

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 1896

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EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being called for the resumption of the adjourned debate on Mr. Dickson's motion with reference to the revival of European immigration (*vide* page 806)—

Mr. FINNEY said: This is a matter of great importance to the colony, and I thoroughly approve of the motion. I also approve of the action of the Government in deciding to resume immigration and send lecturers to Great Britain and Ireland to further that object. I have heard many remarks about the gentlemen who have been appointed by the Government to go to the United Kingdom to advertise the colony—I suppose that is what it really means—and draw attention to the great land that we have nearly empty of people. We have a great deal of room, but very few people to fill it. Mr. Randall, who has already been a lecturer at home for many years, is a man of very great experience, and will, I believe, conduct his work with great ability, great application, and with close study of the subject with which he has to deal. I met Mr. Randall in England myself, and found him a most active worker and very sincere in trying to do his duty to the colony. Mr. Lyons, the other gentleman who has been appointed, is also a man who has great experience of the colony, and I believe he will prove an excellent officer for the purpose for which he is appointed. Some members have expressed the opinion that a man should have great experience as a farmer in order to be a successful lecturer, others that he should have great experience as a miner, and others again that he should have great experience of commerce. But I think that a man who has a good general knowledge of the colony, and who will do his business fairly and well to the best of his ability, will make a successful immigration agent. As to Mr. Finucane, who has been appointed to go to Italy, I do not want to say much about going to Italy to look for immigrants; but if you want a man who is well up in the Italian business you cannot do better than send an Irishman like Mr. Finucane, who knows all about the Italian language and everything connected with the country.

The SPEAKER: I would ask the hon. member to confine himself to the terms of the motion. The question of the appointment of these immigration lecturers or agents does not come within the scope of this motion.

Mr. FINNEY: I understood that the appointment of these agents was part and parcel of the whole system, and you must excuse me if I unwittingly departed from the terms of the motion. If we are going to compete with Canada and other places for immigrants, our lecturers will require to be armed with illustrations showing scenery, the different classes of country, the towns and villages, mining districts, bores, and all such things. The Canadian agents are well supplied with that material to show the people; I have been shown photographs of agricultural districts in full crop which made splendid pictures, and greatly assisted to attract people there. I hope also that when these agents are sent away they will be continued in their work, because I do not think spasmodic efforts in this direction are of much use. The Canadian Government are making great efforts to intercept the stream of emigrants from England, and keep half a dozen lecturers there continually. They carry imperishable specimens of their crops with them, and show them at the different villages, fairs, and markets all over the country. Besides giving the land free, they are prepared to advance money to settlers to enable them to make a fair start, and unless Queensland can do something to offer inducements to people

THURSDAY, 5 NOVEMBER, 1896.

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

QUESTION.

SEIZURE OF PEARL-SHELL.

Mr. TURLEY asked the Premier—

1. Is it the intention of the Government to submit for sale by auction in the usual manner the pearl-shell seized from James Clarke and Co., Thursday Island?

2. If so, when and how will the proceeds of such sale be dealt with?

The PREMIER replied—

1. No.

2. Requires no answer.

DREDGING THE NARROWS.

On the motion of the PREMIER, it was agreed—

1. That the House approves of the plan of proposed cutting at the Narrows, between Gladstone and Keppel Bay, as laid on the table of the House on 29th October.

2. That the plan be forwarded to the Legislative Council, for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

NEW BILLS.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES, it was agreed—

That the House will, on Tuesday, the 10th instant, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing the following Bills:—

1. A Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to the pearl-shell and bêche-de-mer fisheries in the colony of Queensland, and incorporating certain provisions of the Native Labourers Protection Act of 1884.

2. A Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to fisheries.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS, it was agreed—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the advisableness of introducing a Bill to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the incursion and migration of rabbits.

to come here we shall not succeed in getting our lands settled upon. I may also remark that I do not see why land, if it is to be offered on easy terms to immigrants, should not also be offered on like terms to our native youth and other Australians. They should have the same advantages as strangers, and I could never understand why they should not be encouraged to settle on the lands and develop our industries, instead of being allowed to crowd about the towns, trying to get into the Government service or banks, or any other employment that will keep them here. All the wealth must come from the country originally, either from the land or the water, and in regard to that I might state that the fishing industry is capable of employing a great number of people in a lucrative business if it were properly looked after. Our present fish supply is most erratic; there is never any steady supply in the market. In addition to the lecturers sent to England by the Canadian Government, the Pacific Railway Company there have their agents going about trying to induce people to settle on their lands on each side of their lines, so that the competition in the old country for emigrants is very keen. Our nominated system has been fairly successful. I have nominated many people myself who are now settled here rearing families and are doing well. I hope that system will be continued, although it will be necessary to guard against abuses, because there are impostors who will try to take advantage of it. Of course, there are people who do not believe in immigrants coming here; who contend that there are people enough here already. They talk about the number of unemployed, and say that as long as there are unemployed here it is not desirable to encourage immigration. But if no one is to come here until all the unemployed are employed no one will ever come. There are unemployed in every country, and there will be till the end of the chapter. Like the poor, they will be always with us; but the more people there are here the greater will be our prosperity. Another thing that is required is confidence, and I have not the slightest doubt that if we introduce the right class of people they will help to establish that confidence and assist in making work for the present unemployed. We must have steady, sober people; we do not want a lot of loafers who will never go more than 100 yards from a public-house, or if they do they get sick, and have to be carried back there to have another drink to revive them. We want sober people; and if they have the desire to work they will find work and make places they can fit themselves into. Of course there are plenty of people who want work, and it is a pity that they cannot get it, but there are also many who, if they got work, would not do it. It is calculated by statisticians that Australia is capable of supporting 100,000,000 people.

Mr. MURRAY: Would you like to see that many in it?

Mr. FINNEY: Yes; "the more the merrier," provided they found places they fitted into. Of course I am referring to Australia and not to Queensland. There has been a great rush to Western Australia. There were bright visions of gold unlimited to be obtained there, but I fear many will come back sadder and wiser than they went away, and will find a better field for their labour in Queensland than in that—as the hon. member for Burke would say—sunburnt, mosquito-bitten country. Look at the resources of this colony! We have vast quantities of land lying comparatively idle. Get into a train and travel between here and Stanthorpe, and you will pass through miles and miles of splendid country, on which you can see neither a house nor a person. You may see a few dark dots, which mean sheep, scattered

here and there over these plains which are capable of growing grain enough to support tens of thousands of people. As long as that is the case there will be plenty of people walking about idle, and until we get these places settled and the produce of this country utilised, we will have plenty of misery and poverty. The more people come to our shores prepared to work the sooner will prosperity follow. We have large resources in timber, and everyone knows that we have most extensive mineral resources. As far as I can see the development of these resources is only in its infancy, and there is great scope for people to develop the great mining industry. We can produce beef and mutton enough. We can produce coal, iron, tin, lead—in fact, I believe that if Australia were cut off from the rest of the civilised world we could support a large population with the necessaries of life, and be able to live comfortably and happily without any assistance from the outside world. I would like any hon. member to tell me anything in the way of necessities that Australia cannot produce?

Mr. NEWALL: Money.

Mr. FINNEY: There is money lying idle in heaps throughout the whole of Australia begging for investment, but the want of confidence prevents it getting into circulation. If the owners of that money felt that their capital was safe and they could get fair interest on it, it would soon be seen that there was no want of money in Australia. I would like to know if the hon. member for Clermont, for instance, had £10,000 what he would invest it in?

Mr. CROSS: I would buy you out.

Mr. FINNEY: I think he would button it up very closely and keep it in such a position that he would remain master of his capital. If he would plunge into a business that he did not see would pay him, he would be a greater fool than I take him to be. He would not start a factory to give employment to a lot of people at wages that would make them happy and comfortable. I do not think his generosity would induce him to do that. No fear. It is only another case of the man in the ditch being always the best horseman. I heard the hon. member ask here on one occasion, "Why don't you give people good wages, sufficient to live on?" I would like to know how many people the hon. member employs at good wages? There is no doubt that our climate is one of the most salubrious in the world. For eight or even nine months in the year the climate in the Southern part of Queensland is as fine as I have ever seen—and I have been in most countries in the civilised world, except Russia. It is pretty hot in December, January, and February, but outside those months there is not a finer country in the world. In New York I have found it hotter than I have ever felt it in Queensland. This is how the hon. member for Burke described our climate—

"I am a wreck of what I was; there is very little left of the liver I brought with me twenty years ago. I say advisedly that if I were breathing my last breath in this wretched world, and had in view that eternity which is so terrible to the general run of mankind, I would advise people never to go to Centre or North of Queensland. There are plenty of other places in the world, and while there is any other suitable spot to go to don't go there. Look at the other countries of the world! Look at the glorious country through which the grand old Nile flows!"

Now to compare Queensland with the country that the "grand old Nile" flows through is like comparing an arm chair with a burning fire. Just look at the hon. member, wreathed in smiles, and with a bloom on his cheeks, which is certainly not the hectic flush of fever! Look at his well-preserved and well-nourished body! It would be worth while taking the hon. member's photograph and circulating it from pole to

pole, and say, "This is the man who says Queensland is a wretched, dirty, fever-ridden country that is not fit to live in." Nothing could speak better for the salubrity of Queensland than the picture of the hon. member after twenty years' residence in the very worst part of it. People who contemplated a change of abode, seeing his healthy, flourishing appearance, would say at once that Queensland was the country to come to. No doubt there is ample room here for an immense population, and until we get that population I do not believe Queensland will ever be anything like what we can call a prosperous country. When in New York I was simply astonished to see the way immigrants were pouring into the United States. I used to go down to the Castle Gardens every day and see great ships discharging their passengers by the thousand. And it seemed to be always going on. And many of those immigrants were as poverty-stricken looking a lot of people as I ever saw anywhere. Yet they are the people who have been flowing into America for many years, and have helped to make the United States the great country it is. What is a country without population? It is like an empty vessel. Let us only get the people here; we have everything else except confidence. As long as people try to destroy confidence capital will remain locked up in banks and all sorts of places where it is of no use. Let us all use our best endeavours to establish confidence, so that capital may be induced to come out of its hiding-places and get into circulation. We want capitalists to come out to develop the resources of the country. It does not matter whether they stay or not. We want their capital, and then we shall be able to employ the people who are now walking about because there is no confidence. Would any man with £10,000 at his disposal to-day—perhaps the savings of a lifetime—not find himself greatly embarrassed to know what business he could put it into where it would have a fair chance of earning interest. No one but a fool would put it into anything where he thought there was any danger of its being lost. We have all the elements in these colonies to build up a Greater Britain under the Southern Cross than the Great Britain on the other side of the world; but those elements can only be brought out and developed by capital and population. I shall support the motion.

