, had made a most extraordinary speech. He (Mr. Callan) was as much interested in Rockhampton as most men. He wanted to see it go ahead as much as possible, and was convinced that the more accessible the port was made the better it would be for the town; and yet a member representing the town objected to it. He was entirely in favour of the motion, and thanked the Government for having put the £15,000 on the Estimates.

Mr. GLASSEY was glad to hear the Premier say that the Bundaberg Harbour Board would be placed on exactly the same footing as all the other boards. It was only right that all the boards should start on equal terms. At Bundaberg, owing to the limited amount of money at the command of the board, they would not be

able for some time to put the port in order, and he trusted that the request of the harbour board for a grant for that purpose would be seriously considered by the Premier. He did not begrudge the amount given to Townsville; at the same time he considered Townsville one of the most favoured towns in the colony. He would very likely have to call on the hon. gentleman and urge these matters privately. In the meantime he urged that the hon. gentleman would show a liberal spirit towards those harbour boards to which he had referred.

The TREASURER: It was extraordinary that the hon. member and himself were exactly in accord on this subject, except where the hon. member drew comparisons, which were very often odious. He admitted that all the boards ought to be assisted in the way of giving them some kind of endowment to enable them to make a good start in their work, and possibly before the end of the session he would put on the table a supplementary loan estimate for that purpose. Where the hon. member drew comparisons between Bundaberg and Townsville he was entirely in the wrong. As he had explained before, the Townsville board took over the harbour in the condition it was in when the Act was passed. Within three weeks, before the board was formed, the two breakwaters were to a large extent destroyed by a storm. Surveys and estimates had been made to ascertain the amount that would be required to restore them to their condition at the time the Act was passed, and the conclusion arrived at was that the amount now asked for would be required to do that and nothing more. Having full confidence in the Townsville Harbour Board, instead of having the work done by the Marine Board he considered it better to hand the amount over to the harbour board, because it was possible that the original design of the breakwaters might be bad, and they might alter the design. He thought it was a fair and reasonable thing to give this money to put those breakwaters into the same condition as when the Act was passed.

Mr. GLASSEY did not wish to draw odious comparisons between Townsville and Bundaberg. What he endeavoured to convey was that he presumed the Townsville harbour was in a good condition when the board was formed, which could not be said with regard to others.

The PREMIER: Townsville is quite an exceptional case.

Mr. KIDSTON: The Premier seemed to think he was in a great sweat about a port being made at Broadmount, but that was a mistake. What he asked was that the harbour boards formed should have their revenue supplemented by a grant to enable them to start work in an efficient way, and that the harbour boards already formed should be put on the same footing as the harbours that had not yet got harbour boards. They had supplemented the revenue of the Brisbane Harbour Board by a vote from the loan fund for a dredge.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: In Maryborough they were satisfied with the action taken by the Government to leave to the different harbour boards the management of their own affairs. He was satisfied that the new suction dredge, when it came out, would cause a reform in dredging, and be a great saving to the colony at large. He noticed that Rockhampton and Townsville were getting money, but they did not object to that. Townsville was entitled to be placed on the same footing as the other ports, and was asking nothing unreasonable. Though the hon. member for Rockhampton did not want any money spent in his river, the other harbours would be glad to get what they could for harbour and river improvements.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Harbour boards were born out of the distress of the Treasury, and had not been evolved out of the people's will. The people did not desire decentralisation of that kind; it had been brought about by the distressed condition of the Treasury, just as the diminution in the endowment to divisional boards had been brought about. He predicted that harbour boards would be an absolute failure in this country. They ought to be a failure, and he trusted they would be a very early failure.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Why?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Why should the Government retain control of railways and land highways of the country and abandon the water highways? The system of harbour boards meant the introduction of many men and many minds, and a waste of time and labour. Amongst all their harbour boards, who was their engineer? With a vast colony of only 450,000 inhabitants, and with a coastline greater than that of any of the other colonies of Australasia, it was a parochial farce to talk of harbour boards. The Government should understand that it was their duty to monopolise the water highways of the country. The question of cost was nothing. If Rockhampton wanted £250,000, Townsville £500,000, and Brisbane and Normanton £1,000,000 each, they should have no regard for the cost, so long as the general Government were developing the different harbours of the colony for the transit inwards of commerce and the exportation of products. Would any man in that Committee say that Townsville should not have half a million of money? The whole question now was governed by the draught of the ocean tramp steamship. No one had referred to the expenditure at Bowen to enable large steamers to load there with frozen meat, horses for India, and other products. He opposed this harbour board business altogether. They should retreat from the position taken up by Sir Thomas McIlwraith, who initiated those boards, because in the straits to which the Treasury was reduced that hon. gentleman wanted to put all the burdens of ports, roads, and everything else on the local authorities. They had too much of that, so far as the water highways were concerned, and they should endeavour to go back to the wholesome position of the State controlling the harbours and rivers of the colony.

