

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 1896**

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.**

WEDNESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER, 1896.

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

**SUSPENSION OF A MEMBER.—RESCISSION OF SUSPENSION.**

The SPEAKER read a letter from Mr. Battersby, expressing regret and humbly apologising for his conduct the previous evening, which led to his suspension.

The PREMIER: I am very pleased to listen to the letter which has been read, and to the apology the hon. member has made. I think he has adopted a very sensible and honourable course. By the leave of the House I would move that the resolution of the House of yesterday's date for the suspension of the hon. member for Moreton, Mr. Battersby, be now rescinded.

Mr. GLASSEY: I entirely share and concur in the sentiments expressed by the Premier in reference to the apology sent by the hon. member for Moreton, and I am sure the hon. gentleman has expressed the sense of the House generally that the suspension should now determine. I second the motion most heartily.

Question, by leave, put and passed.

### SUPPLY.

#### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE. SURVEY OF LAND.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved that £20,190 be granted for the survey of land.

Mr. GLASSEY asked whether the utmost harmony existed between the Under Secretary for Lands and the Surveyor-General, or whether it was true that on one occasion the Minister had sent for an officer of the Survey Department, and that in consequence of the action of the Surveyor-General that gentleman had not responded to the call? He had received information to the effect that the relations existing between the permanent head of the Lands Department and the Surveyor-General were not harmonious. It was necessary that the two branches of the department should work smoothly and efficiently in the interests of the public.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS had no hesitation in saying that the Under Secretary for Lands and the Surveyor-General worked with the utmost cordiality. Nothing could be more satisfactory than the amicable manner in which the two branches worked with one another. He was sure the hon. member had not been correctly informed. As to someone not coming when he had been sent for, he had sent for an officer one day, and his message had miscarried. The officer thought someone else wanted him, and he had not come, but the matter was quite unimportant.

Mr. GLASSEY was glad to hear the hon. gentleman express himself as he had done with regard to the cordiality which existed between the Under Secretary for Lands and the Surveyor-General; but his information was that there was not that harmony between the two officers which should exist between officers holding such important positions. Of course he did not vouch for the absolute accuracy of the information which had reached him, but still it was of a substantial character. He had been informed that an officer high up in the Survey Department had been sent for by the Minister himself, but in consequence of the high-handedness of the Surveyor-General that officer was not permitted to see the Minister. If his information was true, it seemed incomprehensible that a subordinate officer should not respond to the command of the Minister. The first consideration in the department should be courtesy to the Minister, and, though he sat on the opposite side of the House, he would insist as strongly as any man that the hon. gentleman should receive the utmost courtesy from every officer in the department, whatever his position might be.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member was entirely mistaken. Now that he had spoken of an officer high up in the Survey Department, he remembered that he had sent for the officer, and word came back that he was not in. The officer afterwards met him in the street and explained that the message had miscarried, and apologised for his seeming discourtesy. The hon. member appeared to feel a great deal worse over the matter than he did. He was quite able to take care of himself if there was any discourtesy shown to him by any subordinate.

Mr. GLASSEY had a map in his possession of the Cryna Estate, which had been thrown

open to selection, under the provisions of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act of 1894, at Beaudesert on 22nd September, and after that date at the Lands Office, Brisbane. He wished to know whether that map was still in circulation, or whether it had been withdrawn? He also wished to know whether the drawing in the corner of the map was only intended to attract men, or whether it was intended to represent the real state of affairs on the estate?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He did not recognise the landscape in the picture at all. It was a picture of a ploughed field, with a team of horses, and might represent anywhere. It seemed to be typical of agriculture in Queensland.

Mr. GLASSEY: It is not typical of that place, is it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He did not know; he believed it was. He would hand it to the member for the district, who might know. He did not know whether the maps were in circulation or not. It was just possible that they had been temporarily withdrawn for the purpose of making alterations, because the areas were being increased from 160 to 200 acres; but, so far as he knew, they were still obtainable. He was very glad to say that a very large proportion of the estate had already been selected, and he thought the rest would be selected very shortly.

Mr. GLASSEY: His information had been received from a number of people who had gone to the place to view the land, and who had taken the maps as a guide; but they had been unable to find any semblance of the picture. The whole thing appeared to be a little bit of byplay on the part of the Survey Department to delude and gull the public, and had been got up at considerable expense. There was nothing on the estate to correspond with what was represented on the plan.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS was satisfied that the plans turned out by the Queensland Survey Department were equal to those turned out in any other part of Australia. People as a rule found them sufficient to enable them to pick up the pegs as indicated on the plans. If the persons referred to by the hon. member were not able to find the land with the assistance of the map they were not fit to go on the land at all. He supposed they must have gone by the picture instead of by the plan, and when they could not find the team of horses with a cultivator behind them they took it for granted that they were on the wrong land.

The HON. G. THORN knew the land, and was astonished that any selector should take exception to the plan, which was as good a plan as could be turned out by the Survey Department. The land was of excellent quality, the price was fixed at a very low rate, and he only wondered that it had not been taken up before now.

Mr. GLASSEY: So far as he was concerned the Minister was not going to laugh the thing off in that way, as he was there to see that people who had been misled by the department were protected. The best testimony as to the absurdity of those plans was that they had now been withdrawn because they had been scoffed at by those who went to view the land. He did not wish the Minister to sneer and laugh at the matter, as it was very serious to intending selectors, four of whom had mentioned it to him, believing themselves to be the victims of a want of discretion and wisdom on the part of the department in not supplying definite and correct information as to the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS had no wish to treat the question jocularly if that could be helped, but it was difficult to be serious when the hon. member talked in such a

way. The Surveyor-General knew nothing about the withdrawal of those plans, and they could be used by anyone who wished to select some of that land. The best evidence that the plans were perfectly good for the purpose for which they had been prepared was the fact that most of the land had already been selected. The survey had been particularly well marked, and anyone knowing anything about surveys must be able to find the pegs from that plan if they were on the ground at all. There was no difficulty for any intelligent man to find the land.

Mr. GRIMES held in his hand the picture referred to by the hon. member for Bundaberg, representing a team of horses dragging a cultivator, with a good wide stretch of cultivation land. He had no hesitation in saying that such a scene might have been seen on Cryna at one time, as he had himself seen similar scenes in the immediate neighbourhood.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Perhaps the brands of the horses were different.

Mr. DANIELS wanted to inform the Minister that intending selectors could be supplied with a great deal more information with respect to land available for selection than they got now. There was a great improvement upon olden times in that respect, but there was still room for a great deal more improvement. The Lands Office possessed lithographs of every run that had been divided, and when intending selectors came to the office they should be informed that those lithographs were to be had, giving a description of the situation of the land and the quality of the soil. If that were done the selector would know where to go to find suitable land, instead of having to travel all over the country to find it. The Minister should see that that information was supplied.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will try. Question put and passed.

#### TRIGONOMETRICAL SURVEY.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved that £200 be granted for trigonometrical survey.

The HON. G. THORN asked what progress had been made with the trigonometrical survey since Mr. Tully was in charge of that branch of the service, and whether the officer at present in charge of the work was competent to discharge the duties of the office, which was a very important one?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Very little had been done in connection with the trigonometrical survey, because very little could be done for £200. Mr. Hoggan was for many years in charge of the work, and he carried it out successfully for a long time, but he had been retrenched. At present there was only one surveyor engaged in the work, and he was laying off a line near Tangorin, south-west of Hughenden. It was not very important, but it was necessary to complete the work already in hand. No doubt it would be very desirable to continue the survey more actively, and if they received encouragement from the Committee, possibly the Government would see their way to put a larger sum on the Estimates next year for that purpose.

The HON. G. THORN had never heard of the name of Mr. Hoggan, or of anyone being in charge of the survey since Mr. Tully went to the Land Board. He wanted to know why the Minister did not appoint a competent man to take charge of that very important branch of the service, instead of putting one man on to-day and another to-morrow?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS did not know how it was that the hon. member had not more information concerning Mr. Hoggan, who was a talented gentleman and held

a very high position in his profession as a surveyor. He had been in charge of the trigonometrical survey for many years, where he had done excellent work.

The HON. G. THORN did not see any necessity for that vote if the work was not going on.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is necessary for finishing off the work.

The HON. G. THORN: The amount was not more than sufficient for a surveyor's equipment, or for his travelling expenses, and if there was no necessity for an officer the vote should be got rid of altogether.

Question put and passed.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved that £21,385 be granted for miscellaneous services. There were several increases in the vote, caused by the increase in the travelling expenses allowed to rabbit inspectors and overseers, but the increases were very small.

The HON. G. THORN asked whether the Minister was satisfied that a 1½-inch mesh for rabbit-proof netting was sufficient? They had now spent some hundreds of thousands of pounds on wire-netting, and if, as some alleged, it was necessary to have a 1¼-inch mesh, the sooner they retraced their steps the better.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The more he went into the matter the more was he satisfied that a 1½-inch mesh was the proper one to adopt. The original cost of 1¼-inch mesh was 40 per cent. more than that of a 1½-inch mesh, so that if a smaller mesh were adopted, instead of asking for £102,000 for rabbit fencing to meet the demands which the Government were compelled to meet, as he had explained the other day, they would have to ask for £142,000. That very young rabbits could get through a 1½-inch mesh there was no doubt, but if they did happen to be near a fence, which was most unlikely, the probability was that they would go back again to their doe, as they could not travel. Moreover, it was very seldom that rabbits were to be found in burrows in close proximity to fences, as there was a certain amount of traffic along the fences. No fence in the world would keep out rabbits for a long period, because an accident was sure to happen now and then, and some rabbits were almost sure to get through before the damage could be repaired. An absolutely impassable barrier could not be made, and they had to adopt a mesh that would keep out rabbits that were old enough to travel. Not only was the initial cost of the 1¼-inch netting greater, but the netting was a good deal heavier, and the cost of carriage would be greater in proportion.

The HON. G. THORN asked whether there was any necessity for a vote for wire-netting, seeing that Mr. Pound had found an antidote to the rabbit pest. If the antidote was a success there was no need to saddle the country with enormous expense for wire-netting. Mr. Pound promised a speedy eradication of the rabbits some time ago. What did the Government intend to do if the experiments proved successful?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Mr. Pound denied having made the statement. If the experiments were successful there would be nothing left for the Government to do in the matter. The people affected would then have it in their own hands. Mr. Pound did not claim that his specific would eradicate rabbits altogether; he claimed that there was every reason to believe that wherever the rabbits were thick it would be found most efficacious in decimating them. His experiments were purely accessory to wire-netting.

Mr. SMITH: Have they to be fenced in before the specific is applied?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS :  
No.

Mr. KEOGH asked whether there would be any money available to assist farmers and selectors in fencing out marsupials, or were the squatting party to receive all this money?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : This vote was for rabbit-netting, and as far as he was aware no farmers were troubled with rabbits. When the farmers were prepared, like the lessees in the rabbit districts, to tax themselves for the purpose of keeping out pests with which they were troubled, possibly some feasible scheme might be adopted to enable them to do what they wanted. At present there was no provision for supplying netting except under the provisions of the Rabbit Boards Act.

Mr. BELL hoped the hon. gentleman would not be backward in carrying out any idea of a practicable nature to assist farmers and others, especially on the Darling Downs, in keeping out the marsupials. If it were possible to do so, he would endeavour to have an amendment inserted in the Rabbit Boards Bill giving the Government power to supply netting not only to large pastoralists but also to the smaller men who were prepared to put their hands into their pockets to keep out pests.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS was in entire sympathy with the object the hon. member had in view. Any holder of property in the rabbit districts could apply for netting under the Act. But part of the netting had to be some inches below the surface to keep out rabbits, and it must be made to resist, as far as possible, the decay mentioned by the hon. member for Bulloo. Such netting was expensive, and it would be a mistake for any farmer, who merely wished to keep out marsupials, to take advantage of the Rabbit Act.

Mr. SMITH : Cheaper netting could be obtained for the farmers than was required for rabbit-proof fencing. He would like to know what proportion of the expense of the netting was borne by the run-holders?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : They paid 5 per cent. on the amount. A portion of the vote was used for making advances to the rabbit boards for netting in anticipation of the amount which they would raise by way of taxation, but the amount advanced must not exceed the amount levied during the year.

Mr. SMITH presumed that the farmers who required netting would also be required to contribute 5 per cent. on the cost of the netting?

Mr. ARMSTRONG : If the farmers could get the netting at 5 per cent. on the cost they would be only too glad to do so. He thought the suggestion made was really a good one. It was quite unnecessary to have a very small gauge netting for marsupials, but it would have to be increased in height to make up for the increased mesh. A 4-inch mesh would be quite sufficient. What was the amount paid for the netting supplied to the boards? Some years ago he found that netting could be indented cheaper from England than it could be purchased in the colonies, and if the country was to bear the cost of exterminating rabbits it should do so at as moderate a cost as possible.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : The price paid for the netting was £25 10s. per mile. It was manufactured in the colonies, and he hoped before long it would be manufactured in Brisbane. That was the lowest price at which it could be obtained at present. All the English tenders were above the colonial tenders.

Mr. DANIELS : They had been told that the pastoralists taxed themselves, but he would point out that the farmers had no opportunity of taxing themselves for the purpose of protection against marsupials. If they were given

that opportunity they would only be too glad to do so. If it was right to give the pastoralists wire-netting at 5 per cent., it was right to give it to the farmers also. He should be glad to see a Bill brought in to enable them to tax themselves.