Mr. STEWART: I am sorry I cannot agree with the last speaker in supporting this motion. The hon. member for Bulimba, who is in ordinary affairs a level-headed man, seems to have what I call immigration on the brain. He believes the only thing that can save this great country is an influx of population, and the hon. member for Toowong is in agreement with him. They appear to think that large populations and prosperity are synonymous terms. If those hon. members will only look around and take stock of the various countries of the world, they will see that large populations by no means mean prosperity to the vast masses of the people. Take the United States, to which the hon. member referred in such glowing terms. There is as much poverty there as anywhere. Take Great Britain and Belgium. They also are densely populated; and there is poverty there also. In fact, large populations almost everywhere mean poverty. Now as to Australia. Will anyone say that the people of Australia of to-day are more prosperous than the Australians of ten, fifteen, or twenty years ago were? Everybody I have heard speak on the subject have always referred in glowing terms to the "good old times," when a man could make some money. You cannot make the money now you could some years ago, when population was more sparse and competition less keen. The only con-

clusion I draw from that is that the more population you have the keener is the competition, and the greater the poverty.

Mr. FINNEY: The greater the quantity of work.

Mr. STEWART: What man ever wants to look for work for work's sake? It is the reward of work he wants, not the work itself. What does the hon. member keep a shop for? Is it not to make a living? It is for no other reason. That hon. member was exceedingly personal to the hon. member for Clermont, referring to him in rather contemptuous terms because he was not an employer of labour.

Mr. FINNEY: I am not aware of it.

Mr. STEWART: I would like to know how many people the hon. member for Toowong employs. I am going to make the assertion that he does not give wages to a single individual, that he does not employ one solitary soul. He is simply an intermediary or middleman standing between the public and the people over whom he is the head. He gets money from the public, and he pays it to other people. Talk about benevolence! There is not a less benevolent man in the House than the hon. member for Toowong. The hon. member has built up a large business with the assistance of the public, and no man can build up a big business on benevolent lines. Benevolence does not enter into business at all, and the hon. member ought to keep that out of his discourses when he gets up to speak here. I hope no hon. member supposes that I object to population. I do not. I believe in the child growing to the man, but his growth should be natural and not artificially forced. The hon. member said there was room in Australia for 100,000,000 of people. There is room for 500,000,000, but what of that? There is room for many millions in the Desert of Sahara, but how many will it maintain? We must always look to the population a country will maintain, and we have the fact before us that there are more people in Queensland now than she can maintain. Whatever may be said to the contrary, that is an undoubted fact; it can be proved by the statistics published by the Government. The labour market last year in Queensland, I am happy to say, was a great deal better than it had been for some years before; but even last year we find that for every billet open in the district of Brisbane there were five applicants. In Rockhampton the same thing prevailed, and it was the general rule all over the colony. Hon. members who believe in immigration should read the reports of the labour bureau. The hon. member for Toowong said we would always have the unemployed with us. I quite agree that there are some men who do not care to work, and who will always endeavour to obtain a livelihood by other means than work. There is a great many of them in Brisbane, and in Queen street, and many of them occupy very respectable positions in society. Those men live as much upon others as the man who goes round bumming with a swag upon his back, and they fleece the public more effectually than the poor traveller who is unwilling to do a day's work can possibly do. With our vast resources, to which the hon. member for Toowong has referred so eloquently, and with the power the Government have, matters should be so arranged that no man should have the excuse that he cannot find work. But the fact remains that many men—men who have families and are most anxious to get work—cannot obtain it. It has been asserted that members on this side seek continually to depreciate Queensland.

Mr. McMASTER: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEWART: The hon. member for Fortitude Valley says, "Hear, hear!" and I suppose he is there as usual, but I deny the

assertion. That the hon. member asserts it is no evidence of it whatever. There are members of the Labour party who are, perhaps, given to speaking in rather extravagant terms; I may be one of them myself, but take the average of the party and we always say what we believe to be true with regard to the colony. We do not seek to crack up the colony inordinately, neither do we seek to depreciate it below what we believe to be its proper value. In reading *Hansard* recently I find that no men in the country have done more to depreciate the colony in the eyes of European investors than some of the hon. gentlemen who sit on the front Ministerial bench. Did not some of those hon. gentlemen at one period lead the British public to believe that the colony was actually on the brink of a revolution? Yet they had the effrontery to go to the British people and ask them to send out capital to this colony. I do not wish to pursue that any further, as if I did I could quote hon. gentlemen very much to their discredit. The hon. member for Toowong also said there was no confidence, and the people who had money would not invest it. If that is the case, I ask who is to blame?

Mr. McMASTER: The Labour party.

Mr. STEWART: I would be paying a very poor compliment to the intelligence of the hon. member if I thought for a moment that he believed the Labour party did that. The hon. member knows better, but it suits his political dodgery, his political purpose, to say so. The facts are against him. Had we not a complete collapse of the banking system of Australia a few years ago? Who were to blame for that? Will the hon. member for Fortitude Valley say it was the Labour party? Did the Labour party manage the banks, and grant the overdrafts to the gentlemen who got those conveniences to such very large amounts? I do not wonder that the British investor has lost confidence in Australia, when we know that a large number of persons in Great Britain deposited their money in Australian banks, and when they ought to have got it they found it had been squandered by the Australian directors of those banks. I think it cowardly, disgraceful, and misleading on the part of any hon. member opposite to attempt to lay this want of confidence at the door of the Labour party. I do not believe that the time has arrived when the Government should reopen the question of European immigration. I believe as firmly and as honestly as any man in the House that Queensland possesses within itself great possibilities. But those resources must be developed gradually. We cannot force them. When we have got a people here fully employed, prosperous, and happy, labourers from the old country will come here in thousands. Look at the rush to Western Australia! I do not believe it is nearly as well warranted as a rush to Queensland would be. Look at the rush to the Cape of Good Hope; look at the rush to any country where men have a promise of high wages or even fair wages and constant employment. That is the condition of things we should try to bring about here, and then we should not require to talk of bringing out immigrants. The hon. member for Toowong referred to the vast agricultural areas lying waste. I agree that they exist, and I am sorry that they are producing nothing. But why? They are in the hands of men who have speculated and are holding for the unearned increment. And even in this country, where population is sparse and land so plentiful, has the hon. member forgotten that only last session the Government was compelled to repurchase land from private owners on which to settle people?

Mr. FINNEY: No.

Mr. STEWART: Seeing that such is the case, the claim that there is so much land available for settlement must go by the board. If the hon. members for Toowong and Bulimba desire to see extensive settlement on the land, they ought to assist the party in this House that is desirous of breaking up the big estates and throwing them open to settlement. That is one way out of the difficulty; and if that were done I have no doubt that we would immediately see a stream of immigration coming here. I do not believe there is a finer tract of country in Australia than the Darling Downs.

Mr. KERR: There is as fine in the Central division.

Mr. STEWART: Yes, but not finer. That portion of the colony is able to maintain hundreds and thousands of people if it were only thrown open to settlement. The Government has intimated its intention to encourage passage-paying adults to come here; and when they do come I trust it will give them, as the resolution says, reasonable inducements to settle on the lands. But the sting of this resolution lies in the tail. The mover desires that free or assisted passages shall be granted to suitable female domestics. I do not believe that we want a single domestic in this colony. The only place from which any complaint of a scarcity of domestic servants was received last year was Townsville.

Mr. O'CONNELL: Bundaberg, too.

Mr. STEWART: Perhaps there is a scarcity in Bundaberg. But I think it augurs badly for domestic servants who may be brought out that several letters dated from Bundaberg appeared in the *Brisbane Courier*, advocating the introduction of female kanakas, who might be employed as domestic servants. That shows clearly the opinion of some of the people of Bundaberg as to how they regard the position of a domestic servant. I do not believe there is any lack of young women in this colony available for domestic service; but they do not take to domestic service, and there must be some reason for that. The young women of Australia are no doubt just as eager to earn their own living, and have as much independence of spirit as the young women anywhere else; and no doubt they would be glad to earn their own living in domestic service if proper opportunities were afforded. But consider what domestic service is. A domestic servant is employed every day in the week, and her day is not confined to eight, ten, or twelve hours, but extends in many cases to fourteen and sixteen hours, and even her hours of sleep are liable to be invaded. I would ask the hon. member for Toowong, who has had large experience of young women, whether he thinks any young woman would care to engage in service which ties her up so closely? The hon. member gives his young women a half-holiday every week; and I am certain that if the employers of domestic servants gave their young women a half-holiday, and let them off on Sunday, or even an odd Sunday, and made their hours reasonable, there would not be so much difficulty in obtaining domestic servants. What man would like to engage in employment to which such conditions attach themselves? There is not a single man in the community who would not rather starve or "hump bluey" along the back tracks of the colony, and I would not blame him. Yet we ask women, who are weaker and more defenceless than men, to undertake this service; and when they do not we propose to send to the old country for other women. I also object to the public purse being drawn upon to bring out female domestics. The large mass of the people here have to do without domestic servants; and I do not see why the expense of bringing out servants for the minority who require them should fall upon the majority who do not require

them. If people require domestic servants, and cannot get them in Queensland, they can send to Europe and bring out servants. I am sorry that I cannot support this resolution. I would be very glad to do so, but I really cannot in the present circumstances of the colony, and I will be compelled to vote against it.

Mr. FOGARTY: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. GLASSEY: What is the adjournment moved for?

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON: I have no objection to the adjournment, although I should have preferred that the debate should proceed. There are, however, other hon. members with business on the paper, and I do not wish to exclude them from advancing their business a stage. For that reason I consent to the adjournment.

Mr. CROSS: I tacitly agreed with the hon. member earlier in the day that something might be done in the way of adjourning the debate, but it has taken a different turn from what I expected, and as my name has been freely mentioned I should have been glad of the opportunity of speaking. The remarks of the hon. member for Toowong with regard to me were made, I know, with the very best feeling, but I have something to say with regard to the subject matter of his remarks. However, if hon. members want to adjourn the debate, I have no wish to force my remarks upon the House.

Question put and passed; and the resumption of the debate made an Order of the Day for Thursday, 3rd December.

SANDGATE RACECOURSE BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. LEAHY: In rising to move the second reading of this Bill I intend to be very brief. At this stage of the session hon. members must be brief if they wish to advance their private business. This Bill is for the purpose of giving relief in a case similar to others which have occurred in this colony and in other places. The Sandgate Racecourse was originally vested in trustees, who, for the benefit of the people of Sandgate, incurred liabilities in connection with a loan to the extent of about £2,000 for the purpose of making improvements on the racecourse. When the money was borrowed and the improvements were effected the condition of the country was much more prosperous than it is at present, and there was every appearance that the trustees would be able to pay for the improvements within a reasonable time. It so happens that a good many persons who were security for the advance are not in a good position now; as a matter of fact they have no assets, and the whole of the responsibility falls upon one unfortunate individual. I do not think that persons in these positions, acting in the interests of the community, should be permitted to suffer serious personal loss. If any loss is to be borne, it ought to be suffered by the general public in the neighbourhood affected. The House referred the Bill to a select committee for consideration of the preamble; and the committee, amongst whom were two barristers skilled in the taking of evidence, were unanimous in the report which they have submitted that the preamble has been conclusively proved. The chief provisions of the Bill are contained in clauses 4 to 8. The trustees ask for leave to sell, mortgage, or exchange the land, or certain portions of it. I would ask hon. members to bear in mind that it is not at the sweet will of the trustees that this can be done, but that the consent of the Governor in Council will have to be obtained in the first instance. So that in passing a Bill of this kind hon. members will have that assurance that nothing can be done except with

the knowledge and consent of the Governor in Council. If the Governor in Council cannot be trusted in cases of this kind, then in ordinary cases we give them too much power altogether. Similar privileges to those asked for have been granted to other towns in Queensland.