Mr. KIDSTON: That is very good for Brisbane.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: The hon. member must be a very young man if he thought he was speaking for Brisbane alone. He was speaking for the whole colony. He did not advocate neglect of Brisbane claims, but he had no doubt that the suction dredge coming out would be used in Brisbane until they had 25 feet at low water. Every influence he could bring to bear to secure the utilisation of that dredge in the port of the metropolis would be used, but surely they were not going to have only one dredge of that description. If it proved a success he hoped the Government would call for tenders for the construction within the colony of three or four, or half a dozen more, so that they might be supplied to Townsville, Normanton, and other ports that might require them. He had much pleasure in supporting the vote, but at the same time he warned the Government that if they thought they were travelling in the right track in the formation of those harbour boards, they were labouring under a grievous error.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW never dreamt that any member of that House would ever advocate going back to the old system of dredging their harbours. If any money had been squandered by the Government it had been in that direction.

They had now spent over £2,000,000 on such works; of that amount £220,000 had been sunk in the Fitzroy, and was really money thrown away. He was certain that the harbour boards would be a success. In the Mary River they were working a dredge, and everything was going on smoothly and at a minimum cost.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON: It was all very well for hon. members to complain of the errors of the past in connection with harbour works, but who was there in the community who did not commit errors? From many years' observation and of administration he knew that many schemes of submarine engineering were of a tentative character, and no one could say whether the dredging of channels would be a success or otherwise, as the schemes of even the most advanced engineers might be at any time defeated by the periodic floodings of rivers and other physical disturbances. He did not want to deprecate attempting the extension of local authorities in the shape of harbour boards, but the Government should be cautious in entrusting those boards with the expenditure of large sums of money without proper professional supervision. He did not speak as member for Brisbane, but he must express his surprise that when any expenditure was mentioned in connection with the metropolis members representing more Northern constituencies should complain that that port was voracious and getting the lion's share of the expenditure. The members for Brisbane had been remarkably quiescent in not advocating more strenuously the claims of the metropolis, which certainly ought to receive a large amount of consideration. The Treasurer had introduced a new principle in that Estimate, which they would have to face hereafter in other Estimates, besides those for the improvement of harbours; that was the principle of renovating, at the expense of the Government, works which had been destroyed by a physical catastrophe, and which properly belonged to the local authority. The hon. member for Rockhampton and the members for the Northern districts ought to regard that Estimate with gratitude, instead of complaining of Brisbane having the use of the new suction dredge for a few months. If the experiment was successful he hoped that that dredge would not be a rare bird; but that other suction dredges on an improved pattern would be made in the colony. He trusted that the harbour boards would be a success; but the hon. member for North Brisbane was justified in expressing a doubt as to whether they had up to the present time shown that they had an intelligent idea of the large responsibility devolving upon them in connection with harbour administration. There was too great a tendency on the part of the Government generally to lift the load of responsibility off their own shoulders and put it on to the local authorities in such matters. With regard to the expenditure in Brisbane he had only to add that up to the present it had not had the benefit of the full expenditure of the harbour dues collected in the port, so that Brisbane had not much to thank the Treasurer for in connection with this Estimate.

Mr. McMASTER: To listen to the hon. member for Rockhampton and the hon. member for Maryborough, one would imagine that those two ports were the only ports in Queensland. These harbour boards were very young and had had no experience of floods, but there had been a storm at Townsville, and the Government were going to repair the damage done by it. The hon. member for Maryborough was cooeing before he was out of the wood, because the board there did not know what difficulties were before them. After there had been a heavy flood, which filled up the banks which they were

now removing, it took a great deal of money to keep the river clean. He (Mr. McMaster) did not object to the Northern rivers being attended to, but when they clamoured about Brisbane, he would remind them that Brisbane was a port before those places in the North were discovered. He remembered when vessels had to be sent from Brisbane to bring down people from Port Curtis who would have been starved otherwise, and hon. members representing Northern ports should not forget that. He wished to ask the Treasurer when the Government intended to start removing the belt of rocks at the mouth of the Brisbane River? He understood that they were getting a boring plant, and was surprised that the people of Brisbane had been so uncommonly quiet, and had not insisted upon that work being carried out years ago. He might remind hon. members that the Government had disposed of all the river frontages at Brisbane and paid the money into the general revenue, but Rockhampton and Townsville and Maryborough still had their frontages.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The land was sold by the New South Wales Government.

