

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 9 DECEMBER 1896

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 9 DECEMBER, 1896.

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

SEPARATION DAY.

HOUR OF SITTING.

The PREMIER: I move that the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 6.30 p.m. to-morrow.

Mr. McDONALD: I do not see why we should adjourn until half-past 6 to-morrow, as we are now near the end of the session, and most members, especially those who live in the North, desire to get home. I would rather adjourn for a month and come back and finish the business

on the paper than prolong the session by the proposed adjournment. I therefore protest against the motion, as I did against a similar motion last year, because if Northern members are detained over next Tuesday they will not be able to get home for Christmas.

The PREMIER, in reply: This motion will not in any way retard the business of the House. The only thing it may retard is private members' business.

Mr. DUNSFORD: And that is of no importance!

The PREMIER: I do not say so, but if the hon. member puts that construction on it he may do so. With regard to private members' business, I have ascertained from the hon. member whose motion is at the head of the paper that he does not object to the proposed adjournment, and in consequence of that I have made this motion.

Mr. DUNSFORD: The member whose motion is at the head of the business-paper may not object, but there are other members who do object to the adjournment. We have only three or four hours a week for private members' business, and now that is to be fleeced from us. I know that the Premier does not consider private members' motions of any importance, as he has often said they are only used to ventilate grievances and let off gas. If they are of no importance they should not appear on the paper at all, and we should not devote even one hour a week to private business; but I maintain that they are important, and that we should have an opportunity of dividing on some of them before the session closes. But it appears that they are going to be sacrificed for a picnic to-morrow. I am in favour of some consideration being given to that picnic, but it should be held in the morning, so as not to deprive private members of their rights. I think the Premier should make some promise that an opportunity will be given for a division on many of the motions on the paper.

The PREMIER: You know that I cannot reply.

Mr. HAMILTON: I am very glad to notice that the leader of the Opposition does not offer any objection to this motion. Separation Day is always observed as a holiday, and the House does not meet till 7 o'clock on that day. On this occasion advantage is being taken of the day to show hospitality to a distinguished political stranger from one of the other colonies, and I am perfectly certain that the private members who will be chiefly affected by the adjournment will not object to the motion. The motion of the hon. member for Nundah, which is at the head of the sitting, is of such interest that it would occupy the whole of the afternoon. If it did not, the next motion would take up the rest of the time, although I understood the hon. member for Flinders is not so anxious about his motion relating to the cyanide process since papers on the subject were laid on the table by the Secretary for Mines. At any rate, if private members object to the motion they can vote against it.

Question put and passed.

QUESTION.

SICK PAY AND LEAVE TO CONSTABLES.

Mr. McDONNELL asked the Home Secretary—

1. Is he aware whether clause 37 of the police regulations is still adhered to in reference to sick pay for police constables?

2. Have clauses 4 and 37 of the police regulations been amended or rescinded; and, if so, from what date?

3. In the event of any police constable being incapacitated from duty—through no fault of his own—for fourteen days or over that time, is he still allowed fourteen days' leave of absence during that year?

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. It depends entirely upon the circumstances of the case as to whether such leave is allowed or not by the Commissioner of Police. Such leave has frequently been given.

**QUEENSLAND NATIONAL BANK,
LIMITED (AGREEMENT), BILL.**

THIRD READING.

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

MACKAY HARBOUR BOARD BILL.

FIRST READING.

The House, in committee, having affirmed the desirableness of introducing a Bill to constitute a Harbour Board for the harbour of Mackay, the Bill was presented, read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL.

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS—
COMMITTEE.**

On the motion of the HOME SECRETARY, the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill were agreed to.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: When the Bill was going through committee he moved an amendment in clause 3, which had given rise to a misapprehension. The original clause in the Bill provided that when a residence was provided for an officer he should pay rent at a rate to be fixed by the board with the approval of the Governor in Council, but that he should be entitled to an addition to his salary to an amount equal to the amount paid by way of rent. He had moved an amendment on that with a view to preventing such addition increasing a man's classification; and there seemed to be an impression that he had intended deliberately to prejudice the position of Civil servants and deprive them of a part of their salaries. He asked the Home Secretary to relieve him from that misconception, so that officers in the public service would know that it had not been intended to make any alteration in the conditions under which they occupied residences provided by the Government.

The HOME SECRETARY: The words in the clause which the hon. member took to himself had been in the Civil Service regulations from the time they were first framed. There was no intention to prejudice the position of Civil servants, and the clause was only intended as an adjustment between all members of the service, so that those who had residences provided would not receive higher salaries than those who had no residences found.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON was glad to receive the assurance of the hon. gentleman. He had only troubled the hon. gentleman in order that it should be known that it was not his intention to interfere with the emoluments of Civil servants.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the Council's amendments.

The report was adopted, and the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Council.

**BRISBANE TRAFFIC BILL—STATIS-
TICAL RETURNS BILL.**

MESSAGES FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from the Council, returning these Bills with amendments.

The messages were ordered to be taken into consideration in committee to-morrow.

GOVERNMENT LOAN BILL.

COMMITTEE.

This Bill was passed through committee without amendment, and the third reading was made an order for to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

POSTMASTER-GENERAL—SALARIES.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that £137,540 be granted for the Postmaster-General—salaries, Post and Telegraph Office. The principal alterations in the vote as compared with last year were as follow: The electrical engineer was down for twelve months instead of six months. The item "clerk and cashier" was now included in the item "three clerks at £300." The vote for one clerk at £270 was omitted. One clerk at £225 was increased to £245, and two at £200 were increased to £210; through an error those were overlooked last year. There were two additional assistants to the electrician and mechanic, previously paid from contingencies. The inspector and engineer of telegraph lines, an officer over twenty-one years in the service, was increased from £300 to £320. Two additional packers at £100 were provided for. Of the officers in charge, one at £280 was increased to £300, two at £220 were increased to £240, and there were some alterations in the minor salaries amounting to something like £725. There were two additional line repairers in charge at £160. One salary previously paid at £200 was reduced to £180; but that covered promotion for the officer appointed. There was one additional stamper and sorter at £130.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON asked for some explanation of the statement made in connection with the proceedings at the recent postal conference, that a surprise proposal was submitted from Queensland departing from the uniform charge in respect to the transmission of newspaper matter through the post, Queensland proposing to increase the charge from 10 oz. for 2d. (the present rate) to 2 oz. for the same amount. There was no postal rate in New South Wales upon newspapers carried within that colony, and he would like to see the revenue here permit of the removal of a postal rate upon newspapers, which he looked upon as an educational medium, for the adult population.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There was no surprise or suddenness with regard to the policy of Queensland on that particular matter. It had been discussed many years previously, and full and due notice was given to the other colonies that it was intended to bring the question forward at the Postal Conference. The previous arrangement acted very unfairly against their own people, because southern newspapers could be posted in, say, Sydney direct to their subscribers in any part of Queensland, and though this colony did the bulk of the service of transmission it got none of the revenue derived from that source. The present arrangement was that such papers should be charged at Postal Union rates—the same, for instance, as would be charged between England and France. He believed that the result would be that newspaper proprietors would send their papers to the local agents here, and that those agents would post them to the subscribers, so that the local agents would have an advantage and the Post Office would derive the benefit of the postal revenue, as it certainly ought to. If there was to be a tax on newspapers at all, they should certainly get paid for carrying foreign newspapers as well as their own.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON presumed that a considerable amount of newspaper matter was posted from Queensland, and would like to know

how the existing arrangement would affect their own literature which was sent out of the colony. There was no analogy between France and Great Britain and Queensland and the other Australian colonies, and to treat New South Wales and Victoria as foreign colonies was departing from the spirit of federation.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The newspapers published in this colony would not be in such a favourable position as previously; but what was aimed at in the arrangement now made was to secure uniformity among the colonies. Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, and New Zealand all charged postage on newspapers, but New South Wales, Tasmania, and Western Australia did not. It was understood that newspaper postage was to be brought in in all the colonies, but New South Wales departed from that understanding, and the action now taken by Queensland was taken in the interests of their own newspapers and their own people.

Mr. GLASSEY had always looked upon the postage on newspapers as a very great hardship to the proprietors of country newspapers, many of whom were struggling men who conducted little papers which were exceedingly useful in the community where they were published, and as the population was very sparse in some districts they could not take advantage of the regulation regarding the postage of large quantities, the same as newspaper proprietors in larger centres. There were other sources of revenue which would be less oppressive, and at the same time more advantageous to the country than the postage on newspapers, and he should be very glad to assist in the removal of that tax. The *Worker*, which was the newspaper chiefly aimed at when the postal law was passed, was not affected in the same way as many other papers, as owing to their very complete organisation they could send large bundles of papers to their different agents scattered throughout the colony at a very low rate, who distributed them to the subscribers. He would assist any hon. members in passing a law to carry newspapers free, and was prepared to suggest some other means of compensating the revenue, because he considered newspapers as part of their educational system, and thought the country papers should enjoy the same privileges as those published in the larger towns.

Mr. ARMSTRONG thought the hon. member, as a protectionist, would have supported the postage on newspapers. It was urged at one time that the country papers could not live under the competition of the larger journals coming from Brisbane, and he thought the subscribers to country papers should be made to pay the tax instead of the proprietors. There were other directions in which taxation might be remitted in the country districts, and he would point out one—that was in regard to letter postage. In his district there were three or four centres with small receiving offices. Laidley had five within eight miles, and five beyond that distance; Gatton had six within eight miles and six beyond eight miles; and Helidon had four; but if a letter was posted between any of those places, it had to pay 2d. postage, whereas around Brisbane the charge was 1d. for eight miles. This was a greater tax upon the people than the newspaper tax, and it was time some alteration was made, although it would have to be done by Act of Parliament. There should be a reduction of postage where there were receiving offices within eight miles.

Mr. STEPHENSON thought very few country newspaper proprietors would look upon this tax as any protection, because the smaller the circulation the more severely was the tax felt in pro-

portion. If it had not been explained by the then Postmaster-General, in 1890, that this tax was to be levied in the other colonies, and particularly in New South Wales, he would have had great difficulty in persuading a majority of hon. members to agree to it. Although the revenue had been increased a little by this tax it was probable that a greater amount had been lost to the telegraph office, because the country newspaper proprietors had to retrench in other directions, and they generally spent less upon telegrams. He hoped it would not be long before this tax was removed.

Mr. STUMM would not like it to go forth that this charge was regarded as a protective tax for the country papers, because it was not. It had done a lot of injury, and prevented many people from getting their papers. The tax was imposed upon the distinct statement by the Postmaster-General that it would be imposed by the other colonies, and he said that upon two occasions at intercolonial conferences they had agreed to alter their law and make it the same as that of Queensland; but New South Wales had not done it to this day.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They agreed to do it.