Mr. KEOGH: Only one.

Mr. LEAHY: To Warwick, Rockhampton, Ipswich, Maryborough, and Brisbane. Trustees placed in this position are in a somewhat awkward predicament. I know there are some hon. members who think that when land has once been granted for a purpose of this kind it should not be diverted to any other purpose, and there is some reason in their argument; but as I have already pointed out, private persons becoming trustees at the request of the public, and acting solely for the public, and not for themselves, should not have to bear a personal responsibility which trusteeship in such a case carries with it. In this case I believe the corporation of Sandgate is likely to take over the racecourse, and it would be a very good thing for the whole of Queensland if we could get the local authorities to take over all such grants. It would be a step in the right direction, but the trustees have no power to hand over the property to the local authority. This Bill will give them that power. That will do away with the objection which may be raised that if the trustees are given this power the land may pass out of the hands of the people, because this measure will give the council and the people the right to take it over and keep it for ever. And they would lose nothing whatever by doing that, because the improvements are very solid and substantial, and are worth as much money, or nearly as much, as they cost. The Bill has been carefully drafted by one of the best draftsmen in Brisbane, who has drafted several Bills for this House, and I think it will be found to be in order. It is on the lines that have been approved by the House on several previous occasions in dealing with similar matters, and I believe the House will find the measure entirely satisfactory. Under the circumstances I do not wish to dwell on the subject, but I should like, if the second reading is carried, to get the Bill through committee this afternoon. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Everyone, I am sure, must sympathise with the hon. member in his desire to afford every opportunity to private members to get their business through; but still this is an important Bill, and there is no reason why it should receive less attention from its introducer than it otherwise would. I think the hon. member might have given the House a little more information as to the details of the matter. Most of them will no doubt have been gathered by members who have had an opportunity of going through the report of the select committee; but that report does not go forth to the public. This case is not exactly on all fours with the case of Warwick, in which the trustees had power to sell and lease, though I am not quite sure that they had power to mortgage. But there was a distinct provision in the Warwick Bill that the money derived from the sale of a portion of the racecourse reserve should be applied towards the erection of buildings and improvements on the remaining portion of the land. I believe that was also the case in the Brisbane Bill. But in this particular case the proviso is that the proceeds of the mortgage of the land shall go to pay off a debt which has been incurred by the trustees. No doubt that debt was incurred for the purpose of raising money which was spent on the erection of improvements. In the case of the Warwick racecourse, there had been improvements erected many years before, but they had

become dilapidated, and the proposal was to sell a portion of the land in order to raise funds for the erection of buildings and improvements which would take the place of those that had gone more or less into decay. However, although the two cases are not strictly identical, the principle underlying them is very much the same, the only difference being that in this case the improvements have been already made, and according to the evidence are of a substantial character approximating in value as nearly as can be to the amount spent upon them, while in the other case improvements had to be erected. Under the circumstances, seeing that similar concessions have been made in times past to other racecourses, the Government do not see their way to offer any opposition to the passage of the Bill. Of course a great deal may be said for and against racing, but that is a matter entirely outside the question before the House. It may be said that this Bill is for the purpose of relieving the trustees of a liability which they have honourably incurred, and that the loss will be theirs entirely if the measure is not passed. I believe that would be so, because trustees of public lands are not in a position to sell or part with the land that is the subject of their trust for the purpose of paying debts that have been incurred in connection with that trust, and it would be manifestly unfair that persons who come forward and guarantee an overdraft for the purpose of improving what is practically public property should be allowed to suffer any loss in consequence of their public spirit, so long as there are assets which can be applied in reduction or satisfaction of that debt. At the same time, we should conserve to the racing public so much of the land as is necessary to enable them to enjoy that particular sport. As I have said, under the circumstances the Government will not oppose the passage of this Bill.

Mr. KEOGH: With reference to the old North Australian Jockey Club, I know that the trustees borrowed £2,500 on mortgage, and after a Bill was passed through Parliament for the purpose of enabling them to sell the racecourse, and it was sold, money had to be collected to pay the debt. I trust that this land will not pass out of the hands of the public by its sale to repay the liability upon it. There are many other racecourses in a similar position to that referred to in this Bill, but they have made no appeal for assistance; in fact, the trustees are putting their hands in their own pockets to prevent the land being sold, and passing out of the hands of the public. I will not oppose the Bill, but trust that the people will not lose their racecourse.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON: I think the only justification for passing this Bill is that we have allowed a similar principle to be affirmed in many previous cases, and no doubt will continue to do so. I look upon the principle as essentially a bad one, and the lesson that is to be derived from the position of these trustees is that for the future the Government should be particularly careful in issuing deeds of grant for racecourses, unless to local authorities, so that there will be some responsible body to look to. These people incurred a heavy debt, and doubtless made valuable improvements; but they incurred it of their own sweet will, and obtained assistance from the bank without ever referring the matter to the Government or asking Parliament to give them power to borrow up to a certain limit. It happens that the overdraft and accrued interest in this case amounts to over £2,000, but it might as well have amounted to £5,000, as it bears very little proportion to the realisable value of the land. We must regard it purely as a matter of sentiment, and with feelings of benevolence to the surviving trustee, who appears to be the only

good man left in the joint and several guarantee. This Bill appears to be necessary to extricate him from this heavy load of liability, which I have no doubt, when he undertook it, he thought would be equally divided between himself and his colleagues. I do not see that we can well refuse to allow this trustee to be relieved from this liability, which will probably be effected by assigning or mortgaging the land to the bank, who will then give him a release; but I imagine that the debt to the bank will only be covered by a very successful realisation of the property, so that we need not flatter ourselves that we are benefiting the people of Sandgate. I do not share in the feeling of the hon. member for Bulloo, that the Sandgate Municipal Council may take over the land with the debt upon it. I think there would be a strong feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of the ratepayers if the council were inclined to do such a thing. I believe that all these reserves should be vested in the local authorities free from debt. I regret that we have precedents for the hon. member asking us to accept the report of the select committee and ratify this Bill, as I have always condemned the principle. I think the Government should in future distinctly set their faces against granting reserves of this kind to trustees; but I will not oppose the Bill, although I am sorry to see the Sandgate racecourse placed in this position.

Mr. GROOM: There is no doubt that the position of the trustees who have spent this money must excite sympathy in hon. members' minds, particularly if they are called upon to pay these additional expenses. As has been said, the trustees ought to have taken this into consideration before they incurred these liabilities. The House has departed from a principle established years ago, and the case to which the hon. member for Rosewood referred, of the North Australian Jockey Club, was followed by another equally disastrous in the town of Toowoomba, where one of the finest pieces of ground granted by the Government of New South Wales not only as a racecourse but also as a recreation ground, absolutely passed out of the hands of the people through the extravagance of the trustees. The people had nothing to do with it, and that racecourse is now in the hands of private persons, who can do what they like with it; the public have no access to it without paying. How it is manipulated no one can tell, because no Act has been passed to legalise the transaction. On the strength of these two cases the then Premier, Sir Charles Lilley, passed an Act through this Parliament prohibiting trustees in future from mortgaging or interfering with public racecourses or any other land vested in them as trustees. That Act is still in force, and the only way it can be got over is by passing such a measure as this. Of course, as the hon. member for Bulimba says, this is not the first measure of the kind which has been passed since the passing of the Act I have referred to. Several racecourses have come under our notice. The Eagle Farm Racecourse is one of them. Parliament is therefore unfortunately in the position of having established a precedent which it cannot depart from. Trustees have been extravagant and put up buildings not justified by the circumstances, and then they have asked Parliament for power to mortgage or sell part of the racecourse to defray the expense. In this case the area of the racecourse is 87 acres 22 perches, and the debt is nearly £2,500. I hope that the local authority will take it over, but it would have been more satisfactory if it had been arranged beforehand—if the Bill had contained a provision whereby the local authority could take it over, so that it would become the absolute property of the people.

Mr. LEAHY: They will not take it over to the full amount of the debt, but the rest can be raised.

Mr. GROOM: The point I wish to emphasise is that these eighty-seven acres, which were set apart by the Government as a reserve in perpetuity for the use of the people of Sandgate, may pass out of the hands of the public altogether, because we are asked to give power to mortgage the land, and of course the mortgagee will have the right to sell, because the Governor in Council cannot set aside the rights of the mortgagees, and this racecourse may meet with the fate of the racecourses at Ipswich and Toowoomba. I cannot help saying, in the light of what has occurred in the past with regard to public reserves, that Bills of this kind are very dangerous. No doubt the hon. member for Bulloo is only discharging the duty entrusted to him, but we should consider the public safety before assenting to a measure which may allow this reserve to pass irretrievably into the hands of private individuals. It would be different if the local authority borrowed the money to pay off the debt and the reserve passed into their hands, but that is not provided for in the Bill, and I do not know that the municipal council of Sandgate will be able to find the money unless the Government advance it. I shall offer no opposition to the Bill, seeing Parliament has affirmed the principle before now. At the same time I hope that this discussion may lead both the trustees and the local authority to see that it would be wise to secure this property for the people of Sandgate, instead of having some mortgagee exercising his right to sell at some future time.

Mr. BELL: Unless the House is prepared to abandon the precedent which has always operated in regard to Bills of this kind, it will certainly be doing an injustice; but this is a good opportunity for expressing the opinion I have held for some time that the whole question of racecourse reserves deserves reconsideration. I know a case in which a racecourse reserve is used for race meetings probably once, or at the outside, twice a year, but for the greater part of the time it is used by private persons as a run for their stock. The first reform should certainly be an alteration in the *personnel* of the trustees. Hitherto the trustees have been racing men, but in the future the majority of them should be non-racing men. At present the trustees, instead of representing the public, are members of the committees of the race clubs, and they become bound up in the interests of the club, and do not at all look to the interests of the public. In this particular case I do not think that it is of any importance whether Sandgate has a racecourse or not. So far as I know the Sandgate people are not a race-loving people; I am quite sure that nothing which has taken place on the Sandgate racecourse has contributed towards the good of racing, and I am not very sanguine as to the future with regard to anything that may take place there in that respect. It would be much better for racing, and much better for the people of Queensland, if those racecourse reserves were cut down by one-half; and I sincerely hope the Secretary for Public Lands will think twice before, in future, he recommends the granting, by the Governor in Council, of any further racecourse reserves. With regard to the particular instance mentioned by the hon. member for Rosewood—the Ipswich Racecourse, the ground of the old North Australian Jockey Club, the premier club of Queensland—the hon. member omitted to say that the public of Ipswich did not suffer, because the man who purchased that racecourse allowed them to hold race meetings there to the end of his life.