MR. McMASTER: All the money was not spent in Sydney, but some was spent in Rockhampton, and a great deal more in Maryborough. Brisbane was the capital of the colony, and its wants ought to be attended to. In fact, the capital ought to have most attention, because most of the trade of the colony went through it. He wished to see justice done to all the ports, but he objected to hon. members clamouring about Brisbane, and comparing it to an octopus. Brisbane had been very generous in helping the Northern ports, and would always do so when a good case was made out. He did not begrudge the money proposed to be given to Townsville, but agreed with the hon. member for Bulimba that the Government should take care that the money was spent under the supervision of a competent engineer, so that the board would not have to ask for more. He hoped the Treasurer would answer his question about removing the rocks at the mouth of the river.

THE TREASURER: All he could say was that the Government had ordered the plant, which would be here very soon; and as soon as it arrived operations would be commenced. The Portmaster, as well as one of their young officers, a native of the colony, who had been in the department all his life, had been to Sydney, and had watched the operations of similar apparatus there, and had come back with a full knowledge of how it was worked. He expected operations to be commenced within a month. At the same time, he would rather see the people of Brisbane take the Brisbane River into their own hands. He was doing his utmost to get the Brisbane people to constitute themselves into a local authority like the other ports of the colony. From an interview which he had had that day with the Chamber of Commerce he believed that he would be able to submit a Bill to constitute a harbour board for Brisbane. There were also boards required at Maryborough and Mackay, and if there was time this session—and there was every appearance of it—he hoped to be able to put through those three Bills this session.

MR. DUNSFORD suggested in all seriousness that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and the two members for Brisbane should consider the advisability of shifting Brisbane from its present position if it was to remain the capital of the colony. They should place it somewhere near Redcliffe, or else up about Ipswich, and dredge the river to it, because if it remained where it was it would be washed away by a flood. There was no doubt that the way in which Brisbane had been bolstered up in the past at the

expense of the rest of the colony had given rise to the demand for separation in the North and Centre. If it was true, as was stated by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, that all the trade of the colony filtered through Brisbane, that should be sufficient reward for Brisbane without penalising the other parts of the colony and making them pay for improving the harbour or blowing up rocks at the mouth of the river. Now that it was considered desirable to place all the ports of the colony on the same footing, Brisbane was beginning to clamour for more State assistance. The colony was acting wisely in going in for the formation of harbour boards. The work could be better done, say, by the people of Townsville, than when it had to be done by people at a distance who were not directly interested. They all knew the vexatious delays which had occurred in the past owing to the administration being centred in one corner of the colony. He believed that ultimately the formation of local boards would lead to the reclamation of lands which would not be done by the Government. He hoped that Brisbane would soon be compelled to be on the same footing as Townsville, Rockhampton, and Bundaberg.

MR. SIM pointed out that while provision had been made for a new suction dredge, costing £24,000, and for dredging a channel at the entrance of Broadmount harbour, to cost £15,000, and while they were asked to vote £27,700 as compensation to be paid to the Townsville Harbour Board for the restoration of the breakwater at Townsville, no provision whatever was made for improving the port at Normanton. He was glad to hear the Treasurer say, in answer to the hon. member for Bundaberg, that he was always desirous to be just to all parts of the colony, because he felt in rising to support the plea he was now putting before the Committee he would have a friend at court in the Treasurer. He asked the hon. gentleman was it a fair thing that the whole of Queensland north of Townsville should be left out? He represented a district as large as Great Britain, which had asked for very little. What they had asked for they had got, but the whole of their demands upon the Treasury did not amount to £2,000. He was simply asking the Government and the House to note the fact that no provision had been made for improving the Norman River.

THE TREASURER: He had no reply to give the hon. member. He said he had got everything he had asked for, and yet he complained.