Mr. FOGARTY : The Secretary for Lands informed them that the pastoralists taxed themselves for the purpose of obtaining wire-netting, and that it was given to them at cost price and 5 per cent. added.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : No ; at 5 per cent. per annum.

Mr. FOGARTY : He gave that as a special reason why their claims were stronger than those of the farmers, but it was forgotten that there had also been considerable extensions of the leases to induce the pastoralists to fence. The farmer's land was freehold, and therefore he could not get assistance in that direction. He would suggest that matters might be equalised by charging the farmers 3 instead of 5 per cent. for the netting. He was pleased that the matter had cropped up, because it was time that a little attention was given to the unfortunate cultivators of the soil.

Mr. BROWNE : Hear, hear !

Mr. FOGARTY : The member for Croydon might "Hear, hear" as ironically as he liked, but the farming industry would be alive when Croydon was a place of the past.

Question put and passed.

#### AGRICULTURE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved that £19,613 be granted for agriculture. That was a very large increase on the vote of last year. But he felt certain that the Committee, seeing the purposes for which the increase was required, would not begrudge the expenditure. The first large increase was that of £900 for agricultural and horticultural societies, as to which he believed they were all pretty well agreed. Then there was an additional £500 as a grant in aid for reserves. Then followed a new item of £200 in aid of the propagation of trout and feathered game on the Darling Downs. There were few, he imagined, who did not desire the streams of our uplands filled with trout. In New Zealand the experiment had been remarkably successful. A friend of his, recently returned from that colony, had informed him that no fewer than 1,000 persons visited the particular district where he was, in one season, for the purpose of trout-fishing. Most of those were moneyed persons who went there for sport, and spent their money as sportsmen did.

Mr. DAWSON : Look at the climate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : Undoubtedly the climate of New Zealand was colder, but it was believed to be quite possible to acclimatise trout in the waters of the Condamine and the Severn. The Macintyre Brook he had heard spoken of as a typical trout stream. The temperature of the water had been tested by experts, and it was believed to be several degrees below what would ensure the success of the experiment. He thought the experiment was a step in the right direction, and the *bona fides* of the association which had undertaken the matter was evidenced by the fact that they were putting a large amount of money into it. The last two large items—£4,000 for the agricultural college, and £2,000 for the experimental and training farm—did not require any explanation. There were some salaries provided for six months. With regard to the fruit expert, that had been already explained. None of the other officers whose salaries were put down for a limited period had yet been appointed.

Mr. GROOM : The attempt to acclimatise trout in the waters of the Darling Downs would be

perfectly useless without a short Act to prevent the fish from being interfered with for some time after they were introduced. That had been done in New Zealand, Tasmania, and New South Wales, and had been followed by complete success. He would ask the hon. gentleman, now that 20,000 ova had already arrived in the Warwick district, whether he would, during the recess, prepare a short Bill to prevent the fish in those streams from being interfered with for a given number of years?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS had not gone into the matter himself, but he had an idea that they had power under the Fisheries Act to deal with it. If that was not so he would be only too glad to introduce a Bill giving the necessary protection.

Mr. GROOM did not think the Fisheries Act gave the power. In New Zealand and Tasmania anglers had to take out a license from the clerk of petty sessions, without which they could not fish. He naturally took a deep interest in the question, and was anxious to see the district utilised for the acclimatisation of birds and fishes; but he was satisfied that it would be necessary to introduce a Protection Bill if the experiment was to be the success they all desired.

Mr. ARMSTRONG said the most destructive agent in streams stocked with young fish was a bird known as the diver. It not only destroyed the fish but polluted the water. He hoped the Minister would consider whether something might not be done in the way of giving a bonus for the heads of divers, so as to rid the country of them as soon as possible.

Mr. SMITH agreed with the last speaker as to the destruction caused to fish by divers, and thought it would be well if some means were taken to destroy them. There was one item on the Estimate which he considered ought to be increased—the salary of the Colonial Botanist. He did not think they estimated Mr. Bailey's services at their true value. He did not know the gentleman himself, but he knew what he had done and what he was attempting to do. Mr. Bailey was a credit to the colony, and £300 seemed a very small salary for a man of his ability, and who put his whole soul into his work. He was very glad the Government had taken a new departure in appointing experts; they were necessary for the progress of the colony, and their appointment should be hailed with satisfaction by everybody. The amount proposed to be voted for the propagation of trout and feather game seemed infinitesimally small, and they should be prepared to spend more if they obtained satisfactory results. He would also be pleased to see steps taken to acclimatise the English songsters here, such as larks and thrushes. Experiments in that direction had succeeded in New South Wales, and he did not see why they should not succeed here.

Mr. KEOGH: There was nearly £4,000 down for salaries for officers in the department, and he would like to know if any appointments had been made in connection with the agricultural college. If they had, would the Minister allow the experts to give instruction to farmers and others now, seeing that it would be some time before the college would be ready? He noticed also that there was £125 down for the salary of a tobacco expert; he took it that that was for the next six months. From what he could learn, the growing of tobacco was almost at an end in the Warwick district, where it was only carried on by a few Chinamen.

Mr. DANIELS: The excise killed it.

Mr. KEOGH did not think it was a very good thing to employ an expert to teach a few Chinese how to grow tobacco. He understood that the greater quantity of the leaf now manufactured here was grown outside of Queensland; that very

little was grown about Warwick; and if that were the case he did not see that an expert was required.

Mr. STEPHENSON noticed that last year £1,500 was granted for agricultural and horticultural societies; this year the vote was increased to £2,400, but there was a footnote which said that the National Agricultural and Industrial Association was excluded from the vote. Lower down, however, there was a vote of £750 for the latter, which was the same as last year, and he should like to know how the £2,400 was allotted, and why the National Association was treated differently from other associations? Of course the latter was a more gigantic concern, but this differential system gave rise to a feeling of suspicion, and he should like to have an explanation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The only expert who had been appointed was the fruit expert, but the tobacco expert probably would be. The hon. member for Cambooya need not run away with the idea that the excise had killed the tobacco industry; what had killed the industry at Warwick was that the leaf grown there could not compete with the Texas leaf. There would be twice as much leaf grown at Texas this year as last year, and it would find a ready sale notwithstanding the fact that hundreds of tons of leaf grown in other parts of the colony were unsaleable. They had a great deal to learn in the matter of curing the leaf, but when they could do that he did not see why they should not be able to compete with any other part of the world. The £750 was a standing grant to the National Association.

Mr. GROOM: It was settled by Act of Parliament.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was in connection with the tenure of their property, and was paid to the Acclimatisation Society.

Mr. CALLAN noticed an item of £300 for the destruction of noxious weeds, and he wished to refer to the prickly pear. There was a reserve of some 640 acres close to Jondaryan, which was completely overrun with prickly pear, though twenty years ago he had camped stock on that reserve, and there was no prickly pear then. He understood that the divisional board had asked for no assistance from the Government, but the place was a hotbed for the diffusion of that most awful plant. The whole of the freehold land of Jondaryan surrounded the reserve, and was kept scrupulously clean. Unless some steps were taken to destroy it, even rabbits and ticks would bear no comparison with the destruction wrought by the prickly pear. It had extended from the head of the Dawson, and stations which a few years ago had had none of it were now being taken possession of by the prickly pear. He hoped the department would take the matter into consideration, otherwise it would be most serious for the colony.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW complimented the Government on having appointed a fruit expert. The appointment had not been made before it was wanted. There had been a telegram in that morning's *Courier*, stating that diseased fruit was being offered for sale in Maryborough. He did not know whether the fruit expert had taken office yet or not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW hoped he would take steps to have that fruit destroyed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We cannot do that without passing a Bill.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW hoped the expert would not sit in his office; but that he would travel about and teach the farmers how to grow fruit. Better oranges could not be produced anywhere in the colony than were grown in the

Maryborough district; but the growers had a lot to learn, especially in regard to the grading and exporting of the fruit. He hoped that the expert would realise their expectations.

Mr. GROOM asked the Secretary for Lands what number of acres had been set apart for the site and operations of the agricultural college at Gatton, how much the land had cost per acre, whether the £1,400 voted on the Loan Estimates was sufficient to cover the cost of the buildings to be erected, and in the next place whether any portion of the £4,000 in that vote would be used for the buildings, or whether the whole of that amount was to be devoted to the purposes stated in the Estimates? Also, he wished to know whether the agricultural college and the experimental and training farm were to be one and the same establishment, or were they to be separate?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not one.

Mr. GROOM: Then the experimental and training farm had not yet been determined upon?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It had not. The £1,400 on the Works Estimates was for furnishing the agricultural college buildings. The cost of the buildings themselves was being defrayed out of the £5,000 voted last year. The area of the land was about 1,700 acres, which had been set apart out of the Rosewood Estate, and £6,000 would be about the price, speaking from memory, which selectors would have had to pay for the land if they had taken it up.

Mr. GROOM asked if it would be paid for by debentures as a purchase under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Crown simply took the place of the selector, but he supposed it would be absolved from performing personal residence. He understood that the Treasurer proposed to pay for the land by debentures.

The HON. G. THORN congratulated the Agricultural Department upon having done wonders. It had been dinned into his ears that nothing had been done for the agricultural industry, but the Government had done a great deal in the past, and they proposed to do more in the future. He was pleased to see that it was proposed to employ tobacco, wine-making, and fruit experts. The sooner the latter got to work the better, as he had seen that a lot of diseased oranges were being offered for sale in Maryborough.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You cannot keep them out.

The HON. G. THORN: The Government ought to have power to prevent such fruit being imported. The hon. member for Rosewood had referred to tobacco. He regretted that the Moreton district and other parts of the Downs did not produce as good tobacco as was grown in the electorate of the Secretary for Lands. There could be no question of the quality of the Texas tobacco. Leaf grown about Texas and towards Wallangarra was worth twice as much as any other leaf grown in the colony. That was the information supplied to him by manufacturers in Brisbane. It was their duty now to find a market abroad. The Government were going the right way to work in appointing an expert. They lacked information as to its manufacture, and the same could be said of the wine. The Government did well to assist those things rather than what was commonly referred to as "agricultural produce." He was under the impression that the person who said that the Darling Downs could not grow a cabbage was not very far wrong after all, as he had seen an hon. member buying cabbages in Brisbane to take to the Darling Downs. They knew that the Downs could not produce cabbages, though on towards Stanthorpe they might be produced. He was tired of the praise of the Downs as an agricultural country being constantly dinned into his ears. If there

was one district in the colony which was not at all adapted for agriculture it was the district in and around Toowoomba. The Central and Western country could produce wheat as well as the Darling Downs, and he hoped that in a short time they would be exporting wheat very largely from all parts of the colony. With regard to the dairy expert he considered that gentleman's operations in teaching the farmers to make butter and cheese had done more good than anything else that had been done for the agricultural industry since the foundation of the colony. They could now make splendid cheese, as good as the English cheese. He was very glad to be able to say that farmers in his district who had their heads below water were now getting them above water, and were making a great deal more money by dairying from sixty and seventy acres than they had ever done before from ten times the amount of land with maize and other doubtful crops. Agriculture was a big industry, and the hon. member was right who said that it would live when the mining industry had disappeared. Miners were here to-day and gone to-morrow, but the agriculturist was tied to the soil. Mining members should recognise that, and admit that they could not look upon the mining industry with the same unalloyed satisfaction as the agricultural industry. He trusted the Government would go on in the way they were going, and that the hon. member for Rosewood would give them credit for what they had done.

Mr. GRIMES wished to give the Government credit for some of the items on the vote which he had never seen there before. One was for an agricultural chemist. As the fertility of some of our lands was now beginning to give out and it was necessary that the soil should be recouped what it had lost, the services of an agricultural chemist would be of immense value and would save their farmers thousands of pounds. He hoped that the services of that officer would be at the disposal of the farmers at a very cheap rate, that he might be enabled to give them analyses of their soils to show them in what they were deficient, and what were the best manures to supply the want. In this country the cost of putting the old-fashioned stable manures used in England upon the ground was too great, in consequence of the high rates of labour. He had no doubt that the artificial manures, though perhaps a little more expensive to purchase, would be found to be cheaper for use here than blindly going on with the old-fashioned methods of manuring. He was also pleased to see that provision was made for other experts. That was brought under the attention of the Government twelve months ago by a deputation from the farmers' representatives union. It was very desirable that they should have a fruit expert and a viticulturist. With regard to the tobacco expert, he rather regretted that they had allowed the very excellent expert previously employed to leave the colony. He was now in the service of the Government of New South Wales, and was doing good work. It might have been found that there was land suitable for the growth of the leaf in the district of Warwick, but experience had shown that the Texas country was eminently suitable for that industry. It required a peculiar soil for the growth of tobacco, and he hoped that the industry would largely increase in both these districts. The encouragement given to dairying by the Meat and Dairy Produce Encouragement Act had done a vast amount of good, and he was sure that that industry would prove one of the greatest in the colony. It had been sometimes said that the climate was against dairying, but by the use of refrigerating machinery they had now got over the difficulty in the manufacture of butter, and there was no

reason why they should not become exporters. He was sure that the amounts asked for in that vote would be cheerfully voted, and he trusted that good men would be appointed to fill the several positions.

Mr. BELL asked what arrangement had been made with regard to the appointment of a viticulturist?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS could not tell the hon. member what arrangements were proposed to be made, but he understood that nothing had been done pending the passing of this vote. In the case of the fruit expert it was necessary to anticipate the sanction of the Committee, because the gentleman appointed could not be obtained unless he was secured at once.