Mr. STEWART could not see why newspapers should be carried free any more than draperies or groceries. The only argument for it was that the Press was in a better position to ask for concessions than those engaged in any other business. The charge on newspapers was legitimate, as it was for services rendered. As to the statement that the charge prevented people from taking newspapers, he did not believe that the 3d. postage would prevent any man from taking a paper. Then it had to be remembered that papers were carried in bulk at the rate of 1d. per lb. Postal reformers should turn their attention in the direction of establishing a 1d. rate for letters all over the colony, increasing postal facilities in the outlying districts, and giving more frequent deliveries. That might cause additional expense, but it would do more to advance the welfare of the community than was likely to result from removing the postage on newspapers.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. member was quite right when he said that the postage on papers was really no tax, but a charge for services rendered. In Queensland the postage on inland letters was 2d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz., and the newspaper rate was 3d. for 10 oz., and bulk parcels at 1d. per lb. Considering the distances those matters had to be carried, the charges were not excessive. In the United Kingdom and New Zealand the rate was 3d., with no reduction for bulk parcels, and the distances in those countries were nothing like as great as the distances in Queensland. There was a charge upon newspapers in all countries in the world, and in all the colonies with the exception of Tasmania, Western Australia, and New South Wales. Tasmania and Western Australia did not count for much, but in New South Wales the non-taxation of newspapers was entirely a breach of an agreement entered into by the different colonies. The postage in Queensland was as low as in any other part of the world, with the exception of the United States of America, where the loss on postal matter of the second class—under which newspapers and periodicals were classed—was £1,000,000 per annum. In Queensland the carriage of newspapers brought in something like £12,000 a year, and it was considered fairer to make those who received the benefit bear it rather than the general taxpayers. It was alleged that the charge on newspapers had had the effect of reducing the circulation of

papers; but it had to be remembered that previous to the imposition of the charge vast numbers of newspapers were sent through the post which had never been ordered; but since the charge had been imposed only papers which were ordered had been sent. Statistics showed that the number of papers sent through the Post Office in the colonies in which there was 1d. postage was—in Victoria, 19 per head; in South Australia, 23 per head; in New Zealand, 14 per head; while Queensland headed the list with 25 per head. That was arrived at by dividing the number of papers sent through the post by the population. With reference to the suggestion of the hon. member for Rockhampton North that they should establish an inland 1d. postage, the loss of revenue would be something like £36,000 per annum. There were so many cases of salaries common to both departments that it was impossible to say what was the annual deficiency on each; but on the Post and Telegraph Departments combined it was something like £60,000. The abolition of the newspaper postage would increase the deficiency by about £12,000, and the establishment of an inland 1d. post would further increase it by £36,000. Of course the establishment of a universal 1d. post—Mr. Henniker Heaton's idea—would involve a very much greater loss. In the circumstances of the colony no further remission of charges should be asked from that department.

Mr. CHATAWAY did not agree with some of his fellow newspaper proprietors on the question of newspaper postage. The history of the thing was that it was arranged at Hobart that the colonies should impose newspaper postage, New South Wales promising to do so amongst the rest. Queensland had carried out the agreement, but the metropolitan newspapers of New South Wales prevented the agreement being carried out in that colony, and they had practically killed the country Press in New South Wales. In 1891, when the postage was imposed, it was prophesied that the country newspapers of the colony would be shut up. That prophecy had not been fulfilled in any way; on the contrary, the number of country papers had increased. In the district in which he published two papers, previous to the imposition of postage scores of metropolitan newspapers used to be sent up every fortnight by steamer and distributed free, business men in Brisbane posting them after having read them, and the people to whom they were sent had not to pay 1d. for them. An immense mass of mail matter had to be carried at the expense of the country for the benefit of the metropolitan newspapers. The only objection he had to the postage on newspapers was that even now the metropolitan papers were too much benefited, and the bulk rates at which they were carried were not satisfactory to country newspaper proprietors. One matter in connection with which relief might be given to country newspapers was in making the postage rate on those papers from Queensland to England the same as the rate from England to Queensland. A tri-weekly paper in Queensland sending check copies to English advertisers had to pay 3d. a week postage on them, while if sent from England to Queensland those papers would be charged by weight, and the postage upon them would only be 1d.

Mr. GRIMES did not agree with the inland penny postage suggestion, but he saw no reason why the privilege of the eight-mile radius granted to towns should not be extended to the country districts. He could not see why country residents corresponding with one another should be placed at a disadvantage in that respect, and he knew one case in which a letter carried for less

than a mile required 2d. postage to avoid a fine. He had objected to the newspaper postage as interfering with the spread of knowledge, and as falling principally upon those who were so placed as to be unable to get their papers from local agents. With regard to the parcels post, he saw by the report of the department that the operations under that head had increased by 50 per cent. He did not think it was ever intended, when the parcels post system was instituted, that mail coaches should be piled up with baskets of goods to the great annoyance and inconvenience of passengers. Under the old system mail coaches could refuse to carry any parcels over and above what they could conveniently put on their coaches, but now they were required to carry all parcels posted. A parcel of 11 lb. was carried 100 miles for 2s. 9d., and it might be carried 200 or 250 miles for the same amount; but in the case of letters it was different. Moreover the carrying of such articles as might be sent by packet post, such as soap, sugar, tea, and other things, interfered considerably with the carriers on the various routes, as the rate charged by the post office was considerably under what was previously paid to carriers. Of course if the parcels post system was paying for itself they had not much reason to complain.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is paying very well.

Mr. GRIMES would like to know what was the amount collected at the present time? He would also point out that when a small parcel was sent by packet-post it had to be carried in a wicker basket, which was, perhaps, twice the weight of the parcel, and which had to be returned. The whole matter was one that needed a little looking into, as it was becoming a great inconvenience to *bona fide* travellers.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The gross revenue from parcels in 1894 was £4,731, and in 1895 it was £8,467. It was impossible to accurately give the expenditure, because the service was not only for parcels, but for everything else; but the information he had from the department was that it was paying handsomely.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON thought it would be futile to attempt to analyse the returns of the department in such a way as would enable them to come to a conclusion as to whether any particular branch of the department was paying. With regard to the suggestion of the hon. member for Oxley that people in the country should receive the same favourable treatment in regard to the rates of postage as residents in towns, he would point out that country people did not write so many letters as townspeople, and that a man who sent a dozen letters at a time was a better contributor to the postal revenue than a man who only sent one letter a week. He had always been against the extensions of the suburban area within which letters might be transmitted for 1d., and he would remind hon. members that in the city of Melbourne, where they had given the 1d. rate a trial for a good many years, they had found it necessary to revert to the 2d. rate in defence of the revenue. And for a number of years past they had effaced all those special concessions in England. It might be desirable to maintain the 1d. rate within a mile or a mile and a-half of the post office in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Charters Towers, and one or two other places, and there might be four deliveries in a place like Brisbane; but all those facilities necessitated the employment of a sufficient staff, and it must be remembered that the department was not worked at a profit. The deficiency with their present population was £60,000 per annum. If they took the deficiency in one year per head of the population since

1861 they would find it was nearly £160,000. He would like to know if this £60,000 included interest upon the debt in connection with that department.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: In that case the deficit would be a great deal more, and he should like to know exactly what it did amount to. With respect to the £12,000 a year received from newspapers, he did not call that a tax at all, because it was really a payment for services rendered, and it was not the principal saving to the department at all. The primary saving was in the reduction of the contracts for coach and horse services. The fact that these services were performed for so much less now was not altogether attributable to competition, but to the extension of their trunk lines, which enabled the contractors to get horse feed cheaper in times of drought. He remembered when out West seeing a two-roomed cottage full of newspapers and *Government Gazettes*, and the result of his observations was that people had to pay £1 a year for the *Gazette*. The great advantage to the department was that the moment postage was imposed it stopped shovelling newspapers into the Post Office *ad lib.*, and indirectly the department benefited to a greater extent than by the mere increase in the revenue. He was strongly against any return to the free-postage system, and hoped that the result of this discussion would be that the Government would endeavour to bring about such a state of things in the department, that it would be made a revenue-producing department as it was in Great Britain.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The hon. member seemed to have misunderstood his contention in regard to the reduction of the postage in certain districts. He did not wish for a general 1d. postage, but thought there should be a radius system introduced in places such as those he mentioned, where there were receiving offices within eight or nine miles, as was the case in the larger towns. Hon. members must remember that in Brisbane there were four or five deliveries a day, but in the country districts there were only two or three a week, and that would explain why the 1d. postage did not pay here. The hon. member pointed out that coach and horse services cost less than they used to, and that added force to his argument that they should remit this taxation in the direction he had mentioned. He hoped something would be done to redress the matter speedily. The country districts had to make up the loss incurred in the towns.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: As an instance of the way the country contracts had to make good the deficiency caused by the towns, he might tell the hon. member that when he was Postmaster-General the mail from Springsure to Tambo cost about £330 per annum, while the gross postage for five years on all letters carried under that contract had only averaged £7 12s. 9d. per annum. He had been dreadfully abused for making an arrangement with the contractor by which the contract was terminated. There were numbers of similar contracts still in existence.

Mr. STORY: The three sections who had to be considered in connection with the parcels post were the storekeepers who did not like it, the general public who did, and the travelling public who were inconvenienced by it. The number of parcels sent by post was increasing, and on many lines the contractors had had to put on larger coaches. In order that the parcels should not be allowed to completely monopolise the Western mail lines, there would have to be some restrictions placed on their carriage, unless the department was prepared to put on slower vehicles for the parcels.

Mr. CASTLING: If there was any loss, it must be in places like Brisbane. In the early sixties he had ridden the mail between Ipswich and Nanango, and the contract price had been £400 per annum, but now the mails were carried for about £150. The contract price for the mail between Drayton and Gayndah used to be £900 per annum, and probably it was now less than £300. He wondered how parcels were carried by mail contractors, especially by horse mails.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Horse mails are not supposed to carry parcels.

Mr. CASTLING: He thought the weight should be reduced when parcels were carried by horses.

Mr. FRASER was surprised at hon. members objecting to the parcels post, which was not only a great convenience to the public but, according to the Attorney-General, showed an annually increasing profit. The only complaint was that parcels to a place like Charleville were not delivered by post until two or three days after parcels by rail. He had got up to complain about the way in which supernumeraries in the department were treated. There were men who had been in the service of the department for several years, and to whom promises had been made that they would get a permanent appointment when there was an opening. Those promises had not been kept, though the men were acknowledged to be competent. In addition to that an appointment had been made of an outsider, a man straight from the tailor's board, who could scarcely read an address or write his own name, and whose application for employment had to be written for him. That man had been appointed a letter-carrier at Croydon without the knowledge of the head of the department. He had spoken of the matter to the Postmaster-General, and that gentleman, instead of expressing sympathy with the men, had said he would do nothing for them, as they had gone to him (Mr. Fraser) instead of coming to himself. One of those men had brought forward a letter signed by the Postmaster-General, stating that the matter would be considered, and yet their claims to consideration had been ignored. He had told the Postmaster-General that he was not sorry the Croydon appointment had been made, as the man would not be long in the service, and the man had since left the service. He hoped other members would take up the case of the men to whom he referred.

Mr. TOOTH asked if the department would be prepared to take any action to prevent the present twelve hours' detention of mail matter for the Wide Bay and Burnett districts? It was due to the railway time-table adopted, and he was sorry to say that when he referred to it on the Railway Estimates the Minister in charge had not thought it worth while to reply. The present system involved a loss of two or three days in getting replies from Sydney and the other colonies, and he thought the convenience of the people of the Wide Bay and Burnett districts should be a sufficiently important matter from the point of view of the Postal Department to induce that department to endeavour to make some arrangements with the Railway Department to avoid the present detention. A night train would meet the difficulty, and they were told it would be met when the Gladstone line was completed; but they ought not to be asked to wait twelve months to have their wants attended to. If the Under Secretary of the department would take a trip through the country districts he would find many opportunities of improvement in the delivery of country mails. Old mail routes were continued in districts in which the advance of settlement had

rendered those routes inconvenient for the majority of the settlers. He was not complaining on that point, as he was happy to say that where it was possible the department had always met him in any cases he had brought before them.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The matter to which the hon. member referred, so far as the conveyance of mails was concerned, depended upon the Railway Department. The detention was due to an alteration in the time-table of the Southern mail train, which had at last been secured after much striving, so that people coming into Queensland by rail should have an opportunity of seeing some of its most picturesque features by daylight. He had no doubt the Railway Department would run a night train as suggested when the circumstances justified it, but they could hardly expect them to do so for the conveyance of mails alone.