MR. SIM: He was not bringing forward a complaint, but a petition.

THE TREASURER: Bring it forward next week or the week after.

MR. SIM: He would accept the Treasurer's statement that he could come to him next week if he gave that as an official assurance; otherwise he should be compelled to go on.

THE TREASURER: I doubt your sincerity now.

MR. SIM: If the hon. gentleman wished to adjourn the debate he was quite willing to sit down.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The House knows the case.

MR. SIM was sorry to be compelled to go on. He was trying to emphasise the fact that one harbour in particular had been notoriously omitted from all consideration. During the last election the late member for Carpentaria, Mr. Phillips, stated that the Government had practically promised that £10,000 would be expended on the Norman River. He held in his hand a report from Captain Almond on the Norman River, which showed that there had been correspondence between the Treasurer and the late member for the district. The claims of the port of Normanton had been shamefully neglected,

and he therefore felt compelled to read Captain Almond's report. It was dated 19th November, 1895, and was as follows:—[After some preliminary remarks the report said—]

"After carefully considering Messrs. Cullen and Elliott's reports and Mr. Daniells' survey and report on the obstructions to be removed to get four feet below low water between Baffle Group and Normanton, it is apparent that Mr. Daniells has under-estimated the cost. Mr. Elliott's suggestion, by which the cost of the cutting through the town reach is reduced by £1,000, is, I consider, preferable to that of Mr. Daniells, and should be adopted.

"The only plant belonging to the department which could be applied to this work is a clam dredge consisting of boiler, engine, crane, and two buckets.

"The total cost of deepening the river from Baffle Group to the town is therefore estimated . . . at £8,400.

"Deepening the approach to Normanton by cutting a channel through the town rocks would, as Mr. Phillips states, remove the existing difficulties in approaching the town, and is a desirable work. Providing the plant and the removal of the obstructions in the town reach is the principal outlay, it would be advisable and certainly more economical to remove the whole of the obstructions when the plant is at Normanton, commencing with the town rocks."

Normanton was the port of one of the most rising goldfields in Australia, represented by the hon. member for Croydon. It was also the port for a very large extent of pastoral country, and all he asked now was that the Government should carry out the recommendations of the Portmaster. He asked for nothing but what was fair and reasonable, and he submitted that he had made out a good case for the port of Normanton. Within a very few years it would be the port of one of the most thriving portions of the colony. He was asking for not a single penny too much when he asked for the paltry sum of £10,000 for the purpose of making the river navigable.

The PREMIER: Why did you not write this to the Treasury instead of filling up *Hansard*?

Mr. SIM: He had not risen for the purpose of filling up *Hansard*, and it was an unworthy insinuation on the part of the Premier to say so. All he wanted was to get justice done to a long-suffering community, and he contended that the facts he had placed before the Committee fully warranted the action he had taken.

Question put and passed.

BUILDINGS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved that £15,000 be granted for buildings.

Mr. DRAKE noticed that £3,600 was put down for a new post and telegraph office and purchase of site at Warwick. He did not object to that, but desired to know why Warwick had been singled out, considering that other places had a much better claim. A post and telegraph office had been wanted for a number of years at Red Hill, in the electorate of Enoggera; but whenever a request had been made to the Government it was said that there was no money available. Now they found that there was money available for Warwick. Red Hill, one of the most important suburbs of Brisbane, was without any accommodation of the kind, and as soon as the electric tram system was extended it would become more important.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS did not know what the fact of Red Hill not having a post and telegraph office had to do with the fact that it was proposed to erect one in Warwick. This expenditure was proposed because it was considered absolutely necessary, and a promise was made some years ago to endeavour to have the work carried out. The site of the present office was subject to inundation.

Mr. DRAKE: The reply given by the hon. gentleman was the usual official reply—that the

expenditure was absolutely necessary. His contention was that if money could be found for a building in one part of the colony it could be found for a building in another part. There was an admirable site for a post and telegraph office at Red Hill lying vacant, and while the site of the office at Warwick was subject to inundation there was no office at all at Red Hill. Would the hon. gentleman state what proportion of the £3,600 was for the purchase of the site?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: £1,100 for the site, and the balance for the erection of the building. It was in the centre of Warwick.

Mr. McDONALD asked whether it was intended to erect a post office at Richmond Downs?

The TREASURER: Wooden buildings are erected out of revenue. These are stone buildings.