Mr. BELL hoped that when a viticulturist was engaged care would be taken that he came from the right country, because mistakes had been made in Australia before in engaging experts in wine-making from countries where conditions prevailed which did not operate in the colonies. If a viticulturist was brought here, he should be brought from France, where they made the best wines to be had in Europe, wines that could be produced here more easily than the wines of Italy. He should regard it as a very great mistake if a viticulturist were brought from Italy. With regard to the agricultural college, he considered that a great mistake had been made in the selection of the site. The general principle that should operate in the selection of a site for an agricultural college was that a place should be chosen where the conditions of soil and climate were such that the lessons taught the pupils would be of a character that could be safely applied to the largest extent of country. At the place where the college was now located they had conditions which operated only over a comparatively limited area of country, and moreover it was a well-settled district. They had large territories of land in Southern Queensland that had excellent soil and an excellent climate, but were only imperfectly settled—scarcely settled at all in an agricultural sense—and it would have been a wiser and more practical proceeding if the agricultural college had been located in one of those districts. If he had to choose a site, he should select one in the western or south-western end of the Darling Downs district, where they had conditions that operated over a very large portion of Southern Queensland, and where the pupils could learn lessons and make deductions that could be safely applied to any part of the country they might like to settle upon. However, it was too late now to say very much on the subject. He could only regret the choice which had been made.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It seemed to him that all other things being equal the most densely-settled agricultural district was the one where the college ought to be established, and not in a district where the population was sparse. A college was not wanted primarily for the purpose of inducing settlement on the land, which was a secondary object, but for the purposes of instruction. A vast proportion of agricultural work could be taught anywhere, and the site which had been chosen had been particularly selected because there were several things which could be taught there that could not possibly be taught in other places, as, for instance, drainage.

Mr. DAWSON: Name them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He had just named one. The complaint had been made that the land was not well drained; but the fact of it being swampy in certain portions was considered a recommendation because it would afford an opportunity of teaching

how to drain swampy land, and what might be done with it. The reason why it should be in a settled district was because there we had the largest number of students who could go to the college and then disseminate the information they acquired amongst their friends. Another thing, the college should be as near to Brisbane as possible because the experts were resident in Brisbane.

Mr. CHATAWAY: Why should they be?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Because Brisbane was the capital, and the Agricultural Department was centred in Brisbane, and it was necessary that the college should be within easy reach of the experts.

Mr. CHATAWAY: Why should not the college be the headquarters of the experts?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It would be the headquarters of a portion of them, but they would be the local staff.

Mr. SMITH thought the Government had acted wisely in establishing the first agricultural college in Southern Queensland, but he never supposed that one was more necessary in the South than in any other part of the colony. An agricultural college in tropical Queensland was much more necessary to teach young men the peculiar treatment of tropical products than a college in the South to teach the young idea how to grow the products of the South. A large extent of the colony within the tropics was at present non-productive for want of the knowledge required, and he hoped the Minister would take into his favourable consideration, at the earliest date, the establishment of an agricultural college somewhere within the tropics. Why should the experts be kept in Southern Queensland?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are not.

Mr. SMITH presumed that when the agricultural college in the South was established their duties would keep them there all the time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

Mr. SMITH: Unfortunately the people in the North had to find their own experts, and there was hardly a large plantation of any consequence without an agricultural chemist.

Mr. KEOGH agreed that the situation of the agricultural college was not what it ought to be, and he knew the country very well. The Minister spoke of teaching the young idea how to drain land; but in flood-time that swampy land was covered with two or three feet of water, and he did not see how drainage could do much good on land of that description. There were several sites that it would have been better to purchase for a college than the one selected. The Minister also said that the land was the centre of a thriving agricultural district. That contention was correct, but he believed that so far as farmer's sons were concerned there would be very few of them as pupils at the college. He believed a boy of sixteen years of age was worth £16 a year to a farmer, but the pupils were to be charged £25 a year. No doubt that seemed cheap enough, but there were few farmers in West Moreton who could afford to pay that amount for their sons' education, and those who would derive the greatest benefit would be the sons of merchants and lawyers. He was informed by a young man who was educated at the Sydney Agricultural College that not 5 per cent. of the students there were sons of farmers. Most of the information derived would be upon the questions of soils and machinery, and when a boy returned home his parents would not be able to find the necessary money to supply him with machinery. He was therefore perfectly satisfied that so far as the agriculturists were concerned the college



would be a failure. The hon. member for Fassfern, backed up by the Minister, intimated that the Texas tobacco was some of the finest grown in the world. He would not say it was not, but he asserted that tobacco was being manufactured and sent to market which was hardly fit for consumption. Persons would far rather pay 6s. 6d. a lb. for American leaf tobacco than 3s. for the colonial article. It was to be hoped that the expert would be able to inform people how to manufacture the tobacco leaf properly, so that it could be made a marketable article. With regard to the butter expert, that gentleman must be given credit for excellent work. Some time previous to his advent butter obtained in Brisbane could be smelt fifty yards off, but a very good article was now produced. Matters could be still further improved by the Government establishing more cold stores in places like Toowoomba, Ipswich, and Maryborough, instead of only having one cold store in Brisbane. Very large quantities of butter were still being imported into Queensland, and that could be remedied if more cold storage was available in the various towns along the coast.

Mr. DAWSON very much regretted that the hon. member for Dalby did not pursue his question in regard to the site of the agricultural college. He thought they ought to have a fuller and clearer explanation from the Minister of the reasons for the selection of the present site, when 500 acres were offered free to the Government upon Canning Downs.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I understand that offer was withdrawn.

Mr. DAWSON: There was also a large block of land available in the Cambooya district, and which would have been a very suitable site; but the Government had preferred to purchase an estate in the Rosewood. The reply of the Minister to the hon. member for Dalby was that many things could be taught at the present site which could not be taught elsewhere. He led them to believe that ordinary agriculture could be taught almost anywhere.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The great bulk of it.

Mr. DAWSON: But that there were other matters that could be better taught in the Rosewood district than in any other district of the colony. He asked the hon. gentleman to name those other things, and his reply was that there was a swamp on the site selected. It was a fine object lesson right under the walls of the college, and the pupils could be taught how to drain land. But the most peculiar thing about it was that they had carefully selected every bit of land outside the swamp for the agricultural college, and the swamp was thrown open for selection by the general public. They had not even got the swamp to practise on. He wanted fuller and more definite information why that particular site was purchased when there were large blocks of apparently better land offered to the Government for nothing. He was not satisfied with the explanation that there happened to be a swamp at Rosewood, and therefore they selected that site.

Mr. BELL did not pursue the subject he had raised for three reasons. The first was that as the hon. gentleman was not responsible for placing the agricultural college where it was, it would not be fair to criticise him to the extent of censure for what some other person had done. The second was that the college was there, and that it was very much too late to cry over spilt milk. The third reason was that he had no doubt the college, even where it was, would do some good work, and it had his best wishes. But he hoped the hon. gentleman would, as far

as he could, rectify the undoubted mistake of selection of site that had been made by placing some experimental farms in the districts to which he had alluded.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: It was perfectly true that there was a swamp on the land purchased by the Government for the agricultural college, and it was also true that up to the present no scientific instruction in drainage had been given in the colony; but it was not true, as stated by the hon. member Rosewood, that at times there were three or four feet of water over it, and that in consequence drainage there would have no effect. There was no portion of the land which was inundated to any extent, except in very high floods from the backwater of the creek. As to the land itself, there was perhaps no equal area in the colony that had more peculiarities. It contained the very highest class of agricultural land and the very lowest class; the very highest class of fruit-growing land with a natural drainage of gravel, and a very poor class—the site of the college—with a clay subsoil; and there was also the swampy ground. A more suitable spot could not be found for carrying out the numerous experiments required during the tuition of the pupils. With regard to the assertion of the hon. member for Rosewood that the college would be of no use to farmers' sons, what did it matter who was educated there as long as the education was agricultural? Dealing generally with the vote, he agreed with the hon. member for Mackay that there was really no reason why all the experts should be centred in Brisbane. What was wanted was to decentralise the experts as much as possible, and distribute them all over the country. The Secretary for Agriculture a few days ago informed the agricultural union that the fruit expert, Mr. Benson, would come to the colony with a complete spraying plant, and that his services would be immediately available for the fruit-growing districts of the colony. Of the next expert, the Colonial Botanist, he would say that the colony owed more to Mr. Bailey than to any other one person engaged in agriculture. He was the best officer Queensland ever had, and it was a very great pity that the information he possessed was not allowed to be distributed by means of reports as it should be. He had made a report upon the indigenous grasses of the colony which should have been issued with his report for last year, but owing to motives of economy it was not, and the Department of Agriculture would have to pay great attention to that subject—which was a most important one—in the near future. He agreed with the remarks made in reference to the dairy expert, and the institution of the travelling dairy, which was one of the most useful in Queensland. In regard to the exception which had been taken regarding the position of the National Association, he thought something would have to be done in the matter before the Government came down to ask for more money. The best way would be for the Crown to take control of the grounds and make it a national affair. The museum of the colony might be built there; Bowen Park and the Acclimatisation Society, which had outlived their utility, should also be reclaimed, and the whole place be turned into a Government possession, the annual exhibitions being controlled by commissioners appointed by the Government. There was a well equipped ground there on which experiments relating to rabbits, and so on, might be tried, and there would be ample time for such work, because the grounds were now idle for nine months in the year. The vote for noxious weeds was altogether inadequate, and what had been said by the hon. member for Fitzroy was absolutely true—that unless something was done

in the near future it would cost private individuals and the Crown a great amount of money to reclaim their lands. Altogether he congratulated the Government upon asking for a sum of money which would help to force the agricultural industry into the position it should occupy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he did not say, as the hon. member for Charters Towers had stated, that the site of the agricultural college was chosen to drain a swamp, but partly in order to demonstrate what might be done upon drained lands. He understood that Professor Shelton and the other experts would take up their residence at the college, and as for farmers' sons not being able to go to this college, as the hon. member for Rosewood contended, those in the electorate of that hon. member certainly ought to be able to do so. In fact he and the hon. member for Lockyer had less to complain about on that score than any other hon. members. It was not intended to charge more than £25 a year, which would cover everything except the boys' clothes. Nothing could be cheaper than that, and no farmer, if he could scrape the money together and had confidence in his son, could make a better investment than to send him there. The hon. member for Rosewood had said that only merchants and lawyers would be able to send their sons there, but it would be all the better if they were sent. Did the hon. member wish to perpetuate the race of lawyers in the city and bring farmers' sons here to get billets in town? He should have thought the hon. member would have been glad to see townsmen's sons going into the country to settle on the land. They could do nothing better, and he hoped to send one of his own sons there.

Mr. GROOM: If the hon. member reads the latest reports from America he will see that the majority of the students at agricultural colleges are not farmers' sons.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In Queensland farmers sent their sons to town to get into the police, the railway service, lawyers' offices, or anywhere where they might wield the pen instead of the spade. The situation of the experimental farms had not been decided. The Canning Downs offer had been withdrawn.

Mr. GROOM: After the site for the college had been fixed, not before.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The conditions had been so modified that they could not be complied with. Nearly all the objections that had been urged by hon. members were that the college was not in their particular districts.

Mr. CHATAWAY: I did not object to the site.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He took the hon. member's remarks to indicate that he thought any site near Brisbane would be objectionable. There were reserves at Emerald, Hughenden, Herberton and other places where experimental farms might be situated.

Mr. GRIMES: The residents in the neighbourhood of the college possessed an advantage which should be given publicity to. When the Secretary for Agriculture was laying the stump of one of the buildings, he stated that the sons of farmers in the district or elsewhere, who did not receive board and lodging in the institution, could receive instruction there for a merely nominal sum—£2 or £3 a year. Of course they would lose their time while attending at the college; but agriculture could not be taught by lectures in the evenings. They had to go through the practical work, and if they could receive such instruction for £2 or £3 a year it would be an immense advantage to the sons of small farmers in the district, or those who could find accommodation in the neighbourhood. The forty or fifty berths

in the college itself could be filled by the sons of well-to-do parents, and there should be as many more of the other class who did not reside in the college. He had not the least objection to the sons of merchants and lawyers attending the college. It would be a means of settling them upon the land, and their parents would be able to start them on such a scale that they would give employment to others. Those whom they employed were bound to derive benefit from the knowledge those young men had acquired at the college, and so their farms would become so many experimental farms, turning out men with a thorough knowledge of agriculture.

Mr. KEOGH: That has not been the experience in New South Wales.

Mr. GRIMES: It had been the experience both in New South Wales and Victoria. He had been at the Dookie experimental farm in Victoria. There were the sons of lawyers, doctors, members of Parliament, and other persons of that class at the farm, and those who did not afterwards engage in farming on their own account were greatly sought after to manage places for others. That would be the case in Queensland. The students at the college would be distributed all over the colony, and would thus be the means of imparting knowledge to others. He took it that the site chosen would not be the only one, but he believed that a greater variety of products could be grown on the 1,700 acres at Gatton than could be grown on a similar area on the Downs, because on the Downs there was not the same variety of soil. Other sites would have to be chosen, however. It was impossible to grow sugarcane at Gatton, and, as sugar was one of their principal agricultural products, there would have to be another site chosen where they could deal with the growth of tropical and semi-tropical products. The fundamental principles of agriculture, however, could be as well taught at Gatton as anywhere else, and once a person had been taught those principles a little experience would enable him to grow any crop. He had no hesitation in saying that the site had been well chosen. The selection of a site had been the great difficulty in the past, but the present Secretary for Agriculture had chosen the site soon after he had assumed office. In that he had shown his wisdom, because if he had waited he would have been beset with requests on all hands to select this or that site. He would like to know what progress had been made with the clearing and ploughing, and whether there was any cultivation attached to the farm?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: All the principal buildings were well on the way to completion, and there were thirty acres of land under the plough.