MR. DUNSFORD noticed that there were certain articles which were not carried by parcels post, among which were bars of gold and gold dust. It would be a great advantage to those who were fossicking under very great difficulties in outlying districts if they were allowed to send small parcels of gold through the post instead of having to send them through bankers or other agents who charged a high price—about 1s. 6d. per oz. Jellies, pickles, varnish, paint, and medicines were carried by parcels post, and he did not see why the same concession should not be made in regard to gold. But in transmitting any article by parcels post he thought that distance should be taken into consideration. At present a merchant in Brisbane could send, say, several pounds of tea to Camooweal, or any other place, at the same rate—6d. for the first pound, and 3d. for every additional pound—as was charged for the transmission of a similar parcel from a town which was much nearer to the destination of the parcel, and that was not a fair arrangement.

MR. McCORD hoped it would be found possible to run a night train from Bundaberg, so that the mails from that district might reach Brisbane in time for the Sydney mail in the morning, instead of being delayed twelve hours in Brisbane, as was the case at present. Previous to the alteration of the time of running the Sydney mail, letters from the Burnett district were sent on without delay, and it would be a great convenience to all concerned if that could be done now. With regard to the postage on country letters he did not think the charge should be the same for a distance of nine or ten miles between post offices as it was for much longer distances. There was something very wrong when 2d. was charged for carrying a letter nine or ten miles, and the same rate would carry it to Sydney or Melbourne; and if any reduction was made in the postal rates he trusted that that matter would receive favourable consideration. With reference to the parcels post system his experience was that it had been a great convenience to people living in the country, who were by that means able to obtain things that were not procurable in country towns; but he had not known a single instance in which soap, rice, and other commodities which had been mentioned had been sent by parcels post. He should be very sorry to see the system curtailed in any way; but at the same time he should like to see some fine imposed for sending rations by that means, as that interfered with carriers and other persons.

MR. McDONNELL did not think one set of men should be sacrificed to benefit another set, and there was no necessity that the man at Croydon should be spoken disparagingly of; but the principle adopted in his case was a bad one.

The men who were complaining had been in the service from five to six and a-half years as temporary letter-carriers, and their services had been appreciated in the department to such an extent that they had been promised permanent appointments. The circular regarding their grievances stated that they had been employed as letter-carriers, mailmen, stampers, etc., and they had therefore had a general experience in the head-office work. In May last they sent a petition to the Postmaster-General, which was returned with a recommendation to the effect that their case would be taken into consideration when any appointments were made to the permanent staff, and the recommendation was signed by the Postmaster-General in approval; but still, within a few days, a complete stranger was appointed to a vacancy at Croydon. Their grievance was that they were entitled to permanent appointments, but during six years about sixteen letter-carriers had been appointed. They had sent a petition to the Civil Service Board, but as they were not on the Civil Service list their petition could not be received; and as they had failed in getting consideration from the department, the matter had been brought up in Parliament so that it might be brought under the notice of the Postmaster-General.

MR. MACDONALD-PATERSON was glad to have an opportunity of adding a few words to what had been said in regard to those temporary letter-carriers. The case opened up the question whether it was advisable to have boards at all, and he thought it was better that Ministers should not be relieved of the responsibility of making appointments. People were beginning to wonder why Ministers should not be able to appoint a man by merely signing a minute to that effect. These men had been not only not thought of, but despised; and if a change did not come over the spirit of the board's dream, Ministers would have to resume their true and wholesome responsibilities. There was less corruption in the old days than now, and if the present Ministers would not accept this responsibility they should give way to those who would.

MR. GLASSEY: Would you take Ministerial responsibility upon those terms?

MR. MACDONALD-PATERSON had done it before, and had always opposed these boards. The circular said these men had not only been passed over, when vacancies arose on the staff, by strangers, but they had had to stand aside and see others brought in for temporary work for which they had proved their fitness, and later on they said they had written to the board, but learned that the board could not recognise them until they had been appointed officers of the department. He thought the Minister should be the father of his department, and should look after everybody in it, and in this case should take steps to enable the board to recognise the services of these men. Even a telegraphic messenger should have the first chance of getting any promotion quite irrespective of the Civil Service Board or any prejudices they might have against men who had been in the employment of the department for years. In private employment the reward of faithful service was promotion, and he trusted that the discussion would brush away the cobwebs which seemed to prevent Ministers and their officers from seeing that the merits of men in the lower grades were properly recognised. He hoped that those in charge of the department would treat their subordinates as if they were their personal employees.

MR. GLASSEY hoped the hon. member would often speak in that way and stir up Ministers. Those men were suffering from a real grievance,

and the time had arrived when it should be redressed. He had again and again said that if there was one department in which gross favouritism prevailed it was the Postal Department. The Minister in charge of the department should have some regard for the persons engaged in the department, however humble their position. Of course, the attention of Ministers might be directed into other channels, and, although they desired to be fair to their employees, they might overlook them in consequence of the busy life they led. One man had been doing temporary work in the Postal Department since 1890, two others since 1891, and another since 1892. Although they had given satisfaction to the heads of the department, their claims to permanent employment had been ignored, and others had been appointed to those permanent positions. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley had pointed out that since 1890 no less than sixteen persons had been appointed to permanent positions in the department over the heads of those men who were doing temporary work and were always at the call of the department. It was manifestly unfair that those men should be kept hanging on in that way from year to year, and it was time their claim to permanent appointments was recognised. He had before him a *Gazette* showing the appointments since 1890, and amongst them he saw one of a young man of twenty-four years of age whose salary was stated at only £80 a year, a salary which he believed to be entirely inadequate for the services performed. It was possible that the permanent heads of the department were not to blame for the fact that the claims of the men alluded to had not been recognised, and if so, he should be sorry to criticise them unfairly. It might be the Minister who was to blame, but he was not present and they could not hold the Attorney-General responsible for the Postmaster-General's actions. He hoped the Attorney-General would make a note of the complaint made, and he could furnish the hon. gentleman with the names of the men concerned. After that particular matter was disposed of there were some other things in connection with the department to which he desired to call attention.

Mr. BROWNE: While the grievances of the lower paid officials of the department were being discussed he might mention the case of the men employed as casual labourers in connection with the telegraph lines. They had been some years at the work and were very handy at it, and they were somewhat hardly treated in being kept from year to year in the position of casuals. They had no chance to get appointed as line repairers in country districts, though boys who entered the department as telegraph messengers could work up to those positions. He had heard telegraph masters complain very strongly of some of the young men sent out to them as line repairers, but the men he referred to were thoroughly competent, and he hoped that some arrangement would be made by which, after they had been a certain time in the department, they should have a chance of promotion to the position of line repairers in country districts.

Mr. KERR complained of having received an incorrect answer to a question he asked the Premier on the 19th November with reference to the mail service from Gramzow to Beenleigh. He had asked whether the Beenleigh and Gramzow postal officers advised in favour of running a mail to Mount Cotton, *via* Gramzow, to Beenleigh thrice weekly in place of the present service of twice per day, and the reply he received was that the department had no report on the subject. He found, however, that the postmaster at Gramzow reported on the 25th May last that the Gramzow service was not required at all, but that the Beenleigh mail was sufficient

for the neighbourhood. The reason he asked the question was that he had had occasion to visit the Logan electorate, and was struck with the postal accommodation afforded the people of that district as compared with that given to people in the Western portion of the colony. Some time ago, at the request of the Chamber of Commerce at Barcardine, he and the hon. member for Mitchell interviewed the Postmaster-General, and applied for a mail service between Blackall and Barcardine. There was a service from Charleville to Blackall, and another from the Central Railway to Winton, but anyone who wished to travel from Charleville to Barcardine had to take coach at Blackall for Jericho, a distance of seventy-five or seventy-six miles, which was rather more than the distance between Blackall and Barcardine. If the coach service was continued from Blackall to Barcardine, Cobb and Co.'s coaches would run right through from Charleville to Hughenden. A tenderer offered to perform that service for £80 per annum, but the department declined to incur the expenditure. The reply they received from the department was that the Postmaster-General did not think the circumstances justified the increased expense the proposed service would involve; and it was also stated that there were many places in the country where services were more required and which the department was not able to supply. His reason for asking the question he did was that every man in the Logan district seemed to have a post office at his own door, and £100 a year was paid for this service to Gramzow while people in the bush were told that they could not have services because the cost was too great. A man could not throw a stone in the Logan electorate without striking a postmaster, and he was certain those services never paid for themselves. The hon. member for North Brisbane referred to the service between Springsure and Tambo by the old Nive sawmill; but the hon. member was talking of ancient history, because there was no service there now, although the population had increased. He wished to know if the people living in the Western parts of the colony were going to receive their due share of mail services now that it had been shown that they were entitled to more consideration. In regard to the parcel post, the time had come when they should place some restrictions upon that service, because, as the hon. member for Balonne had pointed out, it was increasing to such an extent that separate tenders would have to be called. Anyone who had travelled by these coaches, particularly about Christmas time, would know that space was taken up by parcels that ought to be given to passengers, and the contractors could not really estimate what space would be required. He was sure that the tenders that would be received in future for these services would be very much higher, and the attention of the department ought to be given to the matter, because at present the mails were being delayed and the passengers inconvenienced. Generally the coaches were so heavily loaded that the horses could not keep up the speed necessary to adhere to the time-table, and they had to travel late at night in consequence.

Mr. STODART had been through the best part of the Logan electorate to-day, and saw only one post office. He did not know much about other people's electorates, and was grateful for the attention the hon. member for Barcoo had given to the Logan; but he should advise him to give more attention to his own electorate. He did not see why the hon. member should go to the Logan to talk about things he wanted in the Barcoo.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member seemed to think he had a lien on the Logan electorate, but

the hon. member did not represent that electorate at the time he was referring to. He would be very glad if the hon. member would come out to the Barcoo to help them to get some post offices there.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. member for Barcoo had asked him a general question as to whether the West was not to receive equal justice with other parts of the colony. He would be very sorry if the West did not receive equal justice. If the hon. member asked him a specific question with regard to a mail between Blackall and Barcaldine, he would endeavour to get the information.

Mr. KERR asked whether it was the intention of the department to run a service between Blackall and Barcaldine?

Mr. FITZGERALD: The hon. member for Logan seemed to think that the reference of the hon. member for Barcoo was a personal reflection upon himself, but the intention of the hon. member for Barcoo was to show that the department refused to grant a certain service on the ground that they had no money, whilst they were always able to find money for small services in the neighbourhood of Brisbane. At present the service between Barcaldine and Blackall went round by Jericho instead of going direct. Cobb and Co. ran a coach between Blackall and Jericho, and the coach leaving Jericho was timed to meet the Western mail to Longreach. As a business man in Longreach, he could speak of the inconvenience and delay caused by the service. There was a great deal of correspondence between Blackall and Longreach, and when he spoke of Longreach he also referred to Winton and Hughenden. There was a direct road from Charleville to Blackall, but there was a gap between Blackall and Barcaldine of about seventy miles, and it took two days for letters to get from Blackall to Barcaldine *via* Jericho, and as the mails were not delivered until the following morning in many cases, there was a further delay in answering. Owing to the way in which the mails were run, it was very quick to get a reply in a week. They did not want to interfere with Cobb and Co's. monopoly; but there was a coach running between Blackall and Barcaldine, and a supplementary mail by that coach would not cost much. In Brisbane every tramcar carried letters, and every steamer took letters to the Northern ports. The request that was now being made had been also made by the chamber of commerce at Barcaldine and by the progress association at Longreach, both of which bodies consisted of business men. When other departments had requests made to them from those bodies they were always attended to, and very often granted.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL understood that the department had inquired into the matter, and considered that the traffic between Blackall and Barcaldine was not sufficient to justify the service. He believed the bulk of the traffic between the two places went through Jericho, and would always follow that route, because people going to Rockhampton went to Jericho and saved so much rillage, and as far as possible the mails followed the passenger traffic. The Post Office had only a limited amount of money to spend, and they over-ran the constable every year as it was, and hon. members would have to fortify their requests by showing that the traffic justified the service they asked for.