Mr. KEOGH: Sir Joshua Peter Bell did.

Mr. BELL: As a matter of fact the opportunity to race on that course existed as long as there was any disposition on the part of the people of Ipswich to go to race meetings at all. Since then a further piece of ground has been proclaimed for racing purposes at Ipswich, with the result, as far as I can hear, that the Ipswich people never go to races at all; and what was at one time one of the greatest racing communities in Australia seems to have become utterly demoralised. Perhaps you will rule me out of order, Mr. Speaker, if I say that one of the best things that could happen in matters of this kind would be the bringing in of a Bill to regulate racing in Queensland, for if we could reduce the number of our race meetings we should have very much higher sport, and probably the sport itself would be purified to a large extent. However, this is not the time to go into that matter. I merely rose to say that I am sure everybody who reads the evidence appended to the Bill will sympathise with the trustees in the position in which they find themselves. At the same time, I agree with the hon. member for Toowoomba that it is a lamentable thing to see any reserve passing out of the public control. I certainly hope that in the future there will be some alteration in the way areas of land are reserved for racing purposes. In fact, I should like to see it specified in future trust deeds that the land is not reserved for racing only, but for a number of other purposes.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I am glad of the opportunity to confirm the views expressed by the last speaker with respect to the number of racecourses all over the colony, indeed all over the colonies. In Victoria and New South Wales they have become a positive nuisance, and a big drain on the purses of the public. We ought to have local option in the matter of racecourses as we have in the matter of licensed victuallers. In a place like Brisbane one racecourse within a radius of fifty miles would be quite enough. The evils that have been developed in the suburbs of the various capitals of Australasia, I have been informed by racing men, are enormous, and then many ramifications are not to be reached by either the police, or the Press, or the church. I have no objection to training grounds. It would be better for racing and better for the trustees of grounds, if a tax were levied on those who desired to have special meetings on different dates from the club fixtures. The last speaker made the very trite observation that racecourses should be used for other purposes; and it was principally to say this that I rose—namely, that the Brisbane racecourse might be utilised for the purposes of the National Agricultural Society, with temporary buildings taken down from year to year. That would give a revenue to the racecourse trustees, and would relieve the present excellent property, which is now practically in the hands of the Government, and enable it to be used for scholastic purposes, either as a site for a university or for general schools. It is very central. There is a railway on two sides of it, splendid roads on all sides, and a tramway also. And as the Normal School, in the centre of the city, will very shortly have to be removed, I desire to bring under the notice of the Government the desirability of taking over the mortgage of that beautiful property and devoting it—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is now wandering entirely from the subject, which is the second reading of the Sandgate Racecourse Bill.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: You have very properly called me to order, and I have only to add further that my last observation is one which deserves consideration at any time

Mr. BRIDGES: I suppose I ought to say a word or two on this Bill, as the racecourse in question happens to be in the electorate I am supposed to represent. I believe the sympathy of every member of the Committee is with the trustees in the position in which they are placed through no fault of their own. With the very best intentions they incurred this debt, and thought at the time they were incurring it they would be able to meet their liabilities. Unfortunately things have not turned out exactly as they thought they would, and they have been forced to come to the House for relief. As to the principle of the Government stepping in to give relief in the case of land given for a specific purpose and lost to that purpose by mismanagement, I cannot say I have any sympathy. Still, seeing that it has been done in several instances before, and to all appearance will frequently have to be done in the future, I think it should be done in this case. Some people have said that in this matter the hon. member for Bulloo slighted me. It is only fair to that hon. member to say that I have received the utmost courtesy from him in the matter, and also from the trustees of the ground. I intend to support the Bill, and I hope these trustees will get the relief they are asking for.

Mr. STEWART: I really do not see any reason why this Bill should pass. This sort of legislation is of a most dangerous character; it is rapidly trying to make of this Parliament a benevolent institution. When people incur liabilities for their own personal advantage, and knowing the law is against them, they should take the responsibility of the position they place themselves in. Every hon. member who has risen to speak upon this Bill has condemned it, and even the hon. member for Bulloo, who introduced it, said he did not believe in it.

Mr. LEAHY: I did not.

Mr. STEWART: The hon. member for Bulimba has spoken against it, and the hon. member for Toowoomba has delivered an admirable speech condemning the Bill, and yet hon. members say they will vote for it. We ought to be guided by principles, and not pass laws to make away with the public estate in this fashion. We are here as trustees of the public, and if private trustees fail in their duty that is no reason why we should fail in ours; but it is a good reason why we should set them a good example in this direction. It has been argued that because certain precedents have been set we cannot now enter upon a new course. I never heard a more extraordinary argument in my life. Because bad precedents have been set we are to follow them! If in matters of this kind we have been going on the wrong tack, the sooner we get on the right tack the better. I know of another racing club which is going the pace as the Sandgate racing club has done and they will be coming here by-and-by asking for a Bill of this character, with the result which will probably follow in this case, that the recreation ground will pass into the hands of private persons. The legislature never contemplated that. If it did it was wrong.

The HOME SECRETARY: You should have set a better example when you came here with the Trades Hall Bill.

Mr. STEWART: I was not here when the Trades Hall Bill came before the House. The Trades Hall seems to be to the hon. gentleman like a red rag to a bull. However largely the Trades Hall looms in the hon. gentleman's imagination, I can assure him that he occupies a very small space in the consideration of the Trades Hall. If I had been here when that Bill came before the Assembly, I should have opposed it just as I oppose this Bill. These people have

entered into liabilities contrary to the Act, and they now come to Parliament to show them a way out. I do not think that sort of conduct should be encouraged, and the Assembly should set its foot upon it right away. We are not here to legislate for the benefit of individuals. If the Bill passes, the probable consequence will be that this recreation ground will pass into the hands of private speculators in Sandgate. In ten, fifteen, or twenty years the population of Sandgate may be three or four times what it is now, and here we will have eighty-seven acres of the finest ground in the neighbourhood in the possession of private individuals. I say it is going to be a splendid speculation for somebody. The hon. member for Toowoomba showed the hon. member for Bulloo a very good way of getting out of the difficulty. He ought to withdraw this Bill and endeavour to make some arrangement with the municipality of Sandgate. This is the only way to do it. If this House is true to the interests of the colony it will throw the Bill out on the second reading.

Mr. DUNSFORD: I am one of those who believe that in Queensland, which is a tropical country, we have not a sufficient number of reserves and recreation grounds, and even indirectly I can be no party to the closing up of one of these lungs or breathing spaces necessary for the public. Though this place may not now be necessary for the purposes of a racecourse—and the fact that the trustees are some £2,000 in debt is proof positive of that—we have no proof that it will not be required as a place of recreation for the people. In Charters Towers, where we are a sporting community, racing is carried on with a large degree of success, the trustees of the racecourse have always a credit balance, and the committee have shown that they know how to manage their business. I notice in this deed of grant that it says distinctly that this is a trust for the purpose of a racecourse, and for no other purpose; consequently if we pass this Bill the original intention of the deed may be defeated altogether. I am inclined to vote against the Bill, and I believe that if it goes to a division I shall vote against the second reading. It is not in the interests of the general community, and we should not allow our sympathies for individuals to override the public interest.

Mr. TURLEY: While the hon. member for Rockhampton North was speaking the Home Secretary interjected, "You should have thought of that before you came here with the Trades Hall Bill." I voted for the second reading of that Bill, and I do not think there is any vote I have been more sorry for giving. I admit candidly that I made a mistake on that occasion; but I do not intend to make a mistake on this occasion or in connection with other matters of a similar character. The Home Secretary has always opposed such measures, so I suppose he will vote against this one, and if there is a division I shall vote against the second reading.

Mr. LEAHY, in reply: I agree with a great deal of what hon. members have said; but it is only fair that people who have undertaken responsibilities of this kind purely in the interests of the public should not be placed in a position by which they will suffer loss. I think there was never a case where relief was more required than in the present case, and if I had not thought it was a just case I would not have submitted it to the House. I shall be sorry if the motion is defeated, because the result will be to inflict a great injustice on an individual, and to prevent others from undertaking the responsibilities of trustees in the future. I therefore hope hon. members will see their way to allow the question to go without a division.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 25.

Messrs. Byrnes, Foxton, Philip, Annear, Fraser, Lord, Stumm, Curtis, Hamilton, McMaster, Smith, O'Connell, Corfield, Newell, Fitzgerald, McDonnell, Stephens, Cribb, Leahy, Bridges, Story, Bell, G. Thorn, Cross, and King.

NOES, 15.

Messrs. Hardacre, Dunford, Stewart, Browne, Sim, Daniels, McDonald, Dawson, Turley, Castling, Glassey, Macdonald-Paterson, Dalrymple, Tozer, and Keogh.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. LEAHY: With the permission of the House I would like to advance the Bill a further stage. Now that the general principle has been affirmed I hope there will be no further opposition. The hon. member for Dalby has business on the paper, which I hope will be disposed of afterwards. I beg to move, Mr. Speaker, that you do now leave the chair.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 3, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 4—"Power to mortgage"—

Mr. STUMM understood the hon. member for Bulloo to say that the Bill provided that nothing could be done except with the approval of the Governor in Council. That was not the case so far as mortgaging was concerned; he would therefore move after the word "may," on line 33, the insertion of the words "with the approval of the Governor in Council."

Mr. LEAHY: Had no objection to the amendment; it was only reasonable.

Mr. CROSS had voted for the second reading of the Bill simply on account of the peculiar circumstances of the case, and he had voted for similar Bills because the circumstances seemed to justify somewhat generous treatment. At the same time he agreed with the hon. member for Gympie with regard to making some provision whereby land dedicated to a public purpose might not pass into the hands of any individual or institution, but should be in possession of a local authority or someone who would represent the public. He would like to know from some member who understood the matter better than he did, whether the insertion of the words would carry out the object he had in view.

Mr. KEOGH: He must contradict the statement of the hon. member for Dalby that racing in Ipswich had deteriorated. As a matter of fact racing had not been so flourishing in Ipswich for some years past as it was at present.

The CHAIRMAN: I remind the hon. member that there is an amendment before the Committee, and must ask him to confine his remarks to it.