Mr. GROOM had interjected when the Secretary for Lands was speaking that the £750 voted to the National Association was fixed by statute, and he now desired to correct that statement. A portion of land taken from the Acclimatization Society was included in the grounds of the National Association, and the Act provided that in consideration of this the association should pay to the society £750 a year. Prior to the passing of that Act the House voted £500 a year to the association and £250 to the society; those two sums represented the amount the association had now to pay to the society. The House was now called upon every year to vote £750 to the association whether an equal amount was collected from local contributions or not, and some information should be given with respect to the position of the association before that money was voted. The association received a loan of £30,000 to put up building and other improvements, and they had never paid a penny of interest on that loan.

The arrears now amounted to some thousands of pounds, and hon. members were still called upon to vote this £750, though the published returns from the annual show held by the association showed a handsome profit. The Auditor-General's report showed that local authorities were most commendable in the way they met their obligations to the State in respect of loans, and yet here was an association receiving exceptional advantages from the State and failing to meet its obligations. The matter was a serious one, to which it was right that the attention of the House and the country should be directed, and he hoped the Treasurer would be able to give the Committee some information on the subject.

The TREASURER: The hon. member was quite correct in his statements with regard to the National Association. Some six years ago, with the approval of Parliament, they received a loan of £30,000, and from that time to the present they had never paid a farthing either of interest or redemption, the amount now in arrears being some £6,000 or £7,000. He was sorry to have to state this, but as a matter of fact it was published every six months by the Treasury with the *Gazette* notices showing the position of the loans to local authorities. This loan was in a different position to loans to local authorities, because in their case the Treasurer could go in and collect the rates and pay the Treasury from them. What he could do in that case he did not know. He could take possession of the property, but whether it would pay him to do that or not he did not know; he did not think it would. He doubted very much whether it would be wise to take possession of the property and run it from the Treasury. He did think it was not very creditable to the capital of the colony to have got that money and then allow their financial position to get into the state it was in now. It was their duty to make an effort in some way to put matters on a much more sound financial basis. He had done all he could to impress that upon the managing committee, but so far without any effect. No doubt for a few years back they had been working under very great disadvantages; that was to say, there was very little money available for ordinary expenditure, and their exhibitions probably had not returned what was originally anticipated. Still for all that they did not seem to make any effort even to pay interest on the money borrowed. He would be perfectly willing to allow of the postponement of the payment of the redemption money if they would only pay the interest. With regard to the £750 that had been voted annually since passing of the Act, it was an understanding come to by the House at that time. The land upon which the Exhibition buildings were situated was originally the property of the Acclimatisation Society; they had a claim upon the land still, and that claim was met by this vote of £750. The £750 did not therefore go into the funds of the association, but was paid over by them half-yearly as rent for the use of the land they enjoyed from the society. Unless the vote had been passed as it had been, the Acclimatisation Society would have been without funds they had a right to expect. He forgot how long the arrangement was to last, but he saw no way out of the difficulty but that which he suggested—that they should resume the whole property, which he looked upon as a very bad investment. He did not see how they could work it except through the committee of the association itself, and if they could not make it pay interest on their debt he did not know who else could. It was a matter for the public to take up. For the credit of Brisbane, the Brisbane people should exert themselves and take

some steps by which the association would be placed in a position to meet their engagements and pay the interest on the £30,000.

Mr. CHATAWAY: What about the insurance? Is that in the Treasurer's name?

The TREASURER: He believed that the buildings were insured as one of the conditions of the mortgage. Independent of their debt to the Treasury, the association had also contracted a debt to the bank, and the bank had, he thought, the security of the organ.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: For £5,000.

The TREASURER: The property was a valuable one, and it was a great pity to see it in its present condition. If the people exerted themselves and managed the thing properly, there was still hope that it could be made a payable concern. One other proposition had been made; that was that the Government should resume the property, and convert the buildings into a museum, instead of building a new museum for which nearly £40,000 was borrowed some years ago.

Mr. GLASSEY: It would be in rather an awkward and inconvenient place.

The TREASURER: He did not know about that. He did not think that a museum ought necessarily to be in the heart of the city, and communication with the Exhibition Building was very good, both by tram and rail. It would, of course, require a good deal of expense to fit the buildings for a museum, because they were not built for that purpose. That proposition was under consideration, but what they should decide upon he could not say. He did not know of any other way in which they could utilise the buildings, but probably something would be done before long.

Mr. GROOM: The National Association Act was perfectly silent with regard to the House having given any guarantee that they would annually vote the society £750. There was merely an understanding, for which Sir Arthur Palmer was chiefly responsible, and he was the first to place the £750 on the Estimates. The question was whether the Committee was to go on voting this sum year after year in perpetuity? The association had not achieved any great results, and agricultural societies which were doing as good work—probably more useful work—only received 10s. for every £1 subscribed, while this association were voted £750 a year without any condition whatever. That, at 4 per cent., represented interest on £30,000. When the Bill was going through the House it was doubted whether the association would be in a position to redeem the £30,000, and it was suggested that if the frontages of the land were sold as building sites they would realise £40,000. Perhaps they would realise that now. At all events, they would realise a considerable sum, and the frontages could be disposed of without any detriment to the grounds, as they were not used at all in connection with exhibitions. The Act was passed in 1888, and the society was now in a worse position than it was when the buildings were erected, and there did not appear to be any prospect of their being in a position to pay the interest on the money borrowed, because whatever was the surplus of a show went in liquidation of their overdraft. Leaving the redemption money entirely at one side, the country had a right to have the interest on the £30,000 paid, and he would suggest that it should be made a condition in voting that £750 that for the future the society should make that interest a preferable debt to be discharged by the gate receipts. He was aware that the £750 was paid by the association to the Acclimatisation Society, but if the money was not voted by the Committee the association would be bound to

pay the Acclimatisation Society £750 every year, and there was no moral obligation on Parliament to vote the money.

The TREASURER wished the hon. member had been as wise when the Act was passed as he was now, and had made a better bargain on behalf of the country.

Mr. GROOM: It was a Government measure.

The TREASURER: Very likely it was, and very likely the hon. member was a supporter of the Government; but that he did not know. At any rate, the matter was very complicated now. The title to the land was not clear, as the Acclimatisation Society had a claim on the land for a number of years, under which they were entitled to £750 a year, and he presumed that the reason Parliament voted that amount was to see that the Acclimatisation Society got their proper dues. The question was: What was to be done? If the institution were taken over and worked by the Government, it might result in a big loss. The question was whether it was not better to put up with the loss they knew than risk one they did not know—whether it would not be better to leave things as they were. He hoped that the discussion would bear fruit, and trusted, for the credit of the people in and about Brisbane, that the institution would be put into a better financial position. The only thing was to appeal to them to make an effort to wipe out what was nothing less than a disgrace to the capital of the colony.

Mr. JACKSON thought the suggestion with regard to realising on the property was better than the suggestion that the building should be turned into a museum. Complaints had been made as to the situation of the agricultural college at Gatton. He remembered reading a suggestion that the college should be established at the Industrial Society's grounds; and he did not think it was a bad idea to have it within a reasonable distance of Brisbane. If it had been situated on the coast the culture of cane could have been taught, but there was not much prospect of being able to grow cane at Gatton. There was a sum of £150 down for an agricultural chemist. That represented a salary of £300 a year; and, seeing that it had been stated by the Attorney-General, the Premier, and the Secretary for Mines, who went to Honolulu some time ago, that the sugar-planters there give agricultural chemists £1,000 a year, the salary proposed here seemed ridiculously small. £300 was down for the dairy expert, and there was no comparison between the training required to produce a good agricultural chemist and that required to produce a dairy expert. The Government were taking a step in the right direction in establishing a place where boys could be taught agriculture, but he wished to know what sort of boys were going to be turned out from the college? In Germany, where these colleges were scattered all over the country, the agricultural experts turned out by them found openings as managers of estates; but in Queensland there was no opening for any large number of men of that class. It seemed to him that the college here would give too elaborate an education in agriculture, and that what was wanted was something not quite so advanced. The college would suit the sons of farmers who could afford to pay, but the ordinary working farmer could not afford to dispense with his boy's labour, and pay £25 a year besides; and while giving facilities to those who could afford to pay to send their boys to colleges, provision should be made whereby the sons of poor men could learn something about the practical working of a farm. Some years ago, when Mr. Cowley was Secretary for Lands, a scheme was put before the Government for extending the system of State nurseries.

It was proposed to take apprentices in and give a small pay to those who joined the farm, they being expected to do the work on it. It was calculated that the Government might, by an expenditure of £500 a year, provide for ten apprentices at each nursery. That system might be adopted in the South where something was wanted not quite so far advanced as the agricultural college. He hoped the Minister would explain the vote of £2,000 for experimental farms—whether he had any scheme prepared. He would also like to know whether the Government proposed to take up the scheme to which he alluded? The two Northern nurseries could be utilised for that purpose. Although he represented a mining constituency he took a great interest in agriculture, and thought that Northern boys should have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with tropical agriculture, which could not be taught at the college. There were any number of fairly well-to-do men among the mining class in the North who would be glad of the opportunity of giving their sons a practical insight into tropical agriculture, but even if those parents could afford to send their sons down South to the college the information gained would not be of much use in their Northern homes.

Mr. O'CONNELL: With reference to the agricultural college, after listening to the remarks of the hon. member for Dalby, he wondered how the Government could pick a site which to a certain extent would not be open to the same objections which the hon. member had to the site at Gatton. The hon. member contended for a site on the Darling Downs, and said that boys going away from the Gatton college would not have acquired the same information as would have been obtained if the site had been elsewhere. But that objection held good no matter what site was chosen. Climate and soil varied greatly, and the pupil would not gain the same knowledge as if he had an opportunity of going to several experimental farms in different portions of the colony. As far as he could see the site chosen was fairly fertile, and it would grow most crops likely to be grown on the coast side of the range. Even wheat had been grown there, and there seemed to be a far larger range of wheat-land in the colony than was generally supposed. Even at Bundaberg, and as far north as Mackay, experimental patches had been grown. The land would grow lucerne to perfection, and undoubtedly the scholar would get an insight into the effect of the climate at Gatton as compared with the Downs climate on that crop, for on the Downs last winter lucerne was severely frost-bitten, whereas it was comparatively slightly frosted at the Gatton college. There were a variety of crops which he hoped to see grown at the college, such as linseed, sunflower, and other things which might be the means of introducing new industries and assist the farmers in changing their crops. As a member for a sub-tropical constituency he sympathised with the remarks of those members who said that nothing had been done with regard to helping experimental farming in the tropical portions of the colony, but he was not selfish enough to in any way decry the efforts of the Ministry because they had not seen their way to establish an experimental farm in the district of Bundaberg or some more Northern portion of the colony. A request was made some years ago that an experimental farm might be established at Bundaberg, because, as pointed out by the planters' association, a cane which might be very well suited to Mackay or Cairns might not be suited to the district of Bundaberg. The climate might affect it so much that it could not be grown there profitably. He would

I like to see an experimental station at Bundaberg under the paid supervision of some man who could be trusted to see the work properly done and give reliable data. He hoped that next year the Minister would see his way to do something to allay the feeling prevailing amongst most hon. members representing sugar-growing districts that their industry—the largest agricultural industry in the colony—was not to receive any consideration from the Agricultural Department. An industry which contributed so largely to the employment of labour and the circulation of money was worthy of the greatest attention the department could pay to it. The hon. member for Kennedy talked about the possibility of persons getting over-educated at the college and becoming useless as agriculturists, as there would be no employment for them. He hoped the young men who went to the college would come away not only with a knowledge of scientific agriculture but with an acquaintance with every practical detail of farm work. He understood that at the Cirencester Agricultural College in England, the students had to do everything in the shape of manual work on the farm, such as cleaning and harnessing horses, looking after the farm implements, and so on. Then they were promoted to the higher branches of agricultural labour, and in the last year's course they were sent to market to buy what was wanted, and sell what they had been growing during the year. Such a course of instruction in Queensland would be invaluable; and if at the end of a student's term he found no employment available, he could take up land and do something for himself. The last number of the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England contained the examination paper set for agricultural students to pass; and really any young man who could pass in such a paper must be a most useful and valuable man. There was no doubt the college would be the means of disseminating through Queensland a lot of very useful information, which would result in a much more scientific system of farming than was at present possible, and show the people in the old world that if they chose to come out to the colony and take up land they could make a profitable living when they arrived here.