Mr. KERR: There is a coach running at present.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That circumstance would have some weight, but at present the department could not accede to the request.

The HOME SECRETARY wished to reply to a statement made the other day by the hon. member for Flinders with reference to an officer of the Telegraph Department who had recently arrived in the colony. Of course the success of that officer would depend upon the confidence those who worked under him had in his ability. The hon. member left the impression in *Hansard* that Mr. Hesketh was a failure, and he wished to tell the hon. member that that was not so. The Blackpool works had not been designed or constructed by Mr. Hesketh, but he took charge when the works were being completed, and felt it to be his duty to inform the committee of management that certain alterations were required to make the works a success. Before his proposals were carried out—though his designs were adopted—Mr. Hesketh was selected to perform more important duties in Queensland, and he brought with him the best wishes of all the persons with whom he had been previously working. He could tell the hon. member that Mr. Quin, Mr. Hesketh's successor, finding that some misconception might be put upon the report to which the hon. member had referred, wrote to the *Electrician* in these terms—

"You speak of new engineers indicting their predecessors' entire handiwork. Would it greatly surprise you to know that my report agrees with the recommendations of my predecessor (Mr. Hesketh) except on one point only?"

Mr. Quin also wrote to Mr. Hesketh on the subject as follows:—

"You have probably seen statements made that my report on these works was an indictment of yourself. This, of course, is entirely untrue, and it has been denied in the local Press by Mr. Brodie, the chairman of committee, and in the *Electrician* by myself. What I have condemned is certainly not yourself personally or professionally."

The hon. member would see that, though the Blackpool works might be condemned, the man who condemned them was the man who was here now to look after their interests. The hon. member would be pleased to hear that all who were acquainted with Mr. Hesketh's work, or who had had anything to do with him in the mother country, certified to his ability; and that it was clear that they had in Mr. Hesketh the right man in the right place.

Mr. McDONALD: The hon. member should have acquainted him with his intention to bring the matter up. The report to which he had referred had come under his notice quite accidentally, and it had led him to urge that in the important matter with which they were dealing at the time they ought to go steadily. He had no desire to condemn Mr. Hesketh, and had not condemned him at all, but he had referred to the report to show that they ought to go steadily in the matter.

Mr. BELL: The Home Secretary was no more bound to inform the hon. member for Flinders that he intended to bring the matter up than the hon. member was to inform the Home Secretary that he intended to bring the matter upon the previous occasion, and it would have been more manly also if the hon. member for Flinders had informed the electrical engineer of his intention to make an attack upon that gentleman's reputation. No doubt the hon. member had made no original comments upon the electrical qualifications of Mr. Hesketh, but the report to which the hon. member had referred created a doubt in the minds of those who were listening to the hon. member as to Mr. Hesketh's capacity as an electrical engineer. He was glad the Home Secretary had gone to the trouble to show that there was nothing in the adverse criticism read out by the hon. member for Flinders. There were no grounds for supposing that the hon. member for Flinders had any

particular animosity in the matter, but he suspected that the hon. member had been made the stalking horse for the animosity of some individual, possibly a professional individual.

Mr. McDONALD : The hon. member's assertion was not true, and it was quite in keeping with the hon. member himself. As a matter of fact he did not know a solitary electrical engineer in Queensland. The paper had come into his possession, as he said, quite accidentally, and when he heard the Home Secretary speaking in glowing terms of Mr. Hesketh and the works in progress under that gentleman's recommendation he was quite justified in making the reference to the report that he did.

Mr. KEOGH desired to bring under notice the fact that the officer in charge of the Railway Telegraph Department at Ipswich had a very great deal of work to do with but one assistant, and got very little pay for his work.

Mr. CASTLING : It was generally understood in the North and elsewhere that during the wet season there would probably be a great rush of diggers to New Guinea. Should that rush take place it was very important that communication should be established between New Guinea and the rest of Australia, and he would suggest that a survey should be made for a cable from Thursday Island. There were plenty of boats lying idle which could be employed for that purpose, and the survey would not cost much.

Mr. JACKSON : For some time past mining members had complained of the absurdly high rate of 8d. per oz. charged for the transmission of gold through the Post Office, which was double the charge made for letters. Some members had waited on the Secretary for Mines and the Postmaster-General this session in reference to the matter, but relief seemed to be as far off as ever. Gold could not be carried by parcels post, and even if that was allowed it would not suit a good many people in outside fossicking fields. It would be inconvenient to such persons, and they would not care to run the risk of sending it in that way. If the present rate charged by the Post Office were reduced, the department would not lose any revenue, because men who now sent gold through other channels would then send it through the Post Office. When he was a storekeeper on the Upper Cape River some years ago he bought considerable quantities of gold, which he sent to Charters Towers by a messenger, or took it himself, rather than pay 8d. per oz. for transmitting it through the Post Office, and there were many small storekeepers on fossicking fields who acted in the same way. He hoped the Government would take steps to remedy that matter.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : The department could not alter the rate without legislation, as it was fixed by the Post and Telegraph Act ; but the Postmaster-General had expressed his willingness to allow the mail contractor to carry gold at a reduced rate, and that would be just as safe as sending it by parcels post.

Mr. JACKSON was well aware that the rate could not be altered without legislation, and that was what they wanted. The suggestion that the mailman should be allowed to carry gold at a reduced rate would not meet the difficulty, because miners would have to wait at a post office to catch a mailman as he was passing. Moreover, the mailman could refuse to take the gold if he chose, and in any case he would have no responsibility.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : The mail contractor would be responsible if he took it.

Mr. JACKSON : But he would not take the responsibility, or if he did he would very likely charge more than 8d. per oz., and though the department accepted no responsibility for gold,

even if it was registered, it would be very much safer to send it in the usual way through the Post Office than by the mailman as a loose parcel. That would not meet the case at all, and he hoped the Government would deal with the matter by legislation as soon as possible.

Mr. DAWSON : The suggestion made by the Attorney-General had been thrown out by the Postmaster-General some time ago, but it would not be sufficient relief. The mailman might not care to carry the gold upon his own responsibility, and if he did he might charge as much as was charged now. The matter had been under the notice of the Government since 1893, when he came down to Brisbane armed with all the documents to show that legislation was necessary, and it would not take very long to run a short amending Bill through. As a case in point he might mention that gold obtained at a small diggings outside his electorate had to be sent to Charters Towers to be smelted and assayed, and in many cases it was worth as little as 5s. 6d. per oz. It was not all gold, of course, but it was charged as such by the Post Office, and they might fairly ask for legislation on the subject.

Mr. STEWART : There had been many complaints about insufficient postal accommodation all over the colony, and the excuse was always given that the present loss was very great. It was desirable that the greatest convenience should be given, as it was a means of promoting settlement ; and one method of defraying the cost would be to curtail the expense of management. The salaries paid seemed to be out of all proportion to the work done. For instance, the postmasters at Townsville and Rockhampton received over £500 a year each, which he thought was too much for the position. He also noticed that at a place called Raglan, in the Central district, the cost of management was £308 per annum. At Southport the cost was £366, and at Sandgate £300, which certainly seemed to be extravagance. The Queensland Government might very well follow the example of the British Government in this matter, although he admitted that the conditions were different. The department itself seemed to be conscious of the fact that this extravagance existed, because last year in several cases the salaries of some of the higher-paid men were reduced, but there was still room for further reductions, which would enable greater facilities to be given to the public. Of course he had no desire to see the men underpaid, but it was because they were overpaid that sufficient communication could not be given. He hoped some reforms would be accomplished. The senior inspector of schools, who must possess educational qualifications of the highest order, only received £450, and either he was underpaid or postmasters were overpaid. Any man of ordinary capacity could fill the position of postmaster, and when compared with the salary of the senior inspector of schools £300 would be sufficient for any postmaster.

Mr. McDONNELL asked whether the Attorney-General had any reply to give to the question asked about the letter-carriers?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : The hon. member for Bundaberg had handed him the papers, and he had told the hon. member that he would bring the whole matter under the notice of the Postmaster-General, and with that the hon. member had been satisfied.

Mr. BROWNE asked whether anything more had been done with regard to the telegraph line from Cairns to Geraldton? It was two years since it had been stated that the matter was under the consideration of the department.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : The matter would be provided for in the next Estimates.

Mr. GLASSEY wished to direct the attention of the Attorney-General to some matters of local interest to the Bundaberg district. A young man of eighteen or nineteen years of age had been in the service as a telegraph messenger for three or four years, when he ought to be in a better position, and he was only getting £1 a week. Another young man—a little older than the first—had been a messenger for four or five years, and he also got £1 a week. Then there was a young man in the telephone exchange in Bundaberg who had been in the department for ten years, and he was in receipt of only £100 a year. He urged upon the Postmaster-General the desirability of increasing the salaries of those young men. Another matter to which he wished to refer was that an application had been made to have bicycles provided for the messengers at Bundaberg instead of horses, as had been done at Rockhampton and Charleville, but the conditions imposed by the department were not at all satisfactory. The messengers had to arrange for the purchase of the machines, and they had to pay so much per month, and eventually the bicycles became their property.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Those regulations have been altered. The department now allows 5s. a week for the bicycles. The other matters will be attended to.

Mr. GLASSEY thought those in the higher grades were overpaid, but at that late period of the session he would merely content himself with moving, as a protest, that the salary of the Under Secretary be reduced from £800 to £700. He believed that that officer was getting £200 or £300 too much, and there were other officers receiving £550 who were getting £150 too much. He moved the reduction as a warning that the time was coming when there would be an overhaul of the public service, with a view to economising to a considerable extent.

Question—That £700 only be voted for the Under Secretary—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 15.

Messrs. McDonnell, Keogh, Stewart, Hoolan, Kerr, Dawson, Hardacre, McDonald, Browne, Fogarty, Cross, Fitzgerald, Dunsford, Turley, and Glassey.

NOES, 36.

Messrs. Byrnes, Tozer, Foxton, Dalrymple, Philp, McCord, Macdonald-Paterson, McGahan, Bell, McMaster, Smith, Hamilton, Lissner, Bridges, Collins, Tooth, Finney, Castling, Stephenson, Cribb, Grimes, Corfield, W. Thorn, Battersby, Newell, Bartholomew, Lord, Stodart, Armstrong, Callan, Smyth, Stephens, Stumm, Chataway, Curtis, and Leahy.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. GLASSEY asked the Attorney-General whether he would bring the claims of the supernumeraries referred to under the notice of the Postmaster-General? He would be glad to get some promise of the kind on record.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Certainly I will.

Original question put and passed.

CONVEYANCE OF MAILS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that £115,800 be granted for the conveyance of mails. The vote was practically the same as last year.

Question put and passed.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that £48,700 be granted for miscellaneous services. There was an increase for country post offices and receiving offices of £700. For the maintenance and repair of lines £1,000 less than last year was asked for. £300 more than last year was required for travelling expenses, and there was an increase of £300 in the vote for rent of temporary offices and allowances in lieu of quarters. There was an increase of £400 for labourers for the protection of telegraph stations, and an increase from £3,400 to £6,000 in accord-

ance with the general principle adopted for extra cost of living on Northern and Western lines. Otherwise the vote was the same as for last year.