Mr. McDONALD: Tenders were called for the erection of a post office there many years ago, but none was accepted. The Government paid £2 a week rent for a building till 1893, when it was reduced to £1 a week. He believed that a post office could be built there for £500 or £600, and that the Government would make 5 or 6 per cent. on the outlay.

The TREASURER: That would be for a wooden building; it would not come out of loan.

Mr. McDONALD: He would not object to a substantial building being erected. The population of the place was increasing, and he would like to hear from the Minister whether it was intended to erect a post office there?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The post office the hon. member desired to see erected would be constructed of timber, and did not really come under this vote at all. All buildings constructed out of loan fund must be of stone or brick, and the hon. member should bring the matter up when they came to the Post Office Estimates.

Mr. McDONALD: Now that the Government had had ample warning, he hoped that when they came to the Post Office Estimates he would find that the matter had been favourably considered.

Mr. GROOM: Four or five years ago Parliament voted £5,000 for a post and telegraph office at Warwick and tenders were called for the work. The lowest tenderer was a friend of his, and as his tender was something under the £5,000, he was surprised that it had not been accepted. The present post office at Warwick was in flood-time two or three feet under water and all business in it had to be suspended. If but £2,500 was to be spent on the new post office, it could not be intended to build it upon the plans drawn for the building for which tenders had been originally called. A new site had been chosen for the building, and the hon. gentleman must not therefore be surprised if questions were asked as to why the site fixed upon by the late member for Warwick had been departed from, and why the amount now asked for the building was less than that which the House voted for the purpose some years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The buildings would not be erected on the plans made five or six years ago. The site chosen was a convenient one in the centre of the town and above flood mark. He could not say why the site adopted six years ago had been departed from.

Mr. GROOM: He was not opposing the vote at all, as he considered it a very necessary one from his knowledge of the present building. He had only drawn attention to the change of site and the alteration in the plan of building.

Mr. DRAKE did not wish to stand in the way of the Warwick people getting a new post office,

but he would like some assurance from the Minister that he would take into consideration the claims of Red Hill. Fortitude Valley had an elaborate post office, and nearly all the other suburbs of Brisbane had post offices; and, as Red Hill was rapidly growing in importance, the Minister might say whether he would take the matter into consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He should be very glad to promise to take the matter into consideration.

Mr. KIDSTON: There was no doubt that the Lands Department at Rockhampton required more accommodation. The best plan would be to build a new court-house and devote the present court-house to the purposes of a lands office. He would like to hear from the Minister that in passing this vote that would be understood.

Mr. CALLAN could not in any way understand the hon. member for Rockhampton. First of all, he opposed the vote of £15,000 for dredging the channel to improve the entrance to Broadmount Harbour, and now he opposed the vote of £1,500 for a new lands office at Rockhampton. He had as large a stake in Rockhampton as the hon. member, and he said distinctly that the best thing to do was to accept what the Government would give them, and afterwards try to get more. If the Rockhampton people would not do that, they were fools, and they were badly represented.

Mr. KIDSTON: He was only asking what he had been requested to ask by the people of Rockhampton, and the hon. member for Fitzroy had been asked to help in the matter. When the hon. member spoke about the people being fools he might at least give them the credit of knowing their own business.

Mr. CALLAN: He did not mean that the people of Rockhampton were fools, but that the hon. member was a fool. If the Government offered a certain sum of money to any municipality, the people of that municipality would be very foolish if they refused it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: With regard to the question of accommodation in the public offices at Rockhampton, the hon. member for Rockhampton and other members for the district, as well as some citizens of Rockhampton, had been moving in the matter, and he had explained at several interviews that it was necessary that some other departments besides that of the Works should co-operate and come to an agreement. The Home Secretary and the Secretary for Lands had been conferring with one another, and he thought that what the hon. member desired would be carried out; that was to use the present court-house as a lands office, and build a new court-house.

Mr. McDONALD asked for some information with regard to the item of £1,400 for the Gatton Agricultural College, buildings and furniture.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: As the hon. member was probably aware, last year £5,000 was voted for the purpose of erecting an agricultural college. The additional sum of £1,400 now asked for was intended to supplement that amount, as Professor Shelton and other experts had advised that it would not be sufficient to furnish the college and provide necessary outbuildings.