Mr. GROOM: Some varieties of American wheat were distributed amongst farmers for this season's crop. He did not know whether the Minister had received any report on the subject from the Professor of Agriculture, but practical farmers had informed him that they had been an utter failure, and that the Allora Spring wheat had proved itself to be the best variety. Seeing that they were sending away from the colony more than £500,000 for breadstuffs, every endeavour should be made to induce farmers to go in for something more than growing horsefeed. Up to the present the Agricultural Department had not given the best information obtainable with regard to the varieties of wheat that would stand the climate of Queensland. Formerly the question was, What is the wheat that will best resist rust? After the bitter experience of droughts of the last two years the question was, What is the wheat that will best stand droughts? The present season had proved conclusively that, as far as the Darling Downs was concerned, the Allora Spring wheat was the best variety. In Canada the question was receiving great attention, and from an official document he held in his hand it appeared that the Agricultural Department of Ontario had no less than fifty-five varieties of spring wheat, some of which had stood the tests for four or five years in succession, and yielded an average of twenty-six to twenty-eight bushels per acre. He contended that the Agricultural Department

should find out the best varieties of spring wheat, so that our farmers, who were now going largely into that industry, might have the best information. It was to be regretted that the Secretary for Agriculture was not present to hear what was said by the representatives of the farmers upon this subject. This was one of the most important industries they could turn their attention to; and now there had been two bad seasons in succession and the wheat was being harvested, it would be very interesting if the officers of the department went round the various farms and took down the names of farmers, the kinds of wheat they sowed, the rainfall they had had, and the yield upon each farm. By that means they might be able to find out which were the best varieties to sow. In the majority of districts there were official returns of the rainfall available, and, as only about half an inch had fallen in some places since February, it would not be difficult to ascertain the amount. Even in places where the yield was only twenty bushels to the acre, it would be interesting to know the chemical constituents of the soil, and the department ought to be able to supply that information. In place of importing varieties of wheat which failed, there should be farms in which experiments could be tried. At Wagga Wagga, Dr. Cobb had something like 650 varieties; he had been able to disseminate the very best information amongst the wheat-growers as to what kinds would stand drought and rust, and so great was the demand for his wheat that even at the rate of 10s. a bushel he was not able to supply the demand. This was a most serious matter for the farmers who depended upon their wheat crop, and found that, although they had planted varieties that were said to be good, the crop was a failure and the season was lost. It was of the highest consequence that the Department of Agriculture should devote its utmost attention to the cultivation of wheat. He might be told that there were experimental stations at Killarney, Roma, Spring-sure, and Barcaldine, but they wanted something more than these small patches, and if the department would follow the example of Ontario in trying to ascertain the most suitable varieties, and distributed the information, it would be very useful. Whether the department would be able to carry out these experiments he did not know, but at any rate they required something more useful than they had at present. Another suggestion he would make would be this: They gave grammar school scholarships to State school boys, and they might well offer half a dozen scholarships during the next year to the agricultural college, the curriculum to be framed by the officials of the college. A number of young lads would by that means be initiated in agriculture very early, and those who obtained the scholarships would be very useful men in disseminating information later on. He hoped the Secretary for Lands would celebrate the commencement of his administration of the department by establishing these scholarships.

#### THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:

The question of scholarships was more a matter for the Secretary for Education than for the Secretary for Lands, but personally he thought the suggestion was a most admirable one, and no doubt it would receive attention. Like other institutions, the Department of Agriculture had fallen upon bad seasons, but some attention had been devoted to the question: Which were the most suitable kinds of wheat to grow here? and not less than 500 varieties had been tried at the various places to which the hon. member had referred. Unless they had a very large amount of money these individual experiments must necessarily be upon a small scale. Owing to the dry season the officers of the department

had been disappointed in having no seed wheat to distribute, and in not being able to report upon the best varieties to be grown in Queensland; but if the next season was anything like favourable they hoped to have some practical result from the large number of experiments they had been making. They would have a better chance of doing so, because they would have more funds at their command. The hon. member for Toowoomba was one of those who had for many years advocated the expenditure of more money upon such experiments, and since he (Mr. Foxton) had been in the House he had seconded the efforts of the hon. member. He was glad to think that they were apparently entering upon a new era. As regards the American wheat which had had to be imported, he wished to set the matter right. Expecting a shortage of seed-wheat for the present season, the Agricultural Department had ordered 2,000 bushels through the Agricultural Department of New South Wales; but only 345 bushels had been delivered, although they had been led to believe that the full quantity would be obtainable. It was then necessary, as many farmers were depending upon that wheat for sowing, to see where else seed wheat could be obtained, and the only way it could be done was to get it from millers who had imported American seed wheat for their private purposes. Probably now that the department had improved financially, it would be able to deal with those matters in a more satisfactory manner for the future. The department had received no information as to failure of any of the imported wheat. The hon. members for Kennedy and Musgrave had referred to the question of experimental farms. He had stated at an earlier period of the evening that there were several sites under consideration by the Secretary for Agriculture. Only the other day a very large area had been reserved in the neighbourhood of Emerald. There was also a reserve at Hughenden, he thought two at Herberton, and one somewhere else.

Mr. JACKSON: What are you going to train at the experimental farms? Boys?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Boys, he supposed. They would carry out experiments. The hon. member spoke of apprentices who would receive small wages. Well, the students at the college would be apprentices, but they would get no wages. They would have to work just as hard as any apprentices. He was in hopes that the inducements offered in connection with the experimental farms would be so great that ultimately lads would be willing to go there also without wages for the sake of the knowledge they would acquire. At the college the whole of the work would be done by the students. There would be no shirking work or kid-glove business about it. It was desirable that they should make the college pay, and they would then have some inducement to start colleges in other parts of this vast territory. The debate had proved that it would be desirable to have half a dozen colleges or experimental farms throughout the colony.

Mr. DANIELS could not help noticing the interest which hon. members showed in the farmers, and the trouble the department took to encourage the farmers, more especially the wheat farmers on the Darling Downs. Last year the wheat crop had been such a failure that it had been necessary for the department to import seed wheat from America; but though they had been told by the Premier that the farmers would get it for 2s. 6d. or as low as 1s. 6d. a bushel, yet they had had to pay 6s. a bushel. Then instead of being charged the railway rate for which wheat was brought from the Downs, they were charged the highest rate, and the seed was bad at that. The hon. gentleman had stated that the department

had received no information as to whether the imported wheat had failed. Well, if the department had been anxious to get such information, it could very easily have got it. Local wheats, such as Allora Spring, and in some cases Purple Straw and New England, had been a success, but on no part of the Downs, where he had been lately, had they got a crop from the imported wheat. What was the reason of the failure he could not say. With regard to the agricultural college, the hon. member for Kennedy approved of the college, but he said that the students would not take to farming themselves—they would be too highly educated for that. If an agricultural education would not enable a man to make farming pay, then it would not pay anyone else to hire him. He never was a great believer in agricultural colleges, but he was a believer in experimental farms, which could be made self-supporting from the start. Given the pick of a piece of land and an advance of money, he would manage the farm, pay the State 5 per cent. interest, and pay all the labour he required fair wages. Some hon. members seemed to think that would be a great concession, but here they were voting a sum of money for what was practically the same thing, when they were told that it was not going to be self-supporting. They could get practical farmers to manage experimental farms at about £250 a year. If they wanted their soils analysed they could send them down to the agricultural chemist of the department, who would say what they were likely to produce, and his own practical knowledge of farming would teach the manager how to cultivate his crops. Young men wanting a farming education would gain a great deal of knowledge on those farms, which could be so worked that the students should participate in the profits after the State received 5 per cent. on the money advanced. Under those conditions they could have separate farms in different parts of the country, and they could grow wheat, sugar, or whatever produce was suitable for the district. The students could be shifted from one farm to another, and in a few years they would have a practical knowledge of two or three kinds of agriculture. With regard to the farm at Gatton, the hon. member for Lockyer told them that if they went a mile or so from the railway line they would see some good land; but a man could not go a mile from the land except in dry seasons unless he took a boat with him. It was a ridiculous position for the Government to be placed in that they should have to repurchase land for an agricultural college. They were paying £5,000 a year for men to induce people at home to come out to Queensland with a view to settling on the land, while they practically acknowledged that they had not land enough for an agricultural college without repurchasing it from private owners at a high price. There had been good offers of land for the purpose at Canning Downs, and he thought Yandilla, and they had Crown lands at Cambooya and elsewhere which could have been used for the purpose, and so saved that money. In order to encourage farmers starting wheat-growing in new districts the department should supply the seed free, or at half-price, and they should make no charge for the carriage of the seed. Nothing of that kind was proposed, and it seemed to him that those agricultural colleges and experimental farms were wanted to find billets for men who said they had a lot of knowledge of farming but did not intend to farm themselves. They preferred to tell others how to do it, because if they were asked to do it themselves they knew they would fail. With respect to noxious weeds, they had millions of acres covered with them, and as close in as the Jondaryan railway station

they had land covered with the prickly-pear. If the Government wanted to do away with that pest why did they not say that they would give the land in fee-simple to anybody who would clear it, and let them start on it.

Mr. KING: How much of it?

Mr. DANIELS: As much as they could clear—100,000 acres if they cleared it; and if they put the land under cultivation it would pay the State well.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON did not intend to say more on the question of agricultural colleges than to state that he was glad that a commencement had been made. With the increase in agricultural settlement people would not have been satisfied if some attempt had not been made in that direction. He hoped it would prove successful, but to give it a fair trial similar institutions would have to be established in other parts of the colony where different climatic conditions existed. They could hardly tell what benefits would accrue from the establishment of the agricultural college in the Lockyer electorate, but it was a commencement in the right direction, and he hoped that in time similar institutions would be created in other portions of the colony, where instruction would be given in tropical agriculture. He considered that vote a very important one indeed, for agriculture must be the foundation of the true and permanent prosperity of the country. He regretted very much that there was not in that Chamber a representative of the Agricultural Department, such as they expected would be appointed under the Officials in Parliament Bill passed this session. When they were discussing that measure two distinct promises were made by the Premier, one to himself and one to the hon. member for Bundaberg, that the Minister conducting that most important and growing branch of the public service would have a seat in that Chamber, and it was on that understanding that some members assented to the Bill. He must express his surprise that the question submitted to the hon. gentleman by the hon. member for Bundaberg did not elicit a more straightforward reply as to the appointment being made without unnecessary delay. The subject was a somewhat unpleasant one to deal with, and it required a certain amount of moral courage to open it up, because similar remarks might appear to be a reflection upon the gentleman who at present administered the Department of Agriculture. He wished it to be distinctly understood that that gentleman had earned the commendation of agriculturists by the attention he had given to the department, by the ability he had displayed, and by his enthusiasm in agriculture. At the same time it would be more satisfactory if the Minister conducting the department were present in that Chamber to listen to the debate, and answer questions with reference to the department, as he would be able to reply more fully to the opinions expressed by hon. members than the Secretary for Lands could be expected to do, though he had very efficiently discharged the vicarious duties imposed upon him. He hoped that when the Committee were again asked to deal with that question the department would be represented by a Minister in that Chamber.

Mr. CHATAWAY: Although the hon. member who had just sat down appeared to think that because the Minister for Agriculture was not in that Chamber they were talking in vain, he had sufficient faith in the gentleman at present in charge of the department, who took an interest in agriculture generally, to offer a few remarks on the Estimate. Two years ago he suggested that the salary of the Under Secretary should be £600 instead of £500. That officer

had a reputation which was almost world wide. Not long ago they had two visitors from Cape Colony and he had lately had the pleasure of reading the report which they presented to the Cape Parliament, in which Queensland was congratulated upon the possession of such a valuable Under Secretary as Mr. McLean. A good deal of the space devoted to Queensland was taken up with laudation of that gentleman, and of the wisdom of the Government in employing a man who had himself been a practical and successful farmer. Under those circumstances, the salary of that officer, in consideration of his increased duties and the energy with which he applied himself to them, should be increased to £600. He was allowed £100 a year for travelling expenses, and that amount was all expended. It appeared somewhat invidious that that amount should be allowed, and that that sum exactly should be spent. The £100 should be added to his salary, and he should be allowed travelling expenses at scale rates. With reference to the agricultural college, the hon. member for Musgrave had said that one of the first questions put to students at Cirencester College was, "Describe what you would do with a 400-acre farm." If that question were put to the Instructor in Agriculture and he were to write a reply, a more valuable pamphlet could not be issued by the department. He would show just what could be done with a 500-acre farm—what crops could be grown, what profits might be expected in ordinary seasons, what could be made out of cows, wheat, maize, and so on. Coming to the Colonial Botanist, he was not going to say anything about that gentleman's merits, which were known to the world, but he wished to point out that there were works of his which were out of print, and which were of the greatest value. Mr. Bailey had at his command special knowledge which he could not hand on to anybody else orally, and the department should encourage him to go on with what was probably the *magnum opus* of his life and bring out another edition of his "Synopsis of Queensland Flora," which was a credit to Queensland. "The Ferns of Queensland" was a very valuable book of plates edited by Mr. Bailey. It was sold at 2s. 6d. at the Government Printing Office; but he did not see why it should not be given to some booksellers to sell, because it would sell like wildfire in the shops. The hon. member for Kennedy took some exception to the salary put down for the agricultural chemist, but the hon. member was making some mistake. A first-class analyst could be got for £400 a year, and a very fair analytical chemist for £300 a year. He was sorry that the report of the Under Secretary for Agriculture did not allude more fully to the disastrous condition of the tobacco-growing industry. The quality of the leaf had been deteriorating for some time, and manufacturers told him that it was not worth buying, though they could get it practically at their own price. In New South Wales, through the industry getting into the hands of Chinamen and other careless cultivators, the price fell as much as it did here, and tobacco had lately been grown at the experimental farm on the Richmond River by the department. The report on the experiment stated that the leaf sold at 1s. per lb., while the current prices in Sydney for colonial leaf were from 2½d. to 5d. per lb. That showed that if growers would grow good leaf there was still a price to be got; and if the tobacco expert who was to be brought here could induce people to believe that it was not the quantity but quality that would command a market and ensure a profitable return he would be well worth his money. So much praise had been bestowed on the dairy expert that he need only say that he believed no officer in the department had given