Mr. KEOGH had no objection to the amendment, but his reason for voting against the Bill was that he had very painful recollections of how another club was treated when a similar matter was brought before the House. He had fought hard to prevent the Ipswich course from being mortgaged. However, it was mortgaged, and it passed out of the hands of the public. The hon. member for Dalby said the people of Ipswich had the use of it, but that was only because the late Sir Joshua Peter Bell was kind enough to allow races to be held there until the time of his death, after which the land passed out of the hands of the people. He would be sorry if a similar fate befell the Sandgate racecourse. He believed it would under this Bill; that it would go into the hands of speculators, who would make money of it.

Mr. GROOM suggested to the hon. member in charge of the Bill that he should move the Chairman out of the chair, so that they might have time to fully consider the matter. In the meantime he would direct the attention of the Attorney-General to section 3 of the Trustees of

Public Lands Act of 1869, so that care might be taken to conserve the public interests in such a way that a similar disaster to that which occurred at Toowoomba should not happen at Sandgate.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again on Thursday, the 19th instant.

CHILDREN'S PROTECTION BILL.

CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS—COMMITTEE.

Mr. BELL: The amendments made by the Council were purely verbal, and unless some hon. member objected he thought they might deal with them *en bloc*.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. BELL: Very well. He moved that the Committee agree to the Council's amendment in clause 1.

The HOME SECRETARY did not think this amendment a verbal one. Under the clause, for the offence of ill-treating, neglecting, or abandoning a child, a person was liable to a fine of £25, and in addition to that might be imprisoned for six months. The Council had inserted the words "subject to the provisions of the next following section," and that section provided that where it was proved that there was a certain motive for committing the offence specified in the first clause the fine might be increased to £100. He could not understand what was meant by the amendment.

Mr. BELL: The Bill as it had passed this House was a perfectly good measure, but the other Chamber had chosen to put in the words referring to the following clause, which imposed a heavier penalty if a certain motive was proved in the offence; and while he admitted that the amendment did not improve the measure, it could do no harm.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The amendment was perfectly absurd, and entirely incompatible with the clause. The clause stated that for a certain offence a person should be liable to a certain penalty, and then the Council inserted the words "subject to the provisions of the next following section." The "next following section" referred back to the first clause, and there was no necessity for the words inserted by the Council. The Bill as it passed the Assembly was perfectly intelligible, and they ought to set their faces against that super-refinement, which, if continued, would make the statute-book perfectly absurd. He should vote against the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

On clause 3—"Restrictions on the employment of children"—

The HOME SECRETARY: One of the amendments in that clause provided that any person who caused or procured any child to perform any task or labour beyond his strength or endurance should be liable to a certain penalty. They ought to disagree to that, because it would allow anybody to go to the parent of a child, and say that he was causing his child to perform a task which was manifestly beyond his strength. A child could not perform that which was manifestly beyond his strength, so that the amendment meant nothing, and ought to be negatived.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They had had so much purism from the Upper House on the question of drafting that he would like to refer to a previous amendment in the clause, which read as follows: "At any hour later than eight o'clock in the afternoon." That was perfectly ridiculous. The afternoon was between 12 o'clock and sunset, and 8 o'clock was at night. The Council objected to their saying between "8 p.m. and 5 a.m.," and said, "At any hour

later than eight o'clock in the afternoon or earlier than five o'clock in the forenoon." He objected to such absurd phraseology.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again on Thursday, the 3rd December next.

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

SUPPLY.

REPORT FROM COMMITTEE.

Mr. ANNEAR, as Chairman of Committees, presented a report from the Committee covering the resolutions passed in connection with the expenditure from the loan fund account.

Resolutions agreed to.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

At five minutes past 7 o'clock the CHAIRMAN called upon Mr. Stephens, member for South Brisbane, to relieve him in the chair.

Clause 17 put and passed.

On clause 18—"Annual inspection by the board"—

Mr. GLASSEY: This was a very important clause, and it would be as well to have a statement from the Minister in charge of the Bill as to the work the board would be called upon to do which up to the present time it had not done. The clause stated that once in every year the board should make themselves personally acquainted with each department, and with the character of the work performed by each officer, and might for that purpose examine the permanent head or any officer of a department. The original intention of Parliament was that each officer should be examined, and placed in the position for which he was fit, and he did not see how they could do the work they were expected to do if they merely examined the head of a department. The present method was to issue schedules to the officers in each department and ask them to fill them in, giving their length of service, character of their work, wages received, and so on, and then to say to the head of the department, "I suppose this is correct." If the board was to perform the work expected of it by the country, it would examine every officer in the service instead of merely examining the heads of departments with regard to the capabilities and duties of the officers. If the Committee did not insist on the board doing its work, it was almost useless appointing a board, except to act as a buffer between members of Parliament and Ministers.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member would have an opportunity of dealing with the question he had raised on the Estimates. The question the hon. member should put to himself now was whether that clause was a good one or not. He thought it was a good one.

Mr. STEWART: While approving generally of the clause, it might be made more effective by the omission of the words "as far as practicable," which made it to a certain extent permissive instead of imperative on the board to discharge that duty every year. The members of the board were paid to do certain work, and it should be clearly understood that they were to do it.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member would find those words in the previous statute. It would be quite impossible for the board to examine every officer in the colony. The board did not shirk its work, but it could not do more than was practicable. If the words were omitted it would be an excuse for the board incurring a tremendous amount of extra expense

in providing for deputies to do the work. The board knew what was wanted of it, and the clause would do very well as it stood.

Mr. GLASSEY: Why should not a member of the board visit every nook and corner of the colony? There were three men, and their labours were much lighter since they had not the superannuation fund to look after.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: There appeared to be a hiatus between the 17th and 18th clauses. The 17th clause required the permanent head of each Ministerial department to furnish the board at the end of each month with a return showing every change which had occurred in the department and sub-departments during the month, and particulars of such returns were to be recorded in a book kept for the purpose. Nothing appeared to follow that clause requiring the board to ratify or disallow the alterations which had been made. What was the use of requiring returns to be furnished if the board had not to express some opinion upon the changes made by the permanent head of the department?

The HOME SECRETARY: There was nothing done by the permanent head of the department, but certain things, such as resignations and deaths, must get before the board. Previously returns had only to be furnished once a year, but it was now to be done once a month. The reason for the clause was shown in the last line, which stated that the particulars of the returns were to be recorded. If returns were not furnished to the board they would know nothing of such changes.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON was very glad of the explanation, because reading the 17th clause by itself it appeared as if the permanent heads of departments made certain changes on their own initiative, and had to submit them to the board for their information; but if the changes were made in pursuance of previous orders from the board it removed his objection.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 19 put and passed.

On clause 20—

Mr. GLASSEY: That clause gave the board power to recommend to the Governor in Council the number of officers of each division and class which they considered necessary for the efficient conduct of the several departments of the service. It was quite possible that the Governor in Council might refuse to accept the recommendations of the board, at the instance of the Minister or head of the department, in order to get rid of some officer who was personally obnoxious to them. What was the use of a board which only had the power of recommending?

The HOME SECRETARY: The object of the clause was something very different. It was to prevent Ministers from stuffing every department with a greater number of officers than was necessary for the efficient carrying on of the service.

Mr. GLASSEY: It would work in another way. Supposing the board recommended that twelve men were required for a particular department. The Minister might induce the Governor in Council to say that six were enough. The Minister might want to get rid of certain officers, and six men who might be objectionable to him at once disappeared.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 21 was amended by the insertion of the words "on the recommendation of the board" after the words "the Governor in Council may," and agreed to.

On clause 22—"Record of particulars of public service to be kept"—

Mr. STEWART asked whether it was intended that the record should be open to the inspection of members of Parliament?

The HOME SECRETARY : The return was published on the 31st January in each year, and supplied to every member of Parliament.

Mr. STEWART : What he wanted to know was whether the record could be examined at any time during the year by any member of Parliament? Could he, for instance, go to-morrow to the office of the board and ask to see the record?

The HOME SECRETARY : The hon. gentleman could certainly ask to see it, and no doubt it would be shown to him if convenient to the board. But a member of Parliament had no inherent right to inspect the books of the board at any time he thought fit.

Mr. STEWART : If they had not the right they ought to have it. Members of Parliament were in the position of public directors, and he was asking for no privilege or right for a member of Parliament which a director or even a shareholder of a private company possessed. Without that right he did not see how they were to do their duty to the public.

The HOME SECRETARY : In one clause they provided that a Civil servant who was dissatisfied with a decision of the board might require the board to reconsider the matter, and if he was still dissatisfied with the result of the reconsideration he had the right of appeal to the Governor in Council. There was in that ample provision for a person disappointed with a decision of the board to get all necessary information through the Governor in Council.

Mr. STEWART did not refer to dissatisfied officers at all. He was dissatisfied with the whole of the Civil Service; and if he had not the right to get information without waiting for the annual report at the end of the year, what position would he be placed in? He wanted the right to go into the office now and get any information he desired. How often were they not told, in discussing the departments, that they knew nothing about them. How were they to know anything about them if they had not the right to enter them for information?

Mr. GLASSEY : The hon. member was quite right in his contention. The record to which the Home Secretary referred only appeared at the end of the year, but the board might now be dealing with a matter that affected persons in his district or in any other district, and if he desired, in the interests of his constituents, to know what was taking place he should have the right to go to-morrow and ask the members of the board what was the result of their deliberations. With such a right it might be possible to alter an unfair decision before the matter was finally settled by the Governor in Council.

Mr. STEWART moved, as an amendment, the addition to the clause of the words "and such record shall be open to the inspection of members of the Legislative Assembly at all reasonable hours."

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON : The object of the Bill was to remove the Civil Service from political influence, and the hon. member's amendment would probably lead to the influence of 120 members of Parliament to look up the records of the board on behalf of some disappointed candidate for promotion in the service. The hon. member would certainly not purify the service or keep it aloof from parliamentary influence by his proposed amendment.

The HOME SECRETARY : It was not wise to put into any statute that which was implied by the unwritten law of common sense. All persons interested had a right to seek information from all departments of the service, but if the right to inspect the records in that department was specially provided for in the Act, its omission in the case of every other department would imply that there was no right to enter any other department for information. Ministers

and all Civil servants were expected to show that courtesy to members of Parliament which was due to their position. No officer would please his Minister who did not do that, and no Minister would please Parliament who did not do it. All the information provided for in the clause would be found in the record-book to which he had referred, and information with respect to deaths, dismissals, resignations, retirements, and promotions would appear from time to time in the *Gazette*. Reductions would, of course, appear on the Estimates. The object was to remove the board, as far as possible, from political influence.

Mr. STEWART agreed with a great deal that the hon. gentleman had said, and, with the permission of the Committee, would withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn; and clause put and passed.

The HOME SECRETARY suggested that the Committee should negative clause 23, which presumed that work was classified—a thing that could not be done by the board. He proposed to substitute a new clause.

Clause put and negatived.

The HOME SECRETARY moved a new clause providing that any classified officer in receipt of salary greater than was reasonably sufficient for his work should be transferred to work commensurate with his salary, and that if he was unfit for such transference his salary should be reduced to the value of his work.