Mr. McDONALD wanted to know where the thing was going to end. He did not take exception to the extra £1,400 being voted, but would impress upon the hon. gentleman and the Committee that there were other branches of industry which would probably ask for the same assistance as was now being given to the farming community; and he hoped that if they did ask for it they would be treated in an equally liberal manner. With regard to the site of the agri-

cultural college in course of erection, it was stated by those who ought to know that the land in that part of the country was of such a character that the education which was to be given in the college would be much more costly than if the college were built in a more suitable locality.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He had been informed that the statement that there was nut-grass there was not correct. All the information he had received was to the effect that the land was exceedingly good, and the site was well chosen. It had the advantage of proximity to the metropolis, and to the scientific staff located here.

The HOME SECRETARY: In reply to the hon. member for Rockhampton, he might state that the Supreme Court had taken possession of the present buildings at Rockhampton, and the inferior court had had to return to the buildings formerly used as a court-house. There was no doubt the accommodation was not what it should be, and the magistrates had brought the matter under the notice of the Government. He had consulted with the Secretary for Lands, and they had decided to take the present court-house for the lands office, and erect a new court-house. The Treasurer had also been at Rockhampton, and agreed that that was the proper course to adopt. If financial matters could be arranged, the administration of justice in the inferior courts would be carried on in a building suitable for the convenience of the magistrates and the public.

Mr. GRIMES did not know where the hon. member for Flinders got his information about the agricultural college, but a good many practical men had been there, and had thoroughly tested the soil, and were convinced of its suitability. He had been over the ground, and could see that there was as much land of an excellent quality as would ever be required for agricultural purposes. There was some inferior land towards the railway line, but it would not be required for cultivation. He did not think a more suitable site could have been found.

Mr. HOOLAN differed from the hon. member for Oxley in regard to the quality of this land. There were other hon. members, as well as that hon. member, who knew ant-bed from rock, and swamp from hard land, and time would reveal a blunder in this case as it had revealed blunders made by past Governments. A vote of £5,000 had hardly been spent before the Government came down for more money to build fowl-houses or whatever Professor Shelton saw fit to add to the plans already adopted by the Government. He should have thought the £1,400 itself would have been sufficient for the purpose. He knew that many farmers had done well on far less capital than that. He looked upon this as a sneaking vote, as if the colony was full of millionaires instead of being in a broken condition all round. It was well enough if the Government credit were good, but if they paid £5,000 for one experiment they would be asked to pay it for another; and that was only a fore-runner of what might happen. Notwithstanding what had been said by the hon. member for Oxley, he said this was bad land; the Government had made a bad bargain, and if they were wise they would proceed cautiously.

Mr. CASTLING had seen the land many years ago; he had been over it again recently, and could say that the land on the bank of the creek, and for some distance back towards the old road, was very good. The land on the frontage was also good, its only fault being that it was rather low and would require draining. He did not think a better site could have been found. The quality of the land could be seen by the crops produced on the adjacent farms. All

the good land in Australia was on the banks of rivers, and the further they went back the worse the land became.

Question put and passed.

WATERWORKS AND WATER SUPPLY.

The TREASURER moved that £2,438 be granted for waterworks and water supply. There were some additions to the vote as compared with last year, which could be seen by looking at the items.

Mr. DRAKE said that last year the Government had been deservedly praised for placing the vote on the Estimates for inspectors for collecting pressures and other statistics of artesian bores. He had not yet seen any report embodying the result of their labours, and he would like to know when they might expect it?

The TREASURER: The report had been somewhat delayed, but it was now in the hands of the Government Printer. He might possibly be able to lay it on the table to-morrow; at any rate, it would be in the hands of hon. members next week.

Mr. GLASSEY: The report was late last year as well, so that it was clear that the department, which was one of the most important in the State, was undermanned. It was necessary that hon. members should have the report when they were discussing the Estimate, and therefore there should be an increase to the staff.

Mr. KERR asked whether the Treasurer could give any information with reference to a statement which had appeared in the Press that some of the bores were decreasing in pressure, whilst one in the Central district was reported to have run dry?

The TREASURER: All the information the hon. member wanted would be included in the report which would be in the hands of hon. members next week at the latest.

Question put and passed.

ARTESIAN BORING AND WATER SUPPLY.