so much value for the money he had received. The Secretary for Lands seemed to think that he took exception to the site of the agricultural college; but he thought it was admirable, and from what he had seen he believed that part of the land was suitable. It had been said that there was nut-grass on it, and in connection with that he referred hon. members to the report of the Under Secretary for Agriculture. In that report he read that nut-grass was an exceedingly valuable mulch. He should like to make this clear, because the report of the Botanic Gardens was bound up with the Agricultural Department's report, and went forth as an official document, and it might happen that some innocent farmers coming to Queensland might be tempted to plant nut-grass round their orange-trees as a valuable mulch. He should like to warn people that nut-grass, as far as the opinion of experienced agriculturists was concerned, was not as valuable as represented. [The hon. member here read an extract from the report of the Curator of the Botanic Gardens, in which it was contended that nut-grass was a valuable mulch, and acted as a ventilator of the soil.] There was no need to import nut-grass to the agricultural college, because it was already there; they could, therefore, in future dispense with all other mulches, and there would be no necessity to employ farmyard manure. There was a vote of £2,000 on the Estimates for experimental farms, and the hon. member for Kennedy was on the right track when he spoke on the subject. There was certainly no need to complain of want of liberality towards the Agricultural Department this year, and they could only hope that the money would be spent so as to give permanent and valuable results. With reference to apprentices on agricultural farms, he knew what had been done in the way of agricultural colleges in other parts of the world, and the fear that farmers' sons would not go to them was quite justified. Agricultural colleges filled all over the world, because there were many men with sons of sixteen or seventeen whom they did not know what to do with. They saw the boys were no good, and they sent them to the agricultural colleges, knowing that if they did them no good they would do them no harm and might give them a taste for agriculture. The Hawkesbury agricultural college was more or less a show place, and in New South Wales all efforts in the direction of the expansion of the agricultural department were in the experimental farms. Hundreds of farmers journeyed every month to the demonstrations at the Wagga Wagga experimental farm, and they learnt more in half an hour than a boy learnt at a college in two years. In New South Wales they were adopting the apprentice system, giving the boys a small salary and making them work. That had been forced upon them by the necessities of the case, because there were constant applications from boys who knew a little of farm life for further instruction. Those interested in wheat could learn something about it at the Wagga Wagga farm, and there were other farms where those interested in silk culture, fruit culture, canning, preserving, and jam-making could gain experience. There was also the Richmond River farm, where a knowledge of cane culture could be obtained. What the hon. member for Kennedy suggested was that they should follow on the same lines. Of course they were bound to have an agricultural college. Few people would be contented unless they had one and spent plenty of money upon it, but he had always opposed such expenditure. He only hoped that good results would accrue from the expenditure. He would like to suggest to the Department of Agriculture that the time

had arrived when they should have an agricultural bulletin or journal. In a country like this, where the distances were great and people could not get about with ease, such a publication would be of the greatest value. Everyone interested in agriculture knew the journal issued by the Agricultural Department in New South Wales. South Australia and Tasmania each had their journal, and even Western Australia had a capital little journal published monthly. The expense could not be very great, and the department might take into consideration whether, in view of the increased importance of agriculture, something of the same kind might not be done here. He was sorry to hear from the hon. member, Mr. Groom, that up to the present no real decision had been arrived at as to what was the best wheat to grow in the colony. Persons coming from distant parts had always thought, in their innocence, that if there was one subject that had received the attention of the department it was that of wheat. They knew that it always occupied the largest portion of the reports of the Under Secretary and of the Instructor in Agriculture. It was, however, satisfactory to hear that Allora Spring wheat—which was in existence, under another name, before the department itself—still held its own as the best. With regard to the £750 for the National Association, he was surprised to hear the Premier say they ought to appeal to the honour and good feeling of that body to pay what they owed. In his opinion it would be a waste of time to do anything of the sort. He should vote for the £750, because if it was withdrawn it would be a very serious handicap to one of the most deserving institutions in the colony—the Acclimatisation Society.

Mr. GROOM: The Acclimatisation Society has already issued a writ against the National Association for £180.

Mr. CHATAWAY: And yet they were asked to appeal to the honour and good feeling of the association to pay its debts!

Mr. STEWART: Considering the present and prospective importance of the agricultural industry, the Government might very well have spent more money in instructing people how to till the land than they had hitherto done. He was glad to see that this session they were increasing the expenditure, though it was questionable whether the money would be spent as effectively as it might be. With regard to the agricultural college, he did not intend to go into the merits and demerits of the site, for whatever site might have been chosen would not suit everybody. The people of Southern Queensland ought to be contented; they had got their college, and they had been promised experimental farms. But if the £4,000 had been expended in doubling the strength of the Agricultural Department it would have been put to a much better use than in erecting a building which, as some practical members had said, would be of very little benefit to the farming community. If any department was undermanned it was the Agricultural Department. It had very few officials, while the area of the country was great, and the agricultural industry one of the very first importance. There was only one instructor in agriculture in the colony, and no matter how able he was or how much he exerted himself he could not cover the whole of the ground. There was only one chemist, only one fruit expert, only one botanist, only one entomologist. There was room for at least two instructors in agriculture, three or four fruit experts, and a couple of entomologists and botanists. But as soon as the college was established the country would be even worse served by the department. Mr. Shelton would have to be in close attendance at the college, and



all the expert would be more or less there; and if they were there, they could not be at the call of people in different parts of the country who desired to consult them. He shared the opinion of those who urged that the Secretary for Agriculture should be a member of the Assembly. He ought also to be a man able to devote the whole of his time to the business. They did not want to have a lawyer holding the position, whatever his knowledge of farming might be. Farmers would scoff at the idea of a lawyer holding the portfolio of agriculture. They wanted a practical man in the position—a man who could command the confidence of the country; a man who would not be tied up by his business in Brisbane, but would be able to travel all over the colony. A salary of £1,000 a year ought to command a man's entire services, and he was sure there were members in the Chamber quite capable of filling the position. That being the case, and seeing that they had a promise from the Premier that the Minister would be a member of this House, it was high time that promise was carried out. He did not wish to enter into the details referred to by previous speakers, but contended that the Central district had been most scandalously ignored in the Estimates. There was £200 for the propagation of trout and feather game on the Darling Downs, but not a single cent for the promotion of agriculture in the most important Central division of the colony.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How do you know?

Mr. STEWART: They had a share of the officials, but it was a very slight share, and he would give an instance. Recently they wanted the Government Entomologist near Rockhampton, and had a great deal of difficulty in getting him. He had received instructions as to how he was to spend every hour from the time he left the steamer until he got back, and his time was limited almost to the minute. He was hurried round the district, and had no chance of doing the work he was required to do. No doubt he did his work well so far as it went, but he was only two or three days there, and it was impossible to do justice to the district in less than three weeks or a month. That was an answer to the question of the Secretary for Lands, and now a great deal of the time of these officials would be occupied by the college, and they would be in a worse position than before if possible. They ought to have an experimental farm and a State nursery in the Central division. The Secretary for Lands said there was a reserve at Emerald which might possibly be turned into an experimental farm, but why "possibly"? They should certainly have it, and it was not wanted at Emerald either, but at some more convenient place where there was some agriculture. Emerald was 165 miles from Rockhampton, and all the agriculture in the district was within a radius of fifty miles from there. The reason why there was not much agriculture was that those engaged in it had not the benefit of the advice and assistance of experienced men, and it was on a very different footing from agriculture in the South, where there was a temperate or semi-tropical climate, and farmers from Europe did not find the difference so great. In the Central division they had a tropical climate; the men engaged in farming there were continually trying experiments, and they all knew what that meant to men with limited resources. They had to resort to the easiest and most profitable means of making a living; but if an experimental farm were started there the whole trend of agriculture would be changed. They had not received justice in this matter. There was an experimental farm at Mackay, and another at Cairns, and they should have one at Rockhampton,

especially as the Central district was one of the best fruit-growing localities in the colony. It was a matter of notoriety that people who wished to grow fruit had great difficulty in getting plants. Sydney firms sent up fruit-trees every year, but it had been found that, after the trees had been growing for years, they were not what they were said to be, and they often became diseased; whereas if there were a State nursery they would get the proper trees, and efforts would be made to keep them free from disease. The Government might well consider whether they could not afford to give the Central district this slight concession.

Mr. TOOTH expressed his disappointment that the Secretary for Agriculture should have a seat in another place, instead of on the Treasury bench in the Assembly. He was not at all satisfied with the work done by the department. He had this morning seen oranges exposed for sale in Maryborough which were infected with the disease called "black brand." He understood it was a most malignant disease, and if it once got a hold in Queensland it would be as great a scourge as either rabbits or ticks. The department knew that those oranges had been imported, but they had taken no steps to destroy them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: On what authority?

Mr. TOOTH: If the department had no power to destroy them, they might have power to buy them up. Even if it cost a few thousand pounds, it would be money well spent. If diseased cattle or if rabbits came into the colony from another colony, the Stock Department would use all the machinery at its disposal to destroy them; and if such attention was paid to the pastoral industry the same attention should be given to the agricultural industry. He did not wish to say anything against the officers of the department. No doubt they did the best they could with the machinery at their disposal, but they had an Instructor in Agriculture. He believed he went about the country lecturing to farmers, but that would do very little good. They wanted a practical man to show the farmers what they should do. If the instructor met a few farmers, in all probability one-half of them would not understand him, and they would go away just as wise as they had come. They ought to have a man who would go round and analyse soils. Many a man shed his very heart's blood in taking up land, clearing it, and cropping it year after year without any favourable result, simply on account of his ignorance of what the soil on his land was capable of producing. If they had a man who could tell the farmers what their land could produce, and what ingredients were requisite before they could profitably grow other crops, some good would be done. But if there was one time in the year more than another when the Instructor in Agriculture could get in touch with the farmers in a particular district, it was at the annual agricultural show. At the last show held in Maryborough the Instructor in Agriculture was certainly present judging exhibits, but he (Mr. Tooth) had seen him at the train on the very morning of the show, on the very day when all the farmers would be coming in from the surrounding district. He asked him where he was going to, and he replied that he had to leave for Brisbane, as the American mail was going out. Surely he could have made arrangements for that. With regard to the college, his opinion was that it would never turn out practical farmers, though it might turn out agricultural prigs. However, it might do a little good, but if they were going to stop there they would simply be throwing money away. They would require to establish State farms in all the agricultural centres, so that farmers'

sons could attend without having to leave their homes for any considerable time. Such farms should be managed by practical men at salaries of £200 or £250 a year. There should also be agricultural scholarships in connection with their State schools. A boy should first go to a grammar school for two years to learn the theoretical portion of agriculture. Then he should have three years at an experimental farm to learn the practical portion of his work. After that he should have an opportunity of taking up 160 or 200 acres of land wherever he chose, and should not be expected to pay anything for some considerable time. If he could not succeed as a farmer after all that, he should be exported somewhere else. Any practical suggestion that was made was always answered by the cry that there was no money, and that was another reason why they were disappointed that the Secretary for Agriculture had not a seat in that House. He believed that at least one-third of the members of the House represented *bonâ fide* agricultural districts, and it was a very poor compliment to them that the Secretary for Agriculture should be in another place. Three years ago he represented to the department the great benefit that a cane experimental farm in the Isis Scrub would be. He mentioned the Isis Scrub as being most central for the Wide Bay and Burnett districts, and in touch with the whole district by rail. He had no hesitation in saying that if that farm had been established three years ago it would have paid hands down in the sale of varieties of cane to the farmers. One firm in the district had spent hundreds of pounds in importing a better class of canes than those which had been grown in the colony; and on their plantation he had seen cane growing every stick of which he was told had cost £1. With that example, it did not require much calculation to show how such a farm as he had suggested would have paid. One thing the department deserved great credit for was the issue of valuable bulletins, which were well got up and well worth reading. But the greater portion of them were to be found in the departmental storeroom; the department refused to issue them in fifties and hundreds to agricultural societies prepared to distribute them. In connection with the important question of the exportation of live cattle, the Agricultural Department might have tried to manufacture some kind of portable fodder. If they wanted a hint he would give it to them. Molasses could now be got from most of the large central mills for the cost of taking it away, and the sweet potato here was almost a weed. He was led to believe that a very good cattle-cake could be made from sweet potatoes and molasses, and he would like to see the department spend a few pounds in seeing whether that could be done. He would not oppose the vote, and was only sorry it was not double the sum put down for it.

The PREMIER rose to make a few observations with respect to what had been said regarding the appointment of a new Minister, as there seemed to be some misapprehension as to the effect of the Act passed this session. The previous Act provided for the appointment of seven Ministers. The Act passed this session increased the number to eight. Some hon. members seemed to think that the passing of the Act made it compulsory to immediately appoint a fresh Minister, but the Act did not say anything of the sort. Like the question put in passing sums on the Estimates "not to exceed" a certain amount, the Act said, "The Governor may from time to time by proclamation declare any officers of the Crown, not exceeding eight in all"; and it went on to say that seven of the eight must be members of the Legislative Assembly—simply saying what everyone knew before, that one

Minister should be a member of the Upper House, and all the rest members of the Assembly. He had never understood the Act to make the immediate appointment of a fresh Minister compulsory, and he did not think that was the intention when it was passed. It would be a very awkward thing to have a fresh Minister appointed during the session, and particularly to appoint a new man to a new office that had just been created.

Mr. GLASSEY: All the more necessary to have a fresh Minister for a fresh department.