Mr. TURLEY asked the amount received from the New Caledonia cable?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The value of the Government and meteorological telegrams for 1895-6 was £701 16s. 8d. The value of private telegrams for the same period was £3,013 8s. 7d., Queensland's proportion being £220 14s. 5d.

Question put and passed.

METEOROLOGICAL BRANCH.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that £1,520 be granted for the meteorological branch. There was an increase in the amount for the salaries of assistants, and in the item for the purchase of instruments.

Question put and passed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that £7,955 be granted for the Auditor-General. There was an increase in the salary of the inspector and examiner of accounts, and there were small increases in the salaries of the record clerk and two other clerks. The item "travelling expenses" was increased by £200, that being necessary on account of the increased work.

Mr. GLASSEY wished to supplement the remarks he had made on a previous occasion, when he suggested, along with the hon. member for Bulimba, that some extra remuneration should be given to the Auditor-General for the valuable services he had rendered to the country in connection with the recent bank investigation. While doing that work he must have put forth considerable extra effort in order to keep the work of his department up to high-water mark.

The TREASURER: There was no doubt that the Auditor-General had a large amount of work thrown upon his shoulders which he could not do by deputy, and which he insisted upon doing himself. As to giving him any extra remuneration for the late responsible work he had been engaged in, he was of so conscientious a nature that it was very difficult to pay him any more than the amount voted for his salary. He might say at once that that gentleman had refused to take anything more than his salary. His (the Treasurer's) sympathies were entirely in the direction indicated by the leader of the Labour party, and he was quite sure that somehow that worthy officer of Parliament would be rewarded for his services.

Mr. GLASSEY believed that the Auditor-General had been so busy in connection with his own work lately that he was prevented from engaging in the further investigation of the affairs of the institution they had been discussing during the past few days, and would like to know whether he was not at liberty to engage in that work.

The TREASURER: The Auditor-General had been out of town for some time, as the hon. member was aware, making an inspection in the Burnett district, and he had not had an opportunity of seeing him for the past fortnight. He had been able to consult with one member of the committee so far, and before giving further instructions he would like to consult with the whole four members. He might mention that, as far as the one he had seen was concerned, they were not very willing to go on with any further investigation, and would only do so upon instructions and from a sense of duty to the country. At the same time he hoped to induce the whole four to undertake the investigation.

Mr. GLASSEY thought that if the four members of the committee had not the time to undertake the work they could find other persons of

sufficient talent and energy who would be willing to do it, and he believed that the country expected the work to be done, and done thoroughly. Question put and passed.

TRUST AND SPECIAL FUNDS—EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION.

The TREASURER moved that £5,050 be granted from the trust fund for European immigration.

Question put and passed.

PACIFIC ISLAND IMMIGRATION.

The TREASURER moved that £12,160 be granted for Pacific Island immigration.

Mr. GLASSEY mentioned the case of an inspector at Mackay whose salary was £250, and who was transferred to Bundaberg at £225. If inspectors were necessary they should receive fair remuneration. He did not imply that he approved of the traffic, and hoped some day to take part in its abolition, but so long as such officers were employed he hoped no injustice would be done.

The TREASURER did not know whether the hon. member would like to know the result of the inquiry which had been held. There was a saving of £25, necessitated by the circumstances of the case. On the whole vote there was a decrease, and economy was being practised. The money was raised entirely from employers.

Mr. BROWNE: The fund was largely contributed to by the funds of deceased islanders.

Mr. GLASSEY referred to the case of Mrs. Bergin, whose husband was killed at the islands. He had brought the case under the notice of the hon. gentleman, who had promised to look into it.

The TREASURER: The present year's funds had been charged already with a gratuity of £200 to the widow of an unfortunate man who was killed by the blacks. There was also a sum of £604 for destitute islanders, and expenses of inspectors and return passages absorbed further amounts. £423 11s. 11d. had been paid to relatives of deceased islanders. He did not remember the case of Mrs. Bergin, but would look into it.

Question put and passed.

CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SHEEP.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £3,217 be granted for the Chief Inspector of Sheep.

Question put and passed.

REGISTRAR OF BRANDS.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £3,683 be granted for the Registrar of Brands.

Question put and passed.

STOCK INSTITUTE.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £1,234 be granted for the Stock Institute.

Mr. McDONALD: Who was the director of the Stock Institute?

The HOME SECRETARY: Mr. Pound.

Mr. McDONALD: Could the hon. gentleman afford any information in reference to the tick plague?

The HOME SECRETARY: The Tick Act having been passed this year the Estimates did not include this year's expenditure. The colony had been divided into districts, with inspectors at £200 a year and forage allowance. If the inspectors were not fully employed their services would be utilised in other directions. Regular reports were received which were of a hopeful character. There had been no abnormal development of the plague, which had receded from the Central line to the Hughenden line. No ticks had been seen on the Barcoo, and the greater part of the colony was free from ticks except the coast district. They were anxious as to what the developments might be in that portion of

the year when ticks showed the greatest activity, which was about now; but every precaution had been taken. There was no portion of the world in which there were so many dips, and if the hon. member would like to see what was being done he could show him a map in his office which showed where each inspector was located, the position of the dips, and every place where ticks had been observed. He was extremely hopeful that the disease in its worst form had passed away from the colony, and the loss would be much less than was originally expected.

Mr. McDONALD asked if the Home Secretary could give them any information in regard to a case in which diseased cattle had been taken from Townsville to Hughenden to be experimented upon. It seemed to be a very dangerous thing to do, because the fact that the diseased cattle were not to be obtained about Hughenden showed that the district about there was pretty clean.

The HOME SECRETARY: There was a popular delusion about the danger of travelling cattle. It had been demonstrated in America that cattle with ticks could be travelled through clean country without any contagion resulting if ordinary precautions were taken. It was thought that it was dangerous to travel cattle from Longreach to Lake's Creek, but there was no recorded instance of ticks infecting cattle in proximity to the Central line, and where they were brought in to Barcaldine they had died out. Ticks became abundant in the paddocks at Lake's Creek, but no deaths had occurred, and great exertions were being made to extirpate the pest. In the case the hon. member referred to, Dr. Wynne was anxious to get some tick-cattle upon which to complete some experiments, and, although there were tick-cattle already in the yards at Barcaldine, they were not the cattle he wanted. He procured these cattle, and no danger had resulted. He had seen him during the last week, and had been assured that he was perfectly satisfied with the results of his experiments, which consisted in injecting the antidote into the animal itself. From what they knew now, cattle could even be taken by steamer without any possibility of danger. The experiments of Dr. Wynne had been in the direction of dealing with the animal itself, because they had found that all those dressings did more harm to the animals than the ticks, and although they killed the ticks, they killed the cattle as well.

Mr. SMITH said it was a source of great satisfaction that these experiments in inoculation were likely to prove successful, but he would like to know if any other cure that had been proposed was likely to prove a success.

The HOME SECRETARY: All the external applications which had been tried had proved failures. Dr. Hunt was pursuing his investigations on the lines he had laid down before he went to America, and which had been attended with some success when followed up by Dr. Wynne. An agreement had been entered into with Dr. Hunt that he should give the Government his services in connection with his investigations for £500 for the first year. The Stock Board, which represented those who contributed to the fund, had recommended that he should be paid £600 a year.

Mr. McDONALD: Has he the right of private practice?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. McDONALD: Then with that and the hospital he cannot have much time for this work.

The HOME SECRETARY: Dr. Hunt would devote as much time to the work as if he did nothing else, because he was following original researches. Not one man in a thousand could do

the work required, and he had it from Dr. Hunt himself that his practice at Hughenden was worth £1,500 a year. The doctor had not wanted to take up the work. There would be something in the nature of an experimental farm at Hughenden, and if Dr. Hunt succeeded in his investigations the money would not be lost.

Mr. SMITH: Have any experiments been made with the virus of pleuro-pneumonia?

The HOME SECRETARY: Experiments had been made by drovers for years, and there was no doubt that inoculating with pleuro-pneumonia had rendered cattle more unlikely to die from tick disease. Hundreds of persons had brought cures to the department, but he told them that he could only assist them with their work, and that if they succeeded in perfecting their cures they would be profitable to them in America and South Africa. He hoped they would not require the services of Dr. Hunt in connection with the tick disease for more than twelve months, but it was the opinion of those who contributed the fund that a stock institute should be established, not only in connection with the tick disease, but other stock diseases. He hoped that by next year the institute would be started, and no more competent man than Dr. Hunt could be appointed as manager.

Mr. JACKSON: What will you do with Mr. Pound?

The HOME SECRETARY: Mr. Pound would work alongside Dr. Hunt. Mr. Pound was a bacteriologist; Dr. Hunt was a pathologist. He hoped the institute would become not only a Queensland institute but an Australian institute, and with Dr. Hunt as manager, and Mr. Pound as his assistant, no better equipped department could be found anywhere.

Mr. JACKSON: Are you paying Dr. Hunt out of the trust fund?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes. Of course there had been a heavy drain on the fund since the tick disease had broken out. There was about £12,000 to the credit of the sheep fund. That fund would have to bear its share of the expense of establishing the institute. There were about £2,500 to the credit of the brands fund, and a levy was being made under the Diseases in Stock Act which should bring in £10,000. He had directed the officers of the department to postpone the levy until they had got in the new returns, so that the levy should be made on the present number of stock instead of on this year's returns. The demand on the fund would be about £10,000 per annum. The inspectors, who were necessary to carry out the regulations of the sister colonies, involved an expenditure of about £5,000 a year. The other colonies required a certificate from an inspector that the cattle were free from disease before they left their pastures, so that there had to be a perfect army of inspectors. As soon as it was possible to reduce the number it would be done. He hoped that the disease which was now decimating the herds in South Africa would not be introduced into Queensland. He believed they had now got the department into proper order. He called the board together whenever he thought it necessary, and with their assistance he hoped to be able to surmount the difficulties which six months ago appeared so serious, but which did not appear so serious at the present moment.

Mr. KERR was glad to hear the funds of the board were in such a good state. He would draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that a number of carriers had suffered very much from the enforcement of the quarantine regulations. One carrier had his team dipped at Alpha, and through some mistake in the oil used the hair came off his horses and he was unable to work them for a considerable time, during which

he was prevented from earning his livelihood. A number of them had been unable to get more than one load of wool in to the Central Railway during the wool season, and as that was the only time during which they could earn anything, some of them were now in destitute circumstances. The man who had had his horses dipped at Alpha had sent in an application to the Chief Inspector of Stock, and he would like to hear from the Home Secretary that if those men sent in reasonable applications, and could show that they had been prevented from earning a living, their cases would be considered.

The HOME SECRETARY: All quarantine imposed inconvenience and sometimes loss upon those who had to comply with it. He had only one application made to him under the Act, and that was an application from North Rockhampton, which was under consideration. He would get a report upon it, and if he found the circumstances such as to entitle the applicant to compensation under the Act he would approve of it. He would be very jealous of applications under the Act, because of course the quarantine must bear hardly upon everyone, and it must be remembered that the regulations under which they suffered inconvenience were enforced for their benefit. The operation of new laws was always considered harsh at first, but he had given every facility for commerce between the towns near the quarantine line. He believed that even now he could fairly ask New South Wales to amend the quarantine boundary and make it the railway line, and they could then have dips along the line and much inconvenience would be avoided. Any case in which it could be shown that loss was suffered through the negligence of the department, or through action taken by the department which might have been avoided with due care and caution, would be considered and liberally dealt with.

