

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 18 OCTOBER 1898

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 18 OCTOBER, 1898.

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

CAIRNS GAS COMPANY, LIMITED,
BILL.

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Mr. DRAKE, as chairman, presented the report of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into this Bill, and moved that the paper be printed.

Question put and passed.

The second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Thursday, 27th instant.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. JOSEPH FRANCIS KELSEY.

On the motion of Mr. GRIMES, it was formally agreed—

That there be laid on the table of the House copies of all correspondence between the Government and Mr. Joseph Francis Kelsey with reference to the admission of himself and son into the Gatton College, and their withdrawal therefrom as students.

Also the correspondence relating to Mr. Kelsey's offer to come to Queensland at his own expense to collect data for the information of North American farmers, who desired such information of Queensland as a future field for farming operations.

MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INTRODUCTION IN COMMITTEE.

In Committee,
The SECRETARY FOR MINES moved—

That it is desirable to introduce a Bill to provide for mining for gold and silver on private property.

Mr. McDONALD asked if the hon. gentleman would tell the Committee whether the Bill was an important one? It was difficult, in the present condition of things, to say what was important and what was not.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Bill was a very important one. Unless the other Mining Bill was passed, of course this Bill could not be passed, as the machinery for administering the mining on private property measure was contained in the principal Bill. This Bill was a very short one.

Mr. McDONALD: That's all right; we now know where we are.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; and the report of the Committee was adopted.

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES presented the Bill, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed; and second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

The TREASURER: I move that you do now leave the chair.

Mr. GLASSEY: Most hon. members—at any rate those sitting on this side, and, I am sure, a considerable number of the public generally—expected the Prime Minister to make some statement this afternoon as to the action the party are likely to take after the adverse vote of Thursday last, but seeing that the hon. gentleman desires to remain silent, I think some notice should be taken of what has transpired. I believe I am correct in saying that the party have had a meeting this afternoon, and it is just as well that some information should be given to the House and the country as to the course which is going to be adopted in the future. I doubtless will be met, as I was a few evenings ago, by the Prime Minister saying, "It is for you to consider what action is to be taken. If you are not satisfied, move a vote of want of confidence." However,

it is not for me to anticipate what the hon. gentleman will say, but it is for him to make a statement, if he desires to do so, indicating what course he is prepared to take in view of the vote to which I have alluded.

Mr. DAWSON: The House is entitled to it.

Mr. GLASSEY: I think it is treating the House and the country with scant courtesy if, after the very serious vote on Thursday night—although we were told it was a very little matter and of no consequence—some explanation is not made on the present occasion. It certainly is treating this side of the House with scant courtesy for the Prime Minister to remain in his seat in the easy manner which he adopts this afternoon, without being disturbed in the slightest degree, and refusing to make any statement. Therefore, I desire to raise the question with the view of giving the hon. gentleman an opportunity of saying something in reply, and without committing myself I will be guided entirely by the statement which he may make. I am quite sure what I am about to say will indicate the spirit and temper of the country, and I hope the statement which he will make will be that the House will be asked to grant sufficient Supply to make good the credit of the country to the beginning of the year, and that in the meantime he and his party are prepared to make up their minds to go to the country with a view of consulting the electors as to whether they are satisfied with the present Government. I think it would be most unusual and altogether contrary to parliamentary practice and usage, in the face of such a vote as that on Thursday—a vote of a most substantial character—and, as the Prime Minister said, on a measure of some importance which it was absolutely necessary should become law—that no statement as to the intentions of the Government should be made. I will not say any more at present, but leave the matter in the hands of the Premier and of the House. I sincerely trust that the statement which will be made will be in the direction I have indicated. We are just as anxious to carry on the business of the country in a satisfactory and peaceful manner as the Prime Minister can possibly be, but considering the unsettled state of public affairs, the unsettled state of the public mind, and the state of expectancy which the House and country is in—considering, I think it may be permitted to add, that the House and the country is on the very verge of disgust—I think some action ought to be taken. I will not use any stronger terms, but I trust the statement will be of such a character that it will go forth to the country that there is to be an appeal to the electors at the very earliest date after provision has been made for the affairs of the country being carried on and for it paying its way.

The PREMIER: I think I indicated on Thursday evening the view which I took of the vote on that occasion. I certainly did not attach to it the political significance which the hon. gentleman desires to attach to it, or I should have immediately adjourned the House and made a Ministerial statement this afternoon in anticipation of the hon. gentleman's remarks. But I said then, as I say now, that I attach no political signification whatever to the vote on that occasion. Hon. members who voted against the Government did so, I have no doubt, through conscientious objections to the Bill, but I never regarded it as a party measure, or as one on which the Government staked