The PREMIER: He thought not, for the reason that any person who undertook to establish a fresh department ought certainly to have had some previous experience in administration. It was not natural to expect that a man who had had no experience of administration could organise a new department in the way in which it ought to be organised. He had had no complaint as yet with regard to the present Minister for Agriculture. So far as he knew that gentleman had the esteem of the whole of the colony, and he was organising the new department with all his ability and the advantage of a very large experience in administration. He did not think they could have been more fortunate than they had been in getting a gentleman like him to undertake the duty. He had stated when the Bill was before the House that he understood the Minister for Agriculture was to be a member of the Assembly. Some hon. members seemed disappointed because they had not even in the present session a Minister of Agriculture present to heckle.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: There is no Minister for Agriculture yet, except in the *Gazette*.

The PREMIER: There was, and *de facto* also.

Mr. HOOLAN: There are half a dozen in the looking-glasses.

The PREMIER: He put the matter plainly before the House, and it did not matter whether it was his intention to have that Minister in the Assembly or not.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He will be here whether or no.

The PREMIER: That might be so, and it might not. Even if one was appointed tomorrow, and he was a member of the Assembly, hon. members knew that the Premier always had the power under the Act to rearrange the portfolios. The Minister for Agriculture might be in the Assembly to-day and in the Upper House to-morrow, and it was the same with all the other portfolios. As to tackling a Minister with reference to his appointments, the same thing always applied to whatever Minister was in the Upper Chamber. The Postmaster-General had for years been a member of the Upper House, and he was not aware that any inconvenience had arisen from that; and there was nothing to prevent the Premier being a member of that Chamber, except the will of Parliament and public opinion. There was no statutory enactment on the subject. There was no intention on the part of the Government to appoint immediately a Minister for Agriculture, but he hoped that there might be one appointed before the House met next year, and he hoped that he would be a member of the Assembly. If he was not, then Parliament could express its wish on the subject.

Mr. GLASSEY: Do you intend to find a seat in this House for the gentleman who now holds the position of Minister for Agriculture?

The PREMIER: He did not think that was at all likely; but if the hon. member would resign his seat for Bundaberg they might put him in there. There was, however, no intention to do anything of the sort. He thought they had sufficient talent on his own side of the House to find a new Minister of the Crown.

Mr. SMYTH : It was very satisfactory that the Premier had eased the minds of hon. members with reference to the appointment of a Minister for Agriculture. From the tone of the debate one would imagine that everybody in the House was an agriculturist. In November, 1894, the then Secretary for Lands, Mr. Barlow, said that a school of agriculture would be established on the same footing as a school of mines. Under the School of Mines Act the residents of a mining locality had to subscribe £2,000 before they could get £4,000 from the State for the establishment of a school of mines, and they had also to subscribe a certain amount every year in support of the institution. What was the result? No school of mines had been started yet, but an agricultural college had been started without the people interested having to subscribe one shilling. The colony received more benefit from mining than it did from agriculture, and yet agriculturists had received every concession possible. He did not say that they had no right to concessions; he believed they had, but at the same time one class should not be fostered to the detriment of other classes. Agriculturists were continually claiming privileges in the shape of an agricultural college, cheap carriage, cheap seed, the appointment of experts, and so on. He would not now compare the agricultural industry with the mining industry, as he would have an opportunity of referring more fully to what had been done for mining when they came to the Estimates for that department. But he maintained that the mining industry was far more benefit to the colony than the agricultural industry. Yet every time they came to the agricultural vote they had the cry from agriculturists that the State should help them. The mining industry never came down, cap in hand, asking for assistance in that way.

The CHAIRMAN : I trust the hon. member will carry out what he said a few minutes ago, and not introduce the mining question on this vote.

Mr. SMYTH : It was very difficult to steer clear of it, but he would have another opportunity of referring to the matter. He recognised that it was necessary that they should have an agricultural college where young fellows could be taught farming, and also that farming was an honest occupation. At present they were sending young people from Queensland to the college in New South Wales, and some of them had done very well, but they wanted a college of their own in the colony. Young people should be taught that hard work, which entailed labour of the hands, was honest occupation, but the drift now in this and other colonies was in the other direction. He hoped that when they came to the Mines Estimates agricultural members would be as kind to the mining industry as mining members were to the agricultural industry.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON regretted to hear the observation of the Premier that it was requisite to have a Minister who had had previous experience to put the Agricultural Department in form. Though belonging to that profession himself, he wished to know why it was that a lawyer should be an agriculturist, a Postmaster-General, a judge of cows, ploughs, soil, and so on. An agricultural mania set in just before the general election; and he charged the Ministry with forgetting one of the first rules of parliamentary government—namely, that they should follow the people and not initiate. The people had never asked for an agricultural college at the site chosen; they had asked for agricultural colleges all over the colony; and they had never asked for an expenditure of £4,000 for salaries, wages, maintenance, and live stock for an agricultural college. Were our agriculturists to be trained in weatherboard houses with

high-class cooking-stoves and every comfort? Why not provide them with tents, and let them cook in the open? £4,000 for an agricultural college and not a sixpence for a university for the capital of the colony! He was ashamed of the suggestion, and he bowed his head in humility that the Ministry had not possessed courage to appoint a member of the Assembly to be Secretary for Agriculture within thirty days after the Act passed. Referring again to this vote of £4,000 he asked the Premier, who had a large knowledge of live stock, whether the Government were going to take charge of the breeding of cattle, or was it to be left to private enterprise? The people of Woollongong and Kiama did not develop their splendid strains by Government grants but by thrift and experience. If people were given cheap land, easy tenure, with the privilege of making it freehold, and cheap money at market price they would do all these things for themselves. The business of the Assembly was becoming encumbered with parochial questions dealing with matters that ought to be left entirely to private enterprise; and the man or group of men not fit to buy a first-class bull or a horse to improve his stock ought to die. There was a sum of £2,000 down for an experimental and training farm; and he intended to vote against that, as well as against the £4,000 for the agricultural college. He did not see why that £3,000 should be voted while many of the retrenched Civil servants had not been given their old rates of wages. The farmers were crying out for railway facilities to carry their produce to market, and the industry was never more prosperous in Southern Queensland. But he wanted to get back to the observations of the hon. member for Rockhampton North, who was exceedingly happy in his remarks upon the ignorance of the Ministry as to the Central district. The Minister who laughed at the hon. member knew very little of that district. He knew nothing of the great lakes and great territory in the valley of the Fitzroy. The hon. member for Rockhampton North did his duty in bringing under the notice of the whole colony the diligent exclusion from the benefits of this vote of one of the finest territories of the whole of Australia. Why should every penny of the vote be spent in South-east Queensland? In his opinion there should be eight agricultural colleges or experimental farms. He would not put up buildings for the students; he would erect tents for them, and let them rough it. There should be three experimental farms or colleges in the South-east. He had no objection to the one that had been decided upon, although the Secretary for Lands and the Ministry generally, in their enthusiasm, consulted no one as to the purchase of that nut-grass area. It had been well described by the hon. member for Mackay. He knew nut-grass well, and he unhesitatingly described it as a worthless and destructive weed—destructive of all plant life. Why had the Central, South-western, and Northern areas been deprived of any participation in the vote? An experimental station should have been established west of Townsville, another within fifty miles of Rockhampton, another at Emerald Downs or at Clermont, and one within fifty miles of Longreach, which was the half-way house to the South Australian border. All those stations should have been established, and the people given equal advantages to those possessed by people in the South. Southern Queensland had had the benefit of the experience of the farmers on the Clarence and Richmond Rivers. Practically Southern Queensland was northern New South Wales. There were plenty of men on the Brisbane, Stanley and Burnett rivers who had come over the border, and they had the experience

of years in knowing what crops were most suitable to the Southern portion of the colony. The South-eastern portion of the colony was the least deserving of an agricultural college, but the Central district particularly was the place which was in most need of one. He remembered a large family named Orr, who took up land at a beautiful spot on the Fitzroy many years ago, and gave £1 an acre for it. They spent many years there, and lost £5,000, because they went there with the old English ideas that certain things were to be done in the spring, certain things in the winter, and certain things in the autumn. Hon. members were told they ought to get an agricultural instructor of long experience. What was the good of that if his long experience had been obtained outside the colony in which he was to teach? What would be the use of bringing men from the United Kingdom, or from Warrnambool, or Tasmania, or New Zealand, to teach agriculture in Queensland. He would suggest that the Government should seek out the men of longest experience in the different districts of the colony for the purpose. An expert from abroad might analyse the soil, and say what it was capable of producing, but he could not analyse the climate. He had the pleasure of organising, in the face of considerable opposition, when a member of the Cabinet, the department presided over by Mr. Wragge, and, if he never did anything else in his career as a Minister or as a member of Parliament, he was proud of that. It had been a great success, and had saved thousands of people from repeating the heavy losses that were incurred in the early days. The Premier had spoken of the desirability of having a Minister who had had experience in departmental administration to initiate and organise the new Department of Agriculture, and so the splendid talents of the Postmaster-General were to be frittered away on horses, ploughs, soils, climate, cows and bulls. All he could say was that if any Postmaster-General did his work efficiently, and took an interest in it, it would occupy the whole of his time. They knew that the present Postmaster-General had a *penchant* for live stock; perhaps, like himself, he liked to have a good cow in his back yard; but he failed to see that that was a proper qualification for a Secretary for Agriculture. Who ruled the Cabinet on that matter? Why had they not the courage to appoint a real Secretary for Agriculture? With regard to the agricultural college, the Government had taken too narrow a view of the matter. They had been carried away by an enthusiast, or perhaps two. They were erecting a college in a part of the country where there was better and more successful agriculture, and more solvency on the part of the settlers, than in any other part of the colony. They were beginning to teach in a quarter where teaching was not wanted so seriously or so soon as in the more remote parts. He should ally himself, irrespective of party, with any men who desired to promote the agricultural industry, and to distribute this vote fairly and equitably between the three divisions of the colony. He should do all he could to develop areas of land such as that between the Dawson and Alpha, which would not only assist those particular districts, but the whole colony, and particularly the capital, Brisbane.

Mr. CURTIS: As one of the Central members he desired to say a few words in reference to this proposed appointment of a Minister for Agriculture. In common with other hon. members he regretted that such an appointment had not been made from this House, but when it was made he hoped the claims of the Central district would not be overlooked in regard to representation in the Cabinet. He was not a candidate for the position, but there was an hon.

member on this side who had been a supporter of the Government for many years, and who would fill the position with credit to himself and benefit to the colony. The gentleman he referred to might not have had much experience in organising a department; but he was a man of intelligence, and would very soon overcome any difficulties he might have to contend with. He had carried on farming in the neighbourhood of Rockhampton for many years, and by the time the Minister was appointed the department would be pretty well organised and there would be little difficulty in doing what was necessary. He agreed with a good deal that had been said by the hon. members for North Brisbane and North Rockhampton so far as the Central division was concerned, and regretted that the claims of that division to consideration under this vote had been ignored.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There are no farms there.

Mr. CURTIS: There were some, and if an experimental farm were started there would soon be more—a great stimulus would be given to agriculture in the locality. Professor Shelton had told them that the finest wheat-growing lands in the colony were in the Central district, and the college about to be established in the South would be of very little use to the Centre or the North. There should be at least three colleges, and later on more might be necessary; but considering the amount the Central division contributed to the general revenue its claims should be considered.

Mr. MCGAHAN did not rise to oppose the vote, because he would have preferred to have seen it larger. This was the most deserving department in the State, and although they were told that it asked more concessions than the mining or the woollen industry, still it did not receive them: That was where the trouble came in. Many hon. members said the poor farmer was always asking for something; but did they receive it? They received a very small amount, and it was very bad taste for some hon. members to get up and say that the farmers were always crying out. That point had been raised this year by the hon. member for Gympie; but they had to take what they could get, and the Government was now doing something to assist the farmers. Some hon. members thought nothing of spending £20,000 or £30,000 in opening up harbours for ships; but they objected to this small amount being voted to assist the agriculturists. There was a paltry sum of £125 on the Estimates for a tobacco expert. That should be £325. It was an unfortunate industry; but he hoped it would be a great one in the future.

Mr. DANIELS: It cannot with the excise on it.

Mr. MCGAHAN: If they voted £3,000 for the erection of a tobacco factory in the districts where tobacco was grown, and a proper expert was appointed to teach farmers the proper kind of tobacco to grow and how to grow it, the industry would flourish in spite of the excise. It had been said that tobacco could not be grown in the Warwick district. Tobacco had been grown in the Warwick and Cunningham districts which had sold for 10d. a lb., but now the same tobacco would not bring more than 3d. a lb. That was on account of the want of education in the growth and treatment of the crop. If £3,000 was expended in the direction he had indicated it would be a profitable transaction for the country. He wished to say that the gentleman who had charge of the travelling dairy had earned thousands of pounds for the farmers and also for the country, and he trusted he would be kept on, and that the amount voted for the purpose would be greatly enlarged. There was another vote of £2,500 for

wages, travelling expenses, freights, wheat and other experiments, and incidental expenses. That looked a large sum, particularly as he had been informed that numbers of farmers had applied to the department for seed maize and wheat from time to time, but they had found that the department would not supply them unless they got the money first. That was a step in the wrong direction. If the seed had been supplied the farmers would have willingly paid for it. He was not going to say that the Government had done wrong in connection with their choice of a site for the agricultural college. If they were wrong, time would prove their mistake. At the same time he thought that the offer made by the late Hon. J. D. Macansh of 500 acres of splendid land, worth £2,500, in one of the oldest agricultural centres in the colony should have been accepted. However, he supposed the Government had their own reasons for not accepting that offer. It was believed by every man, woman, and child on the Downs that the reason why the present site had been selected was to provide a picnic ground for the gentry of Brisbane and its surroundings. He hoped that was not so, but he did not expect much from the site. If the Canning Downs land had been accepted a college would not have been necessary, as an experimental farm there would have done more good than the college on the present site. As the college had been decided upon, the next thing was to have experimental farms. There should be two of those farms on the Downs—one at Roma and the other in some central position—Pittsworth, Clifton, Canning Downs, Glengallan, or any of those places. They were all suitable, and the money would be well expended. He was very pleased to hear the hon. member for Brisbane North talk of the fine crops of wheat grown on the Downs, but he did not believe there would be more than half a crop all over the Downs. Still, half a loaf was better than no bread. The farmers were not anything like as prosperous as the hon. member appeared to think. He was afraid that many of the recent settlers on the Darling Downs would be compelled to leave their homes in the near future. He trusted that the Government would see their way to give them assistance, and he had every confidence that they would do so.