Mr. KERR: That was very well; but the hon. gentleman should remember that those carriers had been made scapegoats, and had been deprived of the means of earning their living during what was their busy season. From what he knew of those men they would not apply for anything to which they were not justly entitled.

Mr. NEWELL: It was no doubt a hardship to teamsters to have their teams put under quarantine, and they should get every consideration. Several teamsters in his district had lost their teams altogether through ticks, and he would like to know whether their claims, if put in, would be considered?

Mr. KERR: The teams I refer to were in clean country, and there was not a tick on them.

Mr. STEWART: There appeared to have been a good deal of blundering in connection with the administration of the Act in North Rockhampton. The dip there had been erected in such a position as to cause the pollution of the water supply of a large number of persons, and he thought the Stock Department might have foreseen that. Rain had fallen since, and that danger was in a great measure done away with. Another matter he wished to refer to was in connection with the inspector, who appeared to have acted in a dictatorial manner and taken the law into his own hands. He was informed that in one case that officer broke down a fence, and took cattle out of the paddock and dipped them, although they were free from ticks. If he had the other necessary qualifications for an inspector, he certainly did not possess ordinary discretion, which was a very great want. It was stated that he was a storekeeper. Of course there were many storekeepers who knew a great deal about stock, but the question was whether he possessed the requisite knowledge. If not, he would like to know whether it was intended to continue to

employ him in the capacity of inspector, and also whether it was intended to continue dipping cattle at the place he had referred to at North Rockhampton. He was glad to hear the Home Secretary state that there appeared to be some prospect of dealing with the tick complaint by another method, because, although dipping might kill the ticks, it killed a good many cattle, and what they wanted was a cure that would kill the ticks and save the cattle.

The HOME SECRETARY: The dipping at North Rockhampton had been discontinued, and would not be carried on there if it was found to be in any way injurious to the inhabitants of the locality, and they made a protest against it. The thing must be subordinated to the health and welfare of the inhabitants, but he believed that it was possible by joint action on the part of the local authority and the department to carry out the dipping in such a way that it would not pollute the water. The injury to the water previously had resulted from turning the cattle loose and letting them run in the watercourses, instead of putting them in a paddock. Mr. Haylock had certainly nothing to do with the location of the dip, as that was fixed by local commissioners at Rockhampton. With regard to his qualifications, Parliament had provided that inspectors should be examined and approved by the Stock Board, and Mr. Haylock had been approved by the board. So far as he knew he had done the work entrusted to him by the board well and energetically. What he (the Home Secretary) complained about was that the Stock Department did not take him into their confidence in regard to the instructions they gave Mr. Haylock. The policy of the Government in administering the Act was a policy of peace preservation, but Mr. Haylock took the law into his own hands, and acted in a way that he did not approve of. The proper method was to request people to undertake the dipping of their own stock, and, if then they failed to do so, to enforce the law against them mildly and quietly, and not rush against them in the manner Mr. Haylock had done. One man had complained that a number of his cattle were lost through the dipping, and the matter was now being investigated. If it was found that the cattle had been lost through negligence on the part of the department, he would be entitled to and would receive compensation. But he wished it to be understood that neither the breaking into the pasture reserve nor the seizing and dipping of the cattle had been done with his knowledge, and that he would have wished it to have been done differently.

Mr. CURTIS: Having known Mr. Haylock for many years, he could say that he had had considerable experience of horses, sheep, and cattle, and was thoroughly well qualified to perform the duties of the office he held at the present time. There was no doubt that some of the cattle that had been dipped had died, but that was not owing to any want of care on the part of the inspector. With regard to the location of the dip, it did not occur to him when he saw it that the water was likely to be contaminated. He was rather inclined to think that if it was contaminated it was by the cattle going down to the water. He believed that after the further directions given to Mr. Haylock there would be no trouble in the performance of his duties.

Question put and passed.

LIVE STOCK AND MEAT EXPORT ACT.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £900 be granted for payments under the Live Stock and Meat Export Act of 1895.

Question put and passed.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION FUND.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £11,042 15s. be granted for police superannuation. Question put and passed.

MARINE DEPARTMENT.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £39,570 be granted for the Marine Department.

Mr. GLASSEY: There was a considerable reduction on the vote. The men in the department some years ago suffered severe retrenchment of salary in addition to their food allowance being reduced. He believed there had been some slight restoration this year; but the men were very much dissatisfied that the increase was not more substantial, and they maintained that they were entitled to be placed on the same footing as the men on the Government steamers "Otter" and "Lucinda." He thought the demands were reasonable, and he would be glad to hear a statement from the Treasurer on the subject.

The TREASURER: There was a considerable increase on last year's vote for wages, the reason being that salaries and sustenance allowance had been amalgamated. In the case of carpenters and blacksmiths the wages had been restored to what they were in 1893 over and above the ration allowance. Seamen and firemen had been restored 10s. a month over and above the ration allowance, to bring them to the uniform rate of wages paid to the other men in the Marine Department. The total amount asked for was for twelve months' expenditure on three dredges. The improvements intended to be carried out were principally works in the Brisbane River; the Rockhampton, Townsville, and Bundaberg Harbour Boards having taken over charge of their respective harbours. The bar cutting was still going on; they were clearing away obstructions in the South Brisbane reach, removing the rocks at Lytton, and finishing the work at Cairns. That would be completed in February next, and the "Platypus" would be brought to Brisbane for repair, as he was informed there was no accommodation at Townsville to effect the necessary repairs.

Mr. McMASTER: The same complaint was made last year in reference to the wages of the men employed on the dredges, and the Home Secretary promised that they should be restored to the rate paid to the men on the Government steamers "Otter" and "Lucinda." He did not think they had all reached that standard yet.

The TREASURER: There had been a difference of 10s. per month, but that had been restored.

Mr. DIBLEY had been informed that all the men had not been restored to what they got prior to 1893. Strikers were then getting the same as firemen, but the firemen had been restored while the strikers had not, although they had to take the firemen's places when the latter were off duty.

Mr. TURLEY said the victualling allowance on board the "Otter" was 2s. per day, but on the dredges and tenders it was 1s. per day. The men on the vessels under the Marine Department, instead of receiving a salary and a victualling allowance, would in future receive a salary which included the victualling allowance of £1 10s. per month; but no restoration in the wages had been made, so far as he could understand. He had been informed that the men on deck in the vessels under the Marine Department had been given back 10s. per month; but they were reduced £1 per month in 1893, while the men below, who were reduced £2 per month, had been promised £1 per month increase. He wished to know if that was correct, or whether what the Treasurer was leading the Committee

to believe was correct—namely, that the wages had been restored in full, without considering the victualling allowance?

The TREASURER would repeat what he said. In the case of carpenters and blacksmiths, the salaries had been restored to what they were previous to 1893. The salaries of the firemen had been restored 19s. per month, and had been made uniform with those paid to men holding similar positions in the Marine Department.

Mr. TURLEY: They were told when the reductions were made in 1893 that they were necessary, seeing that persons outside the Government service had had their wages reduced. Since then men working directly under the Government had had their wages restored to what they were before 1893, while the men in the Marine Department had not had their salaries restored. It appeared that in one Government department the necessity for restoring the wages was recognised, while in another it was not. Governments were always backward in increasing wages, but they were very smart in reducing them. A few days ago a motion was carried by the Melbourne Harbour Trust to the effect that the wages of the men should be increased, the reason given being that wages outside had been increased, and for the same reason it would be only a fair thing to restore the wages of the men in the Treasurer's department to what they were before 1893.

Mr. GLASSEY was sorry he had not with him some data supplied by men engaged in this department, which would have shown the Treasurer that the information given by him was not in accordance with that conveyed to the men. The Treasurer had stated that he had received departmental information to the effect that the men engaged on the dredges had been placed in the same position with regard to wages and victualling allowance as the men on the Government steamers.

The TREASURER: The men in the other branches of the Marine Department.

Mr. GLASSEY: He would submit the information he possessed to the Treasurer in the course of a few days, so that the hon. gentleman might compare his information with the information given by the men. He wished to know now when the increases to the men who received increases would commence—at the beginning of the present financial year, or when?

The TREASURER: Any increases commenced with the commencement of the year. He would be ready to hand over the dredges to a harbour board in Brisbane, and if that was done he hoped the men would be in a better position than they were now.

Mr. TURLEY: A certain barge, which had been converted into a suction dredge, was half her time lying alongside the wharf in consequence of breakages in the machinery. The result was that the river was in such a condition that even coasting boats going from the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company's wharf to the South Brisbane wharves got stuck; and two or three mail boats had been in danger of breaking their backs. The present state of the river was a disgrace to whoever was responsible, and he hoped that, whatever authority might have the management of the port of Brisbane in future, the work done and the money expended would give more satisfaction than had been the case for some time past. It was only the week before last that one of the "Duke" line had been lying nearly across the river. It was necessary that something should be done. There was only one little suction dredge working in the reach half her time, and she carried four or five loads a day down the river and deposited the silt in a spot from which

another suction dredge pumped it on to the land. At the time of the elections they had been told by the Government that it was necessary to do something to improve their ports in view of the efforts being made by New South Wales to secure trade and the advantages which she offered to vessels to go there. Could the Treasurer tell them anything that had been done?

The TREASURER: I told you—taking away the Lytton rocks.

Mr. TURLEY: He believed there was something in that, but apparently they had not men in the colony who were capable of working the machinery, and men had been imported as well as the machinery. Notwithstanding all the professions of the Government at the elections, nothing had been done, and the Brisbane River was in a worse state than it had been since he came to the colony, eighteen years ago. People would like to know whether the Government were going to do anything to afford facilities for vessels discharging their cargoes in the Brisbane River.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK.

The TREASURER moved that £9,088 be granted for the Government Savings Bank.

Question put and passed.

THE MEAT AND DAIRY PRODUCE ENCOURAGEMENT ACT OF 1893.

The TREASURER moved that £1,900 be granted for the Meat and Dairy Produce Encouragement Act of 1893.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1895-96.

The TREASURER moved that £117,857 18s. be granted for the service of the year 1895-96, Supplementary Estimates, for the various departments of the Government. It was not necessary to explain the votes, which had all been referred to in the Financial Statement. They were a little higher than usual, but a full explanation of that had been given a considerable time ago.

Mr. GLASSEY: You are not taking the whole vote?

The TREASURER: Yes; that had always been done before. All the money had actually been spent.

Mr. TURLEY: Could the hon. gentleman give the Committee any information as to who received the money included in the vote on page 4 of the Estimates, "Reward, Ayrshire Downs arson case, £900"?

The TREASURER: He had replied to that question before this session. It was contrary to the public interests that he should give the information asked for.

Mr. TURLEY: It seemed to him that they were inaugurating a secret service business which was not in the interests of the public or of the persons administering the Government.

The TREASURER: It was money well spent.

Mr. TURLEY: That might be, in the hon. gentleman's opinion; but he was pointing out that they were inaugurating a secret service fund which might be used for all sorts of purposes which the Government might consider good, but which other persons might consider bad if they knew the circumstances and the persons to whom the money was paid.

At eighteen minutes past 10 o'clock, the CHAIRMAN called upon the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Stephens, to relieve him in the chair.

Mr. STEPHENS took the chair accordingly.

Mr. KERR: There was an item on page 5 of the Estimates—

The TREASURER: There is an item on page 2, "Costs of action Reid and others v. the Speaker."

Mr. GLASSEY : Don't be too sarcastic.

Mr. KERR : There was an item, "Expenses of Local Government Commission," on page 5. He wished to know how much per day was received by the gentlemen sitting on that commission?

The TREASURER : It was one of the cheapest Royal Commissions that ever sat in Queensland, and the work done was remarkably good.