Mr. GLASSEY asked who was to be the judge as to whether the salary was too great or not?

The HOME SECRETARY : The board.

Mr. GLASSEY : In that case he had no objection. He would object to a Minister being the judge.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON thought it would be well to make the clause a little more explicit.

Mr. GLASSEY had known an officer transferred from place to place for several years and finally sent back to the starting-point. There was no reduction in that case, but in consequence of the transfers the officer had failed to rise.

The HOME SECRETARY : Provision had previously been made for compensation by pension in the case of those who were found unfit for transference to work commensurate with their salaries, and that provision had been eliminated. He would give an instance to show how the clause would work. A very old officer in his department receiving £400 a year became physically unfit to do work worth £400 a year, but was still able to do work worth £200 a year. Rather than let him go out of the service he was offered work worth £200 a year, and he remained at that salary.

New clause put and passed.

The HOME SECRETARY said he proposed to substitute a new clause for clause 24.

Clause 24 put and negatived.

The HOME SECRETARY moved the insertion of a new clause providing that the salary of any classified officer receiving less than was reasonably sufficient for his work should as soon as practicable be raised to an amount commensurate with his work. This clause was a corollary to the one just passed. The clause was really a provision to classify a man according to his work.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON : The clause really took power out of the hands of Parliament and made the salary a subdivision. On one man being reduced from £400 to £200, the £200 might be given to another. The increase of salary should be subject to the approval of Parliament.

The HOME SECRETARY drew attention to clause 60 which said that nothing in the Act should authorise the expenditure of any greater

sum than that authorised by Parliament. The clause really dealt with the individual status of particular officers. If a man was getting £200 and the board found the work was worth £300, and another had been reduced from £300 to £200, then a rearrangement could be made. Not one farthing more than Parliament voted would be spent, and if they wanted to do justice in the service they must put the man up who deserved to go up, and the man down who deserved to go down.

THE HON. J. R. DICKSON: The clause said distinctly that the board should, as soon as practicable increase the salary, and that might be done without the money being voted by Parliament. Presuming they passed the Estimates in October or November, the next month the salaries of officers which had been under discussion, and upon which reductions might have been made, might be increased by the board, thereby defying the intentions of Parliament.

THE HOME SECRETARY: His first intention was to word the clause in this way, "shall be promoted into a higher class," but that would be injurious in some cases. Supposing a man was getting £210 a year, and was found to be worth more, the next class would entitle him to £300, and there might be an injustice in promoting him in that way. In putting a man down they made no additional charge upon the revenue, and in putting him up it must be done within the vote allowed by Parliament.

MR. GLASSEY agreed with the spirit of the clause. The Home Secretary said a man holding a position to which he was not entitled might be put down, and in other cases where the work was worth more than that paid for it, the officer might be promoted. That was all very well, but how would that work in the case of a new office? If there was a rush of work in the Lands Department and it was necessary to appoint a land agent, the man best fitted for the position might be a man holding a subordinate position of, say, £150 a year, although the new office might be worth £250 a year. The same might happen in such an office as the Government Savings Bank. In practical working it would be found that officers filling important positions were getting very small salaries.

MR. KIDSTON: There was a great deal in the contention of the hon. member for Balimba. If the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the board, could raise a salary in the way described, the judgment of Parliament would be overridden. According to the clause if the board found that a classified officer was in receipt of a less salary than was reasonably sufficient for the work performed they might advise the Governor in Council to increase his salary, and they might so increase it, although Parliament would have already decided what should be paid for the office.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Subject always to the 60th clause of the Bill.

MR. KIDSTON: Then the clause meant nothing. It should distinctly stipulate that the increase should be with the approval of Parliament.

THE HOME SECRETARY: If the hon. member would look at the provision of the existing Act he would see what the difficulty was, and why it had been altered. That provision stated that if any classified officer was in receipt of a less salary than the minimum of the class to which his work had been assigned by the board he might, with the approval of the Governor in Council, have his salary increased to the minimum of that class, which necessitated his going up a class; and it might be that he was not worth £100 more, which was the difference between one class and another, but that he ought

to be paid something between the maximum of one class and the minimum of the other. If an officer was in receipt of £210 his case might be met by an increase to £250, but under the existing law he would have to go up to £300. Another difficulty was that if an officer receiving £210 had his salary increased, under that provision he would get an additional £90, whereas a man receiving £290 would only get an additional £10. It was to remedy such anomalies that the new clause was introduced, but no man could jump over the barriers of two classes.

MR. TURLEY: The hon. gentleman stated just now that if it was found that a man who was receiving £400 was incapable of doing his work, and that a man in receipt of a salary of £200 was able to do it, he might be promoted to the position. That would be going up two classes, but the hon. gentleman said now that a man would not be able to go over one class.

THE HOME SECRETARY: We would have to get another man in such a case.

New clause put and passed.

On clause 25—"Governor in Council to appoint examiners"—

MR. DANIELS: The examination which candidates for admission to the Civil Service were required to pass was ridiculously high. The subjects included reading, French, German or Latin, which were not taught in the State schools; and under that examination it was a moral impossibility for any workman's son to get into the service.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Nearly every boy who has got in is a State school boy, and the son of poor parents.

MR. DANIELS: But their parents had been in a position to give them a certain amount of coaching after they left school. It was altogether unnecessary that candidates for the position of messenger, letter-carrier, or letter-sorter should be required to pass such a high examination. It would be better to adopt the system in force in the Education Department, under which a candidate could enter the service after passing a comparatively light examination, and then, if he wanted to go higher, pass a higher examination.

THE HOME SECRETARY: The clause did not deal with the subject referred to by the hon. member, but only provided that the Governor in Council might appoint examiners. The standard fixed was not very high, but what happened was this: If the board wanted twenty officers for particular work they would take the highest twenty on the list who got over 50 per cent., and any others would get other work. For instance, in the Postal Department as little as 30 per cent. was considered sufficient, and if that percentage was considered exclusive, and kept out deserving young fellows, the board had power to reduce it. The Governor in Council appointed the examiner; the work was generally done by Mr. Woolcock, who was a very capable man, and knew what sort of examination was required. He might say to the credit of the boys who had got in, that the service was never better off, and he spoke with a knowledge of some years. All those who had come in under this system were most capable officers, and would be an ornament to the service in whatever branch they might happen to be. The system was going on so well that it should be allowed to go on. As the service had been worked, there was congestion.

MR. TURLEY: Do you say there is congestion?

THE HOME SECRETARY: He said that there had been great congestion in the past, and there was congestion still in the sense that further reductions could be made by the amalgamation of offices. There was still room for reform in that direction, but under the present

system the service had been cut down to about its normal condition. He did not think it was overmanned, although by amalgamating offices a great saving could be effected.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 26—"Candidates to be examined before admission"—

The HOME SECRETARY: He found this clause would not work as it stood. After stating that nobody should be admitted into the service unless he had passed the prescribed examination, it said "or has proved to the satisfaction of the board that he has already passed some equivalent examination which the Governor in Council may consider sufficient." If they retained the last part of the clause it would interfere with the status of officers, because clause 29 provided that a list of candidates who had passed the examination should be kept in the order of their merit. That system would be disturbed if they admitted boys from the universities without any examination here. While not excluding other boys, preference should be given to their own. If there happened to be an excellent officer whose abilities and services were required there was a clause to deal with that. He therefore moved the omission of all the words after the words "examination," in line 44.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. GROOM thought that the passing of the senior or junior Sydney University examinations should be considered equivalent to the prescribed examination, without making anyone who had passed those examinations undergo the further examination.

The HOME SECRETARY: Any boy who passed those examinations would have no difficulty in passing the examination prescribed by the Act.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 27 to 29, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 30—"Service of probationers"—

The HOME SECRETARY wished to make it clear that the clause dealt only with the classified division of the service, and had nothing to do with the unclassified division, in which all the officers were appointed by Ministers, whilst classified officers were appointed by the Governor in Council. They had to provide how they could get into the classified division. He therefore moved the insertion of the words "classified divisions of the." That would require applications for admission into the classified division to be made to the board.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON understood the hon. gentleman to say that the board would have no cognisance of officers in the unclassified division. If that was so, how could they be admitted by the board into the superior grade?

The HOME SECRETARY: The distinction between the two classes was that the classified officers were to be appointed by the Governor in Council, whilst the unclassified officers, such as seamen on the "Otter" and the warders in the prisons and asylums, would be appointed by Ministers. The board had cognisance of unclassified officers, but they were appointed and their salaries fixed by Ministers. It would not do, therefore, to provide that applications to the public service should be made to the board, seeing that the board had nothing to do with the appointment of unclassified officers.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON was glad to learn that unclassified officers came under the cognisance of the board, so that they had an opportunity of getting into the classified division.

Mr. GLASSEY presumed that the clause would enable the warders in prisons and asylums, persons in the Harbours and Rivers Department, and men in the Government Printing Office—in fact, all men doing mental work—to get a footing

on the first rung of the ladder, and would enable them to get still further promotion if they showed capacity?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, if they are permanent officers.

Mr. GLASSEY: To that extent he was satisfied. Did the hon. gentleman provide for transfers as well as for entrance into the service?

The HOME SECRETARY: I have another clause dealing with transfers.

Amendment agreed to.

The HOME SECRETARY: The clause provided that every person admitted into the classified divisions of the service should, in the first instance, be admitted into the probationary class, and should remain there for not less than six months; but it was never intended that the electrical engineer, for instance, should be compelled to remain in the probationary class for six months, and he proposed to amend the clause so as to provide that no person should be admitted to the classified divisions unless he had in the first instance been admitted to the probationary class, and had remained in that class for not less than six months. Of course, in the case of such officers as the electrical engineer, the Governor in Council had power to make an exception. He moved the omission of the word "every," with the view of inserting "no."

Amendment agreed to; and clause passed with verbal amendments.

On clause 31—"Appointments from probationary class"—

The HOME SECRETARY: He had given notice of an amendment in pursuance of a promise made to the Committee. The clause as it stood provided that appointments to the 6th class shall be made from the probationary class. Under the present Act the door was kept open to all persons who were employed in connection with the public service before the 6th January, 1889. He had omitted that because he thought that if any had not entered the door since that date they were probably keeping out of their own will. It appeared, however, that there were four or five persons who had not yet entered, and as the right was there before he did not desire to take it away. He proposed to add to the clause the words "or from persons who, before the 6th December, 1889, were and still are employed in connection with the public service."

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Mr. GLASSEY proposed the insertion of a new clause to follow clause 31 providing that—

The persons employed in the Postal Department as letter-carriers, mailmen, stampers, and sorters, and receivers and despatchers of mails, before the passing of the Civil Service Act of 1889, shall be classified without examination, and placed in either the fifth or sixth class according to their present salaries.