The TREASURER moved that £22,000 be granted for artesian boring and water supply. There were some new votes—namely, one for artesian wells to encourage settlement—£5,000. The idea was to put down bores wherever a number of grazing farmers or others settled, which would supply a number of those settlers, thereby encouraging settlement on the land. The Burketown bore was finished. They had a supply of water there; but they had tried to get a larger supply, but so far it had not eventuated. The Normanton bore was also finished, and there was no vote down for it. There was an increase in the vote for additions, alterations, and repairs to tanks and dams. The vote last year was £3,000; but it had not been sufficient to meet the requirements, and he was asking for £5,000 this year. Any other information which was wanted he was quite prepared to give.

Mr. McDONALD asked if anything had been done to repair the tanks between Hughenden and Cloncurry?

The TREASURER: He thought they had been let to people; but if the hon. member would call at the Treasury he would give him all the information he wanted.

Mr. McDONALD: He should not need to go to the Treasury for the information. Every year he had been in the Committee he had referred to it. That was the fourth time. Some of those dams had cost a considerable amount of money to construct, but owing to their peculiar position whenever there was a flood the waters washed them partly away. They held little or no water, and they were getting worse every year. Up to the time he had come along—in April last—nothing had been done to

repair them since 1893 or 1894. Every wet season added to the amount that would be required to put them in repair again.

The TREASURER: The hon. member had never sent an application to him with regard to any of those dams or bores. If he had done so he would have given him the fullest information.

Mr. McDONALD: It was not a question of writing to the hon. gentleman about it. Why had not the inspectors brought it under the notice of the department? The hon. member for Gregory could say something about the bores in his district, which were not in a very good state either. If the hon. gentlemen thought the dams were not worth looking after, that was his business. He had done his duty by drawing attention to the matter.

Mr. HAMILTON: Every member knew that if he wanted anything done in his district the best plan was to write to the department. The matter would then be laid formally before the Minister, and would not be lost sight of.

Mr. STORY: It was to be assumed that if the bores which were to be put down to encourage settlement were a success, a further vote would be asked for next year. He hoped that in the choosing of sites for the bores his district would not be overlooked, as the idea originated there.

Mr. McDONALD reminded the Treasurer that last year he brought the matter of the tanks before him, and he said it would be attended to. It was the duty of the department to keep the tanks in repair, but it would have been far better if, in the first instance, they had put down bores instead of wasting money on tanks. He might also refer to the fact that in Hughenden there was a large amount of machinery belonging to the Government which was going to ruin; it would be far better to give it away, on condition that it was made use of, rather than let it rust and rot away.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Sites for the proposed bores were now being inspected. One would probably be sunk in the Winton district, and one round about Cunnamulla. His impression was that those would be found to be the most convenient districts to commence with.

Mr. CORFIELD was pleased to hear that the department was going to sink a bore near Winton. He understood the Treasurer to say that the Burketown bore was completed. He would like to know whether it was in contemplation to send the boring plant to some other portion of the district; say to the Georgina River.

The TREASURER: The bore at Burketown had been done by contract; the plant belonged to the contractor. The Government had no control whatever over it.

Mr. SIM: If the plant could be removed to the Camooweal district, and it was proved that artesian water could be obtained there, it meant an addition to the colony of a tract of country capable of carrying 10,000,000 sheep. He was aware that the Hydraulic Department had reported against sinking a bore there, but there were persons who did not always accept the reports of that department as final. Even if the bore was put down and no water was found it would do good to the colony, because it would prove that that immense area of country must be watered by other means.

Mr. DANIELS: With regard to the vote of £5,000 for artesian bores, they were promised a Bill dealing with the subject, showing how the money was to be spent. If the bores were to be sunk on large selections the money would be wasted; it would be spent in helping those who

ought to be in a position to help themselves. Without the Bill he did not see how the money could be spent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The vote was to enable the department to carry on till the 30th of next June. The Bill would not be tabled during the present session, and it was not necessary to enable the money to be spent. The hon. member was in error in imagining that the bores would be put down on large selections. When the bores were sunk and water was found they would know how the land ought to be cut up, and that could not possibly be before the end of next session.

Mr. SIM wished to have an answer with regard to the removal of the boring plant from Burketown to Camooweal.

The TREASURER: Favourable consideration.

Mr. KERR reminded the Treasurer of an application made by some men who had already settled on land at the Alice River, and expressed the hope that it would also be taken into favourable consideration.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again at a later hour of the day.

The House adjourned at twenty-eight minutes past 12 o'clock.