Mr. DUNSFORD : Didn't they strike for an extra guinea a day?

The TREASURER : No, there were no labour agitators amongst them.

Mr. McDONALD : You took good care of that. Mr. KERR : He had asked the hon. gentleman how much per day was paid to each member of the commission?

The TREASURER : I do not know. You have the full amount here.

Mr. KERR : The item appeared to him and to others to be a very large one, and he understood that the members of the commission had voted themselves £2 2s. a day.

The TREASURER : No, they did not vote themselves anything.

Mr. KERR : That was what was stated, and it was to give the Minister an opportunity to let the public know how much per day the members of the commission received that he asked the question. He considered that if they got £2 2s. a day it was not the cheapest commission that had ever sat in Queensland.

Mr. DANIELS was surprised at the hon. member for Barcoo referring to that matter, because it was well known that the Government had a lot of electioneering agents and defeated candidates at the election, and they had to pay them. They must feed their friends when they were too sick to feed themselves.

Mr. BROWNE wanted some information with regard to the item "Reid and others v. Speaker." He did not know whether "Reid and others" included himself, but the action cost the country a great deal of money, the biggest share of which went into the pockets of the Attorney-General. He wished to know why a sum of £142 was asked for in addition to the amount already voted?

The TREASURER : The hon. member would have to apply to the Speaker for that information, as the action was against the Speaker.

Mr. KERR : Then why did you invite the hon. member to ask for the information?

The TREASURER did not invite him, but simply stated that there were several items on that page deserving of note, of which that was one. He would point out that it was necessary, because a number of members thought they were wiser than Parliament, took the case into the Supreme Court, got up a subscription among the working men, spent all that money, and then the people of the country had to pay the balance.

Mr. BROWNE : The hon. gentleman was in one of his sarcastic moods, and had insulted members on that side who had asked for information. A fortnight ago he showed more consideration to members on that side, but now that he had got the Queensland National Bank Bill through he thought he was off the chain. With regard to the statement that he should apply to the Speaker for information on that matter, he might do so on a future occasion, but in the meantime, with the view of getting some information on the subject, he moved that the item "Reid and others v. Speaker, £142 15s. 3d.," be omitted.

Mr. GLASSEY hoped the Treasurer would be serious. The hon. gentleman seemed to be anxious for a bit of fun, but surely he would see that the question asked by the hon. member for Barcoo was a reasonable one, and should be

answered seriously, and not sneeringly. He trusted the hon. gentleman would not indulge in his little sarcasms, but that he would treat members in the way they ought to be treated by the head of the Government and the leader of the House.

Mr. DANIELS : The proposal to omit the item under consideration was not made because they wanted to omit the item, but because they wanted some further information. The hon. gentleman invited members on that side to ask the question, and then when they did ask it he threw a slur on them. If the hon. gentleman wished to get on with the business of the Committee he should not insult members when they asked for information. Members had been there two nights, and wanted to do the business and get home, but, if it was necessary, he for one was prepared to sit up another night, though he had no wish to do so.

The TREASURER : It was a great pity that some people were so supersensitive. He would comply with the request and give the information. The item was supplementary of £900 which was voted last year, but the papers had not come before him, and he had no information as to details. All he knew was that on one occasion the leader of the Labour party and the hon. member for Croydon called upon him at the Treasury and made certain representations to him with regard to the costs of the action. He would not repeat what was said because it was confidential. He explained that it was a matter outside the Treasurer's province; he expressed sympathy with them, and asked if they would have any objection to him laying the matter before Mr. Speaker. They agreed to that. He represented the matter to Mr. Speaker next day, and he laid it before the House. The House agreed, on his (the Treasurer's) motion, that the money should be paid, and paid it was accordingly. That was all he knew about it.

Mr. BROWNE : The hon. gentleman had not made a correct statement. He, Mr. Reid, and Mr. Glassey called upon the hon. gentleman in his capacity of Premier, and asked him whether the Government intended to proceed further in the matter of the costs. He said it was a question entirely for the Speaker to deal with. The hon. gentleman said he consulted with the Speaker, who laid it before the House. The fact was that the hon. member for Warwick brought the question before the House by way of a motion. He (Mr. Browne) did not want it brought forward because he believed it would be defeated. Although he understood that the Premier had given some idea that he would allow that motion to be carried, yet he opposed it when it came on and it was thrown out on technical grounds. Then proceedings were rushed on against the three members concerned, and they received information that the bailiffs would be sent to their residences. The money was at once paid to clear two members, so that one could fight alone. He was quite prepared then to resign his seat and go insolvent. His friends advised him that he should tell the leader of the House and the Speaker what he intended to do. He did so, and the question having been brought before the House the hon. gentleman moved his motion. That was very different to the hon. gentleman's version. The Government thought they had three Labour members involved where they only had one, and it was only after discovering that, and the fact that there was no chance whatever of any but a Labour man being returned for Croydon, that they took the action they did. The Government thought they had a chance of crushing political opponents. Even if he had received any clemency at the hands of the hon. gentleman, it was a very mean and unchivalrous thing to throw the matter at him in

the way he had done. He could assure hon. members that he was a great deal more proud of the way he had acted than if he had behaved in the mean manner the Premier had right through the piece.

Mr. HAMILTON: The want of chivalry was on the other side. If the hon. member was not ashamed of calling on the Premier, why did he object to the hon. gentleman's interjection about the £700? The hon. member said he objected to the motion of the hon. member for Warwick because he believed it would not be carried, but immediately after it had been rejected by the House he called upon the Premier and told him he was going insolvent. Did he call upon the Treasurer to tell him that because he was so much in love with him, or was it because he expected that leniency would be shown? Had the Premier not shown that leniency, the hon. member would have filed his schedule, and the Speaker, being his creditor, could have refused to give him his certificate, in which case he would not have been eligible for a seat here under clause 61 of the Elections Act.

Mr. SIM rose for the purpose of stating deliberately that the hon. member for Croydon had behind him the whole political influence of the constituency he represented in the action he had taken, not even excepting those who were political opponents. The Treasurer asked why the money was not sent down, but he would remind the hon. gentleman that, although the people in the North had certain resources, they were not in a position to find hundreds of pounds at a moment's notice. Still, if it had been necessary to find money to vindicate the action of the hon. member it would have been found, and as one of the hon. member's constituents he contended that he was justified by circumstances and by the attacks made upon him in the action he then took. No slurs cast across the House against the hon. member would meet with the approbation of his constituents, and it was extremely undesirable that the hon. member for Cook should stand face to face with a man as honourable as himself, and insinuate that he went to the Treasurer cap in hand and asked for relief. He had seen the whole correspondence, and could assure the Committee that every word the hon. member for Croydon said was correct. A motion was introduced by the then hon. member for Warwick desiring to secure relief; but that motion was defeated on a technical point, and the hon. member was put in the position that he must either find the money or file his schedule. He elected to do the latter, and advised his constituents, and in doing that he took a step that was fully warranted by the circumstances, so that it came with a bad grace from the Treasurer to cast slurs upon the hon. members who were involved in that dispute.

Mr. FINNEY did not see that the statement made by the Treasurer clashed with that made by the hon. member for Croydon. Both might be true.

Mr. DANIELS: There was no doubt that it was the intention of the Government, through the Speaker, to try to rush three Labour members out of Parliament. They thought they were certain to gain the seat of the hon. member for Toowong, and there was a possibility of gaining that of the hon. member for Flinders; but they were not certain about that of the hon. member for Croydon; so when the first two paid their costs there was no use running the hon. member for Croydon out, because any man his committee nominated for the seat would have been elected, and as soon as the hon. member received his certificate he would have got back again. If the Government had forced the hon. member to

resign they would have run the colony into the expense of two elections, and would have gained nothing, so they decided to be generous.

The TREASURER: One evening, in the course of debate, the hon. member for Croydon said he never went round the Government offices. He had told the hon. member that if he would go and make known his grievance to the Minister in charge of the department it would do vastly more good than wasting the time of Parliament. It was then that the hon. member said he was not in the habit of going to the Government offices like some members. He (the Treasurer) simply interjected that on one occasion the hon. member went to the Treasury; and he only made the remark once.

Mr. HARDACRE: You said it last session.

The TREASURER: That was when the question came up for discussion, and that was a different matter. The long statement made by the hon. member for Croydon in his desire to advertise himself corroborated what he (the Treasurer) said, except in one particular, in which the hon. member was wrong. The hon. member made it appear that he went to the Treasury before Mr. Morgan's resolution was proposed, whereas it was after the House had refused to vote the money.

Mr. BROWNE: It was before Mr. Morgan's motion was moved.

The TREASURER: Why should he go at all if Mr. Morgan's motion had not been refused?

Mr. GLASSEY: I think it was on the strength of the interview that Mr. Morgan's motion was tabled.

The TREASURER said he had stated the actual facts.

Mr. McDONALD thought there was a good deal in the remark of the hon. member for Cambooya that the Government thought they were going to capture two seats, because they had the candidate for Flinders selected. But the thing did not pan out as the political association expected.

The TREASURER: The expenses in the first two cases had been paid by the Speaker in the first instance, and afterwards they had to be recovered from the parties who had lost the actions. To enable the Speaker to pay the costs the Auditor-General had reported on the matter, and an Executive minute had authorised the expenditure. The Executive minute covered the greater portion of the money, which was paid within a few days and before the 30th June, 1895, and the balance had been paid subsequent to that date and came into the next year's accounts.

Mr. McDONALD asked how it came up in connection with "Reid and others v. the Speaker"? The Speaker had tendered a statement of his costs against Mr. Reid and himself, and had been paid. Had the Speaker not sent in a full statement of his costs?

The TREASURER: The Speaker had had to pay to pay all the costs first, and recover them afterwards.

Mr. McDONALD: The Speaker's costs in two cases had been paid. Then how was it that an additional amount was asked for?

The TREASURER: The amount had not all been paid at once. A certain amount had been paid before 30th June, 1895, and the balance of £142 15s. 3d. came into the next financial year.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: It was perhaps as well that the actual dates should be given. According to "Votes and Proceedings," on 20th August, 1895, Mr. Morgan had moved his motion. On the 17th September the Speaker reported that he had received from his solicitors a bill of costs which amounted to £1,142 15s. 3d. £1,000 had been voted on last year's Estimates,

and the balance was now asked for. The Premier's motion was introduced on the 24th September.

Mr. BROWNE: The day that the hon. member for Bundaberg, Mr. Reid, and he went to the Treasurer was prior to Mr. Morgan's motion, and that motion was the result of the interview. Before that they had asked the Attorney-General whether any action was going to be taken to recover the costs, and that hon. gentleman had said that he had nothing to do with it, and that they had better ask the Treasurer. The Treasurer told them, when they went to him, that it lay with the Speaker of the House. Then Mr. Morgan had introduced his motion. After Mr. Morgan's motion had been defeated steps were taken to defray some of the costs, and the expenses of Mr. Reid and the hon. member for Flinders were paid, and subsequent to that the Treasurer had introduced his motion. He had no wish to advertise himself, and he had not advertised himself on that occasion. The Treasurer had brought up the matter himself. He had no need to be ashamed of anything he had done, and the hon. gentleman did not add to his dignity by descending to such small tactics, and rejoicing over the great victory he had gained over a young member on the other side. He had attained his object, and accordingly asked permission to withdraw his motion.

The TREASURER said the hon. member was labouring under a hallucination. He would recollect that the Under Secretary of the Treasury was present at the interview.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: Well, if the hon. member would go to the Treasury, the Under Secretary would look up his diary, and see when the interview took place; then the hon. member would be convinced. What difference did it make? It was a question of veracity or memory between himself and a member who had been four years in the House, and appealed for commiseration because he was a young man.

Mr. HAMILTON had been the only member on his side who had supported Mr. Morgan's motion, because his feelings were with the hon. member for Croydon at the time. He could corroborate the statement of the Treasurer, because he recollected speaking to the Treasurer and other Ministers about it subsequently in an endeavour on his own account to obtain what he considered leniency for the hon. member. Subsequent to that he recollected that the hon. member had mentioned to him that he intended to go to the Treasurer, and he had heard that he had done so. It really did not matter whether it was before or after Mr. Morgan's motion that the interview took place.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. McDONALD would like to know something about the contribution to the Australian Squadron. He understood that the agreement in connection with it would shortly expire, and he wanted to know if it was the intention to continue that contribution?

The TREASURER: He would read what he stated to the House on the subject in the Financial Statement. Evidently the hon. member did not attend, or his memory was very short. This was what he said—

"Another item of abnormal expenditure for the year of a similar nature is our contribution to the Australian Squadron. Our agreement with the Imperial Government, in conjunction with the other colonies, was to contribute for ten years, and our first instalment, though due on the 1st April, 1891, was not paid until the 28th January, 1892, thus bringing the payment into the financial year succeeding the one in which it was really payable, and this practice has been followed ever since. In order, therefore, to bring our contribution

into its proper due date, two payments have been made in the financial year just closed, involving additional expenditure on this item of £13,691. Our last payment falls due on the 1st April, 1900, and if the correction now made were not done, the Treasurer at the close of the agreement would be a year in arrear with his contribution."

He thought that explanation was sufficient.

Mr. McDONALD: What he wanted to know—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I point out to the hon. member that the vote for the Australian Squadron is not included in the vote now before the Committee. I did not stop the hon. member before as I did not want to block information. The hon. member has asked for information and has received an answer, and I remind him now that that question is not before the Committee.

Mr. McDONNELL desired to call attention to an answer to a question given him earlier in the evening concerning the regulations of the Police Force with respect to sick pay. Clause 22 of the police regulations provided that in case of sickness the constable should be considered on leave of absence, and under clause 4 leave of absence was granted on a scale giving leave not exceeding a fortnight on full pay; exceeding a fortnight and not exceeding a month on half pay, and exceeding a month without pay. Those regulations were enforced up to the date of the recent changes in the heads of the department, and though they had not been rescinded or amended, constables were now only allowed half pay for the first fourteen days of absence through sickness. That amounted in most cases to 21s. per week, and when they had to go to the hospital they were charged that amount for attendance. The change was due to Chief Inspector Stuart, who acted tyrannically and entirely against the interests of the men in the force. The men could get no redress from the heads of the department, and for that reason he brought the matter before the House, that some explanation should be given. Another matter was that according to the regulations the men were entitled to fourteen days' leave of absence in every year, but during the last twelve months numbers of men who had applied for leave had been refused it, and in some cases men had been docked for sick leave. Those matters required explanation by the head of the department.

The TREASURER: The hon. member was probably not aware that they were now discussing the Supplementary Estimates for last year, and that the question before the Committee was, Why those votes had been exceeded? If the hon. member was really desirous of getting information on the subject he referred to, and would call at the office of the Home Secretary any morning, he would get all the information he wished, and have everything explained to him with regard to leave of absence, sick leave, and every other kind of leave.

Mr. McDONNELL was quite aware of the question before the Committee; but, having received unsatisfactory answers to the questions he had put earlier in the sitting, he held that he was quite in order in asking for further information on those Estimates.

Mr. GLASSEY: Chief Inspector Stuart was a man who was utterly unfit to hold a commanding position, and had lost his balance since his promotion to his present office. He might be a good officer in some subordinate position where he would have charge of animals, but he was certainly not fit to be in charge of human beings. By nature and conduct he was a petty tyrant; he had not the brains and capacity to be a big tyrant, or he would be. If peace and harmony were to exist in the Police Force, and the best

men were not to be driven out of the force by petty tyranny and persecution, he would advise the Home Secretary to remove Mr. Stuart to some position that he could fill without injury to his fellow-men.

Mr. McMASTER was really pleased that the case of the police had been taken up by his colleague and the hon. member for Bundaberg, after the way in which they had been abused a few sessions ago by hon. members opposite. He had heard no complaints from the police against Inspector Stuart. Mr. Stuart had been in the service for years, and was, he believed, a most efficient officer, but because he had done his duty in the protection of life and property, and overtaken some of those scoundrels out West who cared nothing for life or limb, some hon. members opposite considered him the worst man in Queensland, and said he should be shunted to some out-of-the-way corner. He hoped the Home Secretary, instead of putting him in a quiet corner, would put him in those places where there were rascals to catch. If he did, he was sure Inspector Stuart would do his duty.

Mr. McDONNELL would repeat that Inspector Stuart was simply a tyrant. There was the case of Constable Dunne, of Toowong, who had been hounded from the force. A detective had been sent to Toowong to make inquiries from a fire-wood proprietor in reference to the wood supplied to that officer—whether it had been really supplied and paid for—although a more honourable officer with a better record there was not in the force. There was also the case of Senior Constable Healy, of Kelvin Grove, against whom there had never been a black mark. He was hunted from the force before he intended to retire, and lost his increased retiring allowance. There was also the case of Constable Lane, of Bulimba, and many others. The whole action of Inspector Stuart was against the interests of the men, and his conduct amounted to petty tyranny. He hoped the Home Secretary would take some action upon the matters he had mentioned. If the hon. gentleman expected the police to be as loyal as they had been in the past he would take a little more interest in their welfare. He was sorry that the hon. member took so very little interest in the matter, and sneered at the remarks that had been made, instead of giving satisfactory answers to the questions that had been asked him.

Mr. LEAHY had known Mr. Stuart for ten or twelve years, and thought him quite the reverse of a tyrant. The hon. member said he knew those things that he had stated, but even if he was told them by the police they were only *ex parte* statements and required to be proved. As for saying that certain things had occurred since Mr. Stuart came here, there was no necessary connection between them and Mr. Stuart's arrival.

The HOME SECRETARY: They were now on the Supplementary Estimates for last year, which were generally moved by the Treasurer, and it was only an accident that he was present. They had had the Police Estimates before them, and the administration of the department had been discussed for a whole week. During that discussion he was ready to give the hon. member all the information he wished; but now because the hon. member received an answer to a question that was not satisfactory to him, he made scandalous charges against the administration of the department under cover of the privileges of the House. If those policemen had a grievance they should go to him as head of the department. The majority of them had confidence in the administration of the department, but no doubt there were some who would go behind the backs of their

officers, and use hon. members of the Labour party to gratify their malice and malevolence against their superior officers. If an officer did wrong he would try to see that wrong redressed. In that case these men sent him a statement saying that they were worn out in the service, and they asked that facilities should be given to get their pensions, but nothing had ever been said about Mr. Stuart's conduct. It was most unfair to the Minister for the police to come there first to get their grievances redressed, because they knew that he had tried to improve their position, and if he had not succeeded there were hundreds of hypocrites in the service, because they had said he had. Why did the hon. member come here with those statements which could not be corroborated?

Mr. McDONNELL: Your manual is the best proof.

The HOME SECRETARY: The manual said fourteen days' leave on full pay; if a man wanted leave up to a month he received half-pay, and anything over a month he had to take without pay. He might say that the force believed in the integrity and uprightness of their Commissioner. Of course there were one or two who had been removed from here to make way for men who had been doing duty in the back blocks for a great number of years; and the hon. member came forward to make an attack on Messrs. Okeden and Stuart at the instance of a lot of grievance-mongers. What he had tried to do was to create ill-will between the police and the Government, and make the police believe that they could not get their grievances redressed unless they went to the Labour party. If they wanted their grievances redressed in fact, they would go to the Minister.

Mr. McDONNELL did not fear the bounce of the Home Secretary; he was going to do his duty. Every statement he had made could be substantiated, and 80 per cent. of the police would say that Inspector Stuart was tyrannical in his actions if a poll could be taken. He was speaking of Inspector Stuart as the boss policeman. The hon. gentleman dwelt on the right of a policeman to air his grievances before the Minister; but did any hon. member think a policeman would be safe in the ranks if he went to the Home Secretary and complained of the Commissioner or Inspector Stuart? There was no use the Home Secretary trying to gloss over those things. The hon. gentleman knew the truth of his statements, and he knew that the Commissioner had requested Dunne to remain in the force after the action of Inspector Stuart, and that Dunne had refused. His authorities for his statements were men who were as jealous of the truth as the Home Secretary himself. He was quite satisfied that the discussion would deter Inspector Stuart from carrying on as he had been doing during the last six months, and it would show him that if the Home Secretary would not take action his conduct would be referred to in that Assembly.

Mr. STORY said that Inspector Stuart had been inspector in charge of his district for many years, and although he knew many members of the force very well he had never heard a complaint against the inspector. He was sure he would have heard if the men had been dissatisfied.

Mr. FINNEY had known Sergeant Dunne for a great many years. He was a fine, respectable man, and, though he had been in the habit of coming to him for the last twelve years when he had any trouble, he had never told him that he had been ill-treated by Inspector Stuart. He certainly had told him that on one occasion, when he had been very ill, Inspector Stuart had come up to him and had spoken in a loud tone—

Inspector Stuart did not speak in whispers—and that he had been upset, as he was very weak at the time. He had known Inspector Stuart ever since he had come to the colony. He believed him to be an excellent officer and a strict disciplinarian. He was a kind-hearted man, though he had a rough exterior. He had also found the Home Secretary most anxious to make a most careful examination into any case which was brought before him, and had a high opinion of the hon. gentleman's impartiality.

Mr. SIM could not endorse the compliments to the Home Secretary in every particular, because in replying to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley the hon. gentleman had allowed himself to be betrayed into expressions which were not creditable to him, and which were not in accordance with fact. The hon. gentleman had said that men actuated by malice and malevolence always made their way to the Labour members in order to ventilate their grievances, and the hon. gentleman evidently believed that Labour members were fond of scandalmongering and listening to the grievances of men actuated by malice and malevolence. He repudiated that, and would say no more about it. The Treasurer, by interjection, had stated that if 80 per cent. of the men under the control of Inspector Stuart would condemn his administration it was a proof of his efficiency; but he could not agree with the hon. gentleman that it was a proof of the efficiency of an officer that men under his command were disaffected. Some little time ago he had called for the papers in connection with the appointment of Lieutenant Chauvel to the adjutancy of the 1st Moreton Regiment. That officer, being an officer of a mounted regiment, was appointed to the paid adjutancy of the 1st Moreton Regiment over the heads of two senior officers—two majors—holding commissions of far longer date than his own, who had served the colony efficiently and well, and who had a good record. He did not hesitate to say that an injustice was done to the regiment, and to the force, and that if the officers of the Defence Force were polled to-morrow that scandalous appointment would receive very strong condemnation. There were five candidates for the position, two of them being majors and members of the regiment to which the appointment was made, and yet the officer of a mounted force was put over their heads. From information he had received he knew that that officer was not fit to take the adjutancy of an infantry corps, and challenged the appointment. He trusted that without attempting to interfere with discipline the Government would take the hint, and see that things were not done which were likely to interfere with the efficiency of the force.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TRUST FUNDS ESTIMATES.

The TREASURER moved that £12,986 4s. 1d. be granted from trust funds.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLEMENTARY LOAN ESTIMATES.

The TREASURER moved that £46,572 0s. 8d. be granted from the loan fund.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the ACTING CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again at the next sitting of the House.

The reception of the resolutions was made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

The House adjourned at thirty-one minutes past 12 o'clock.