It would be seen that he was not attempting to admit a very large number of persons into the classified branches without examination. Most of them had been in the department over eight years. One had been there for twenty-one years, during fifteen of which he had been doing clerical work. He was still down as a stamper and sorter, and as long as he remained unclassified it was impossible to advance him. There were others engaged as letter-carriers, mailmen, stampers, and sorters and receivers, and despatchers of mails who ought to be admitted into the service without examination. He knew from his own knowledge and observation that for many years the department had been largely worked on lines of favouritism. It was only fair that the persons to whom he referred should be given an opportunity of rising without having to go through the ordeal of an examination which many officers high up

in the department would be unable to pass. He had so framed the clause as to enable the board, who ought to be the best judges of the work performed by those gentlemen, to say whether they should be put into the fifth or sixth class. The applications made by those men had hitherto been declined by the heads for reasons best known to themselves, and in many instances their written communications had not reached the proper authorities.

THE HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member was asking for those persons something which would be of no value whatever to them, and he had not shown how it could be of any value to them. Classification would make no difference to them in salary or the social scale, as there were unclassified officers drawing £200 a year and classified officers getting only £55 and £60. Under the Postal Act messengers, mailmen, stampers and sorters, letter-carriers, switchboard attendants, and line repairers were to be admitted into the classified divisions of the Civil Service upon passing the examination provided for the purpose, and that examination only required to get 30 per cent. of marks. There was a special privilege in connection with the Postal Department, as a man could get into that department at any age, while to get into the classified divisions in the other departments there was a limit to the age, and probably over 70 per cent. of marks would be required in a competitive examination. All that was required was that there should be some standard of education, and if the 30 per cent. standard was too high there was nothing in the Act to prevent the Postal Department making it lower. He had communicated with the Postmaster-General on the subject of the amendment, and the hon. member must see that the amendment could not possibly come into the Bill, because it dealt with only one class. He should not be an advocate in an Act of Parliament for a particular class. He had left out lots of persons in the Postal Department—all the messengers, for instance.

MR. GLASSEY: I will include them if you like.

THE HOME SECRETARY: The practical operation of the Act was that if the board went down to the post office and were informed by the Under Secretary that a messenger there was doing clerical work, they would ask no further questions, and he would go into the classified divisions of the service.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: They have not done it.

THE HOME SECRETARY: He could mention the case of young Blackboro in his own department, and five-and-twenty other cases of men who had not passed any examination at all and were now in the classified divisions. He had been informed by Mr. McDonnell, to whom he telephoned just now—

MR. GLASSEY: He has always been opposed to reform, and I don't care twopence for his opinion.

THE HOME SECRETARY: The hon. gentleman had a grievance, but he should not air it so far as that. The Postmaster-General said he had looked after the unclassified officers precisely the same as the classified officers in regard to increases.

MR. GLASSEY: Nothing of the sort.

THE HOME SECRETARY: He knew that they had got their £10 increases for the last two years. There were a lot not on the list who did not get the rise, and he agreed that every officer should be on the list. The Postmaster-General said it would not tend to the efficiency of the service if the unclassified officers were to be placed in the classified division without some test of their fitness; there was nothing to prevent any man who aspired to getting into the classified

list from being admitted; and under all the circumstances it was impossible for him to accept the amendment.

MR. GLASSEY was disappointed at the manner in which the hon. gentleman had dealt with the amendment. He had attempted to cloud the issue with a number of unnecessary words and found fault with the amendment because it did not include other classes. With the permission of the Committee he would include "messengers." The hon. gentleman said there should be some test. What better test could there be than the fact that these men had been doing clerical work for years? He would not ask that they should be admitted into the classified divisions unless they were competent, but he knew they were competent. There were men in the Postal Department in the fourth class who could not pass the examination, simple as it was. If the test was to be applied to the men included in the amendment it should be applied all round.

THE HOME SECRETARY: There is a test for the others.

MR. GLASSEY: No. They were getting good salaries, and occupied certain positions; and that was the only test.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Why exclude the railway men?

MR. GLASSEY: He was not dealing with them, but with men whose work he knew. He would be untrue to the men with whom he had worked and to himself if he did not try to obtain for them justice and fair play.

THE HON. J. R. DICKSON sympathised with the views expressed by the hon. member for Bundaberg, but he should like to see the principle enunciated by him made of wider scope. He had in view a number of employees in the Government Printing Office, many of whom had been in the service from twelve to twenty-one years, and remained unclassified. That was a most unfair position to put any men in. There was this weakness in the hon. member's amendment: That some of the men in the unclassified divisions were getting larger salaries than would be obtained under clauses 5 and 6, which limited the salary to £200 and £120 respectively, and he would not like to see, as a result of classification, the salaries of those men reduced. He would go upon the broad principle that all men who had been from twelve years in the Government employ should be considered as having qualified themselves for admission to the classified divisions without examination. Service of that length was an education in itself, but there were men in the printing office who had attained a comparatively high standard of literary ability, although they might not be able to pass an examination. If some such amendment were adopted it would give satisfaction in the service, and he would even be prepared to support the amendment in its present form, although he thought it should be extended to other branches of the service.

MR. GLASSEY: With regard to the salary question raised by the hon. member for Bulimba, he had made inquiries, and he did not believe there were any men receiving more than £200 a year. His desire was not to overweight the clause so that hon. members would say it opened up too difficult a question. If any hon. member desired to extend the clause in the direction mentioned by the hon. member for Bulimba it would have his support, but he did not want to cloud the issue in any way.

MR. BARTHOLOMEW: No doubt there were unclassified officers in the Government service who were worthy of being put into the classified divisions. They had been under the impression that they had to pass a probationary

examination, which was almost an impossibility for men who had been so long in the service. The Home Secretary had, however, cleared up a lot of misunderstanding upon that point. They had been under the impression that they had to obtain 70 per cent. in order to pass, but it now appeared that if they passed to the extent of 33 per cent. they would have a chance of rising in the service. Still, his feeling was that the unclassified officers should be admitted into the fifth and sixth classes on their merits, and if the hon. member for Bundaberg would make his amendment to cover all departments it would not have the appearance of favouring any particular class of men. Some men had been in the Railway Department for three and four years, and were still on the unattached list, although they were supposed to be put on the permanent staff after six months' probation. He had no wish to admit officers to promotion unless they showed they had ability, but where they had shown they were capable men they should be given a chance of rising in the service.

The HOME SECRETARY: He could explain the hon. member's proposition by taking the case of a carpenter, and he spoke of that class of employees with the highest respect. Under the present system if a carpenter, who was an unclassified officer and might get up to £200 a year or more, wished to enter the clerical or ordinary division of the Post Office he could do so, if he showed his competency by passing a certain examination. If there was no examination, as proposed in the new clause, an incompetent man might get into the fifth or sixth class, and he would remain there as a monument of incapacity, because once classified promotion could only be according to merit. The object of the examination was simply that a man might give a certificate of his fitness for classification, and if men who were not competent were admitted without examination their salaries would be limited to the particular class to which they were appointed, whereas if they remained on the unclassified list there was nothing to prevent them getting £400 or £500 a year if their work was worth that amount. If he thought it would be the slightest help to competent men to get into the classified division without examination he would accept the clause; but he could assure the hon. member that it would be to no advantage to the persons whose cause he was advocating.

Mr. GLASSEY believed that the clause would improve the condition of those persons. He could name several persons in and around Brisbane who had been appointed postmasters, and were drawing £200, £250, and £300 a year, and he could remember some of them going into the department. How had they got into those positions? Was it by any test of their ability? No; but by sheer favouritism. How were the men referred to in the clause to advance? Only by getting into the classified division and rising under the supervision of the Civil Service Board. With regard to the question raised by the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Bartholomew, if they opened the door too wide, and included carpenters, compositors, men in the Harbours and Rivers Department, men employed on the railways, mechanics, and others, it might be said that they were doing mechanical work, and that there were obstacles in the way of their classification. He wished to avoid that, and to make the clause so simple that any reasonable person could support it.

The HOME SECRETARY pointed out that if they agreed to the amendment it would have no effect, because the other Act would not be repealed. They had one Act dealing with postmen and another dealing with the Civil Service, and to effect his object the hon. member would

have to repeal clause 6 of the Post and Telegraph Act or else say that, notwithstanding anything contained in the Post and Telegraph Act of 1891, these men should be admitted to the fifth or sixth classes without examination. The clause proposed by the hon. member would not repeal the clause in the Post and Telegraph Act without expressly mentioning it, and he was pointing out the proper way to do it; but whichever way the hon. member adopted it would not meet with his approval.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON would like to let hon. members know his views on the subject before it was finally decided, and he would read an amendment, which he would leave to the wisdom of the Committee—

"All persons who have heretofore been or may hereafter be continually employed in any unclassified division of the Civil Service for a consecutive period of not less than twelve years, and who bear a record of good service throughout such term, shall be capable of being admitted to the classified divisions of the public service according to the salary they then receive without examination."

He preferred that to the amendment of the hon. member, which seemed to be too narrow in only dealing with one department. He wished to embrace the whole of the men who bore good records for twelve years, and who ought to have some opportunity of promotion.

Mr. KIDSTON had no objection to the clause of the hon. member for Bulimba as a general proposition, but the Home Secretary seemed unaccountably obtuse in not understanding the grievance that was complained of. In 1889 all officers in the public service were classified according to their salaries with the exception of these men, and it was distinctly understood that they should be promoted into the classified divisions without examination. Now, the complaint of about 190 men was that only about seven or eight of them had been lifted into the classified divisions under that provision. The Home Secretary had repeated that the examination was very slight, and they should have no objection to it, but what might be a very simple examination for a boy fresh from school might be very difficult for a man twenty years from school, although he might be a better scholar and more competent to do the work he was called upon to perform; in fact, it might be impossible for him to pass it. It had been pointed out that this examination was necessary, because it afforded the board the only opportunity of knowing who were fit to be classified and who were not. When the Act of 1889 was passed, how was it that all the men in the public service were found to be fit to be classified without first undergoing examination? Would it not have been just as easy to decide whether the letter-carriers and sorters were fit at the same time? No examinations had been held before the Civil Service Board took office, and promotions that were honestly made were made on the ground that a man had shown his qualifications by doing the work. He knew of unclassified men who were doing the work of classified officers, and that was practical proof of their ability. The hon. gentleman seemed to think that the effect of the amendment would be to promote men to positions they were not qualified to fill, but it would simply give them a chance of being promoted to positions for which they were qualified but for which at present they were not eligible. The Committee should do justice to men who were suffering from a real grievance. If the hon. gentleman could not accept the amendment in the form proposed, he could put it in another form. The essential thing was that no one in the public service should be allowed to have a legitimate ground for a grievance.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member assumed that the examination was difficult; but the most common-place man could pass it with the greatest of ease. There were 2,000 marks given, and all that a candidate had to do was to get 30 per cent. of that number. The first subject of examination was handwriting. Surely no man would object to showing his writing! For that there were 300 marks. The next subject was English—spelling, 200 marks; then English composition, 300 marks. The next was the first four rules of arithmetic, 400 marks; then geography, 300 marks; and the last was English history from the eighteenth century to the present time, only with reference to the colonies and dependencies. He had seen the papers, and he believed the veriest child who had ever entered the service could get 30 per cent. on those papers. Latin, French, and German had nothing whatever to do with that examination. Three hundred marks were down for mathematics, and 100 marks were given for shorthand writing, but it was not necessary that candidates should take up those subjects. Including them there was a total of 2,500 marks, which meant that a candidate had to get 800, and as most of the marks were for reading, writing, and arithmetic, no one should have any difficulty in passing. Until two years ago the board had placed a different construction on the regulation to that which he placed upon it. They held that the clause did not admit anybody to the classified branch. He contended the meaning of the clause was that any man who was in the service at the time of the passing of the Act was eligible for any work for which he was competent. The board insisted on examination as a small test of competency. Surely that was a reasonable thing to ask. If the hon. member succeeded in passing his amendment, the men in the Post Office would not thank him. They were all now under the Civil Service Board, and if they came in without a certificate of competency they would remain at the bottom of the list for ever. If they would come up to-morrow and pass the examination they would all get into the classified position. What they would do when they were there was another thing.