Mr. DANIELS: You said they had not done anything in the past.

Mr. MCGAHAN: Past Governments had done nothing, but the present Government might do something.

Mr. GLASSEY: Hear, hear! This wonderful Government!

Mr. MCGAHAN: As the hon. member for Bundaberg appeared to be prepared for action, he would make way for him.

Mr. GLASSEY had no desire to curtail the hon. member's remarks by his observation concerning the wonderful Government of which the hon. member was a follower. In the estimation of the hon. member there never was such a Government in Queensland, and under them the agricultural industry was to blossom and bring forth fruit in due season. He had no particular desire either to offer any further remarks upon the vote, though he agreed with the hon. member that the agricultural industry was the paramount industry in importance in any country. He was longing for the time when the Agricultural Department would be given activity and life, and a real head, not a dead head, to whom hon. members might address themselves upon questions affecting the department. He thought the vote should be postponed, and the Committee should insist, before it went through, that a Minister should be appointed to the department, and should

take his place in the Assembly that they might question him as to the appointments made by the able manager and wonderful organiser who occupied a seat in another place. He had referred to one of those appointments before in questions to the Treasurer which had not been answered to his satisfaction—they had not been answered in a most discourteous manner. The appointments at present were few, but he was sure there were many in embryo, and they ought to know before the House rose who were the persons likely to hold permanent appointments in connection with the agricultural college and the department generally. The Premier paid a wonderful compliment to members on his own side in saying that the Minister for Agriculture should be a man of some administrative experience and ability, and capable of organising a department. That implied that the friends of the hon. gentlemen on the other side were without administrative experience and ability, and were incapable of organising the department. Were he one of them he would be greatly elevated at receiving so high a compliment from the Premier. He could give the Committee some information as to how the department was being organised. Some time ago they were informed that a gentleman named Benson, a fruit expert from New South Wales, was to be appointed. But they found that while New South Wales, an older and more wealthy colony than Queensland, could only afford to pay Mr. Benson £400 a year, the gentleman possessing all the organising skill and ability offered him £600 a year to come to Queensland. He found also that the correspondence between Mr. Benson and the department went through Mr. Corrie, an architect who took an interest in agriculture and fruit-growing, instead of direct from and to the department. Yet they were told that the present Ministerial head of the department was a person of wonderful skill and capacity! The real reason why a Minister had not been appointed was that there were a few aspirants for the office among members on the Government side of the House, and the Premier had not the courage to select one because of the offence he would give to the other aspirants. He (Mr. Glassey) took a most deep and intense interest in agriculture, and should like to see a live Minister appointed to that department, and every possible encouragement given to the agricultural industry, but that encouragement should not be confined to any particular spot; it should be extended to every part of the colony where encouragement was required, not omitting Central Queensland. He honestly believed that that important district had not in the past received that encouragement, more particularly in regard to agricultural matters, that its importance and value deserved. He believed that the establishment of experimental farms on the lines laid down by the hon. member for Kennedy, and supported by the hon. member for Cambooya, would result in great good to the numbers of young men who would be employed there and to the colony as a whole, and that it would be the means of settling to some extent the unemployed question. With regard to the agricultural college, a sum of money was voted last year for a site at Gatton. That piece of property, which was a swamp, was purchased under the provisions of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, and they were told that it was necessary to buy it in order to encourage agricultural settlement in that particular part of the country. But what was the fact? He had characterised, and still characterised, the purchase as a job. The land ought never to have been purchased, and in his opinion it was purchased in order to afford relief to some impecunious person. When it was found

that the land would not be taken up, and that there would probably be a howl in the country about the matter, the Government decided to establish an agricultural college there, and set £6,000 down as the sum paid for the site. Then there was £4,000 for buildings, £1,400 for furniture and fixings, and £4,000 for salaries this year, making a total of £15,400. He would not begrudge that sum, provided the college had been on some other site. Some members had said that it was a splendid piece of ground, provided it was drained; but why in the name of common sense was a swamp bought which would cost from £8 to £10 an acre to drain? Those who purchased the land were either utterly unfit to buy property or it was a job. If the Committee rose to the position to which they were entitled to rise, they would not vote a farthing of this £19,000 until the Premier appointed a Minister for Agriculture with a seat in the Assembly. It was rather strange for the Premier to say that, though the Act was passed in July, it did not follow that the Minister should be appointed immediately. What was the use of passing the Act if it was not intended to put it into operation? If it would cause any dislocation in the business of the Agricultural Department to postpone the whole vote, he was willing to move a substantial reduction as a protest against the non-appointment of a Minister for Agriculture.

The HOME SECRETARY: As he represented an agricultural district, he did not want the question to go to a vote without testifying to the assiduity, energy, and ability displayed by Mr. Thynne in the work he had undertaken. In his opinion no more capable man could be found in Queensland.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Rubbish!

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member could keep his rubbish to himself. He was speaking of what he had seen; he knew no man in the colony more capable than Mr. Thynne of bringing to a successful issue the work he had undertaken. Instead of getting his son into the Civil Service, he had set him to work in the Agricultural Department in order to train him up to the work of agriculture. His hon. colleague was not in that Chamber to defend himself, but he had done as much as it was possible for anybody to do to get the department into good working order, and had laid himself out to make it as useful as possible to struggling men engaged in agriculture. That industry was as safe under the care of Mr. Thynne as it would be under the care of any man he knew in the colony. He had known that gentleman more than thirty years, and he could say that when Mr. Thynne "put his hand to the plough" he did not turn back. With reference to the warm observations made by the hon. member for Bundaberg in regard to the purchase of the site of the agricultural college, he might inform the Committee that he had been most anxious to get land in that place from Mr. Thynne, first for a labour colony and afterwards with the view of transplanting Dunwich; but the Agricultural Department preferred to keep the land, believing that it was suitable for the purpose of erecting and carrying on the work of an agricultural college. It was near Brisbane, and it had been found in all the colonies that if they wanted to train youths for agricultural pursuits they must start the colleges somewhere near the metropolis. He hoped it might go forth to the farmers of the Wide Bay district that he, knowing well the Minister for Agriculture and his work, felt sure that he would further their interests in every conceivable way and make a thorough success of the department.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: The hon. gentleman assumed that an attack had been made on the Minister for Agriculture. No such attack had been made. He had not a word to say against the gentleman who nominally filled that position.

The HOME SECRETARY: Nominally.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Yes, nominally, for he knew only too well that it was impossible for a man to attend to his own affairs and have two or three departments to look after as well, and the sooner the Minister was relieved of portion of the work the better it would be for himself. It would probably save him from ruin, instances of which they had seen where Ministers had sacrificed themselves on "the altar of their country."

Mr. DANIELS was sorry the Minister for Agriculture was not to be a member of that Chamber. If they were going to have a Minister in that House, where was the necessity for the tremendous flattery of Mr. Thynne? He had the greatest regard for that gentleman, and he believed that in the administration of his office he gave the greatest satisfaction; but they had been repeatedly told that the Minister was to be in the Assembly. It was all nonsense to say that the Minister for Agriculture must be a man who was used to administering departments. A man in that position only wanted to know a little about agriculture and to be ordinarily intelligent. They were told that Mr. Thynne was responsible for choosing the site of the agricultural college. If that was so, he did not think much of his judgment. They were also told by a strong supporter of the Government that the site was chosen because it would serve as a picnic ground for the people of Brisbane. No doubt it would, and the picnic parties would be able to go out shooting on the lagoons and swamps on the site of the college. The Home Secretary also told them that Mr. Thynne was doing the work as a labour of love, but he (Mr. Daniels) would undertake to find half a dozen men on the other side who would do the work for love and the £1,000 a year attached to it. If Mr. Thynne was responsible for the choosing of the land, that was the worst blunder he had made.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: After the way in which the hon. member for Cambooya had spoken of the agricultural college site, he must distinctly say that he believed the hon. member had never been there.

Mr. DANIELS: Then you distinctly say what is not true.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: There certainly was not a single lagoon on the site. Statements such as those made by the hon. member were not likely to raise the tone of the debate, but it was necessary to reply to them, because they went forth to the country, and might be believed by a number of people. A short time ago, when the foundation-stone of the agricultural college was laid, a number of hon. members accepted the invitation of the Secretary for Agriculture to witness the ceremony, and were afterwards shown all over the land, and especially where nut-grass was said to be growing, yet not one had got up to give his experience of the actual state of the land. He was sure the hon. member for Maranoa would not endorse some of the statements that had been made. The land was public estate, and what was the use of public men decrying it? One reason why the portion thrown open had not been taken up more rapidly was the unfounded and extravagant assertions that had been made about it by hon. members; yet in spite of the land having been so run down, nearly all the first-class land had been taken up by old residents in the district.

With regard to the Secretary for Agriculture, he could say that since Mr. Thynne had occupied the position no one could have devoted more time and application to his charge. But at least one-third of the members of the Assembly represented agricultural constituencies, and it was necessary that the Minister should be in that Chamber so as to supply them with whatever information they wanted.

Mr. CRIBB: It would no doubt be a great advantage to have the Secretary for Agriculture in the Assembly, but the same remark would apply to every member of the Cabinet. It would be convenient to have the Postmaster-General there, so that he might pass his own Estimates and give all the information required as to the working of his department. But he did not think they ought to hamper the Premier in his arrangements. In no other country had such a stand been taken. The present Prime Minister of England was a member of the House of Lords. It would be altogether a mistake to tie the hands of the Premier and to say how and in what manner he should allot the offices in his Cabinet. One great object of the country was to educate its youths. They had grammar schools for higher education, and technical colleges for another important branch of knowledge. They had also universities to which exhibitions might be obtained, and therefore there were sufficient means of education provided. Of course they could not give boys brains or intelligence, but they could put advantages within their reach, and it was their business to make the best use of them. It had been said that lads would be sent to this college because their parents did not know what else to do with them, but the same might be said of sending them to universities. When they considered that this £4,000 had to provide appliances, maintenance, salaries, and implements, it was not at all unreasonable. He had had practical experience of farming, and knew that the expenses came to a very considerable sum. It would also be necessary to provide efficient teachers, and he hoped that matter would be attended to. He was sorry that there had been so much opposition to this vote, because there had been a great cry about their not giving encouragement to the farmers in the way of teaching them better methods, and he hoped it would be passed.

Mr. KING: As he had been referred to by the hon. member for Lockyer, he might explain that he and a number of others who were present at the foundation ceremony had driven over the land that would be cultivated in connection with the Agricultural College, and he did not see any swamp there, although there was some low-lying ground which could be drained. On the whole it was fairly good land, and the site was a good one. They went along the creek, and he did not see any nut-grass; what grass there was was fairly good, and he was satisfied that the land would not only be good for farming but would fatten cattle well. In regard to the Secretary for Agriculture, he thought his proper place was in that House, but so far as he was able to judge he did not think there was a member on the Government side so well qualified for the position as the hon. gentleman who held it at present. He was an enthusiast in agriculture, and had ability and experience. Apart from that, while they had only seven Ministers they were saving £1,000 a year; and it was his duty, and also that of the party he belonged to, not to spend another £1,000 if different positions could be well filled without it. Therefore, they should support the Government in the stand they had taken.

Question put and passed.

## STATE NURSERIES.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved that £1,300 be granted for State nurseries. As increased activity would be the order of the day, there was an increase of £150 for labour, horses, implements, and incidental expenses. The salaries remained the same.

Question put and passed.

## BOTANIC GARDENS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved that £2,234 be granted for the Botanic Gardens. Everything was the same as last year, with the exception of the vote for contingencies. There was an increase of £100 there, occasioned by the necessity of purchasing additional appliances and tools. During the last two or three years this vote had been rather starved, and it was necessary to get additional implements in order to enable the labour in the gardens to be used to the best advantage.

Mr. STEWART asked whether the vote referred only to the Brisbane botanic gardens, or whether it included provision for gardens elsewhere?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The vote referred only to the botanic gardens in Brisbane. The grants to other gardens were contained in the vote of £2,500 for reserves in the previous vote.

Mr. STEWART would like to know the exact position of the botanic gardens in Brisbane as compared with the botanic gardens in other places. They had botanic gardens in Rockhampton, and he understood that the municipal council there had to defray a portion of the upkeep of those gardens. Was that the case in Brisbane, or was the whole expense borne by the State?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: By the State.

Mr. STEWART: He did not see why the Brisbane gardens should be placed in a different position to those in other places. Brisbane got the fat of everything. Everything about Brisbane was national. Seeing that there was no State nursery in the Central district, and that the botanic gardens in Rockhampton were the only substitute for a nursery, the Treasurer might well increase the grant to those gardens.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at thirteen minutes to 12 o'clock.