Mr. FOGARTY: No doubt the unclassified officers of the service had a real grievance, and the hon. member for Bundaberg was endeavouring to remove the grievance of a small section. He believed it was the intention of the hon. member for Bulimba to move an amendment which would cover the whole ground, and he would ask the hon. member to withdraw his amendment in order to allow that of the hon. member for Bulimba to be put, and he should be very much mistaken if there was not sufficient intelligence and independence in the Committee to carry it by an overwhelming majority.

Mr. FINNEY: The unclassified employees of the public service were in a very unfortunate position, and he should vote for the hon. member for Bulimba's amendment if it was put. Men of twelve or twenty years' service ought to be classified without having to pass any examination. If they had not qualified in that time they ought not to be kept in the service. It was very hard that they should be debarred from the benefits enjoyed by the classified officers. There were men in the Government Printing Office who ought to be classified.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not the point at all. They are classified.

Mr. FINNEY: The men in the Government Printing Office were not classified. When on a previous occasion he said that a man a few hours away from work had his salary reduced, the hon. gentleman contradicted him. He repeated now that it was the case; and since he had made

that statement a man who had been there for twenty years went away at 5 o'clock one evening last week through illness and remained away the next day, and his salary was stopped for a day and an hour. The head of the department might advise the hon. gentleman that that was not correct, but the contradiction would not make it so.

The HOME SECRETARY: And the assertion will not make it correct.

Mr. FINNEY: Of course he did not know so much of the subject as the hon. gentleman, but many of those men were in a position they ought not to be in, and he was prepared to support the amendment suggested by the hon. member for Bulimba.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member missed the point altogether. It was not a question as to whether the men in the Government Printing Office should be put into the list under the board. He had already stated that all who were not excluded by the operation of law would be placed on the list, in one division or another. What was asked now was that they should all be placed in the classified clerical division without any test of their fitness.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Service.

The HOME SECRETARY: Was the service of a printer setting up type any evidence of his fitness to act as clerk of petty sessions at Nebo? Yet that was what the proposal amounted to. Hon. members appeared to think there was something derogatory in the position of a man in the unclassified division; but that was not so.

Mr. FINNEY: Those men are liable to dismissal any day.

The HOME SECRETARY: They were not. They were under the Civil Service Board. The proposal was that they should be put into the clerical division without a test of their fitness, and the Committee, if they agreed to that, must take the responsibility of it. It was really asking him to put men who were in round holes now into positions which would be much more disastrous for themselves. Hon. members spoke of the unclassified division as if it was outside the service. There were men in the printing office who were "here to-day and gone to-morrow," as there was no work for them to do, but all the permanent hands were put into the classified division. Then the hon. member for Bulimba came along and proposed that those men, without any examination, should be placed in the fifth and sixth class, and so offer evidence to the world that they were fit to take the work of clerk of petty sessions.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON: No, no. I deny that entirely.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member knew it was the clerical division. All those men were asked to do was to pass a simple examination, and it was far better for them to remain in the unclassified division than to go into the clerical division, from which they would never rise.

Mr. FINNEY: Did he understand the hon. gentleman to say that the men in the printing office eligible to be put into classification would be put there?

The HOME SECRETARY: I have already said so.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON: The remarks of the Home Secretary tended to mystify the Committee. He alleged that because a man became classified he was classified for clerical promotion. The thing was absurd. The hon. gentleman might as well say that the Government Printer was qualified for the superintendence of Dunwich or Goodna.

The HOME SECRETARY: No; he is in the professional division.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON: Then he might be qualified for a police magistrate. The thing

was simply ridiculous. It was not necessary that mechanics should compete with men in clerical positions, occupying the same grade in the service. It was only fair that length of service, with a good record, should entitle men to an opportunity for promotion, and to security of tenure in the positions they held at the present time.

Mr. GLASSEY, with the permission of the Committee, added the word "messengers" to his amendment.

The HOME SECRETARY: If the hon. gentleman wanted the question tested the amendment should take this form: "Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Post and Telegraph Act of 1891, messengers, mailmen, stampers, sorters, letter-carriers, switch-board attendants, and line repairers, who were in the postal service before the 6th day of December, 1889, shall be admitted into the classified divisions of the public service according to their respective salaries without examination."

Mr. GLASSEY, with the permission of the Committee, withdrew his amendment, and substituted that suggested by the Home Secretary.

Question—That the proposed new clause stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 29.

Messrs. Glassey, Keogh, Dawson, Groom, Boles, Drake, Fogarty, King, Dibley, Jackson, Sim, Dunford, Cross, Hardacre, Stewart, Finney, Fraser, Browne, Turley, Macdonald-Paterson, Hoolan, McDonald, Fitzgerald, Dickson, Kidston, McDonnell, Castling, Bartholomew, and Kerr.

NOES, 24.

Sir H. M. Nelson, Messrs. Dalrymple, Byrnes, Philp, Foxton, Tozer, Lord, O'Connell, Chataway, Corfield, Callan, Hamilton, Curtis, Story, Battersby, Armstrong, Newell, Murray, Leahy, Bridges, Collins, Bell, Grimes, and McMaster.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON did not see that the amendment of the hon. member for Bundaberg necessarily clashed with the one he intended to propose, which read as follows:—

All persons who have heretofore been or may hereafter be continuously employed in the unclassified division of the Civil Service or otherwise for a consecutive period of not less than twelve years, and who bear a record of good service throughout such term, shall be capable of being admitted to the classified divisions of the public service, according to the salary they then receive, without examination.

The matter had been pretty well discussed, and all he would say was that he did not see that classification in the service should necessarily be confined to the clerical divisions—why officers of twelve years' standing who had performed good service should not be recognised as officers of the service, although it might never be contemplated that they should be admitted to the judiciary, or made clerks of petty sessions, or occupy other similar offices. He begged to move the clause which he had read.

The HOME SECRETARY: He could only say that the acceptance of such an amendment would simply mean the entire disturbance of the framework of the Bill. If the amendment were accepted he could not possibly proceed with the Bill. It would have to be withdrawn and introduced in another form. The Bill was brought in because the term of office of the board was expiring, and such a clause was completely foreign to the scope of the Bill. The hon. gentleman used the words "Civil Service," which was not the public service, and he used the term "good service," without defining what he meant. All persons who had been or might hereafter be in the service for twelve years were to be admitted to

the classified divisions. The unclassified division had only been in existence for seven years, so that portion of the clause was nonsense. The unclassified division was not unclassified in the sense in which the hon. member took it to be. The unclassified division was practically the mechanical division. That was a division which was classified in a way of its own. The mere wording of the hon. gentleman's amendment would postpone its operation for five years, because no rights could accrue for another five years. Then he went on to say that all persons who "hereafter" served for twelve years should be admitted to the classified division. What was the reason for that? The argument would tend to do away with the mechanical division altogether, although the men themselves liked that division because it put them amongst persons who did work of the same kind as themselves. He would point out to the hon. gentleman that all the Governor in Council had to do was to pass a minute excepting certain persons from the operation of the Act, and that could be done now. If they found the Act was doing injustice to certain persons, all they had to do was to except them from its operation; and then what would become of the amendment? He understood the claim made by the hon. member for Bundaberg. The proposition he made was an intelligible one, and although he did not agree with it, the House accepted it; but he certainly could not agree with the proposal of the hon. member for Bulimba.

Mr. KEOGH: What about the railway men?

The HOME SECRETARY: The railway men were excepted from the operation of the Act already, and the hon. member ought to know it. The views of the Committee, as expressed by their adoption of the clause introduced by the hon. member for Bundaberg, he was prepared to give effect to, and would probably have to extend the principle of the clause to other persons who might be found to have been accidentally omitted, but he could not accept the amendment now proposed. If it was carried he could see no use of going any further with the Bill; it was diametrically opposed to the principles of the measure, and would make it of no use. The Government had put in the mechanical division every man who was permanently employed at a particular class of work; and now that justice had been done—as hon. members believed—to a class of men who were excluded from the operation of the existing Act as far as classification was concerned, he hoped the Committee would not pass the amendment.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON admitted the criticism of the hon. gentleman with regard to the period of twelve years, inasmuch as the classified division had not existed for that period, but that was a matter capable of amendment. He recognised the necessity of the Bill, and did not want to put any clause in it which would have the effect of destroying it. He had given the measure very cordial support up to the present time, and he had introduced the new clause with the view of extending the benefits of the public service to all classes who were employed by the State. They had done good work that evening, and he would suggest to the hon. gentleman that he should now adjourn, and allow a little time for the consideration of the amendment, which could be printed and circulated before their next meeting.

The HOME SECRETARY thought they might finish the section of the Bill they were now dealing with, or at any rate pass the next three clauses, on which he did not think there were any amendments to be proposed. The hon. member would have an opportunity of proposing his clause after clause 38.

THE HON. J. R. DICKSON: With a view not to retard business he would withdraw his amendment in the meantime, and he wished it to be printed and circulated.

MR. TURLEY: The Home Secretary stated just now, in reply to the hon. member, Mr. Kidston, that the Civil Service list was circulated among members. He had looked through the papers furnished to the House, and could find no record of that document, so that he thought the hon. gentleman must be mistaken.

THE HOME SECRETARY: The Civil Service classification list was published in the *Government Gazette*, and he understood that it was the rule that any member of Parliament who desired to have the *Gazette* had only to ask for it, and he concluded that those members who wished to have a copy of the Civil Service list had it among their papers.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clauses 32 to 34, inclusive, put and passed.

The House resumed; the ACTING CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again on Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at twenty-nine minutes past 10 o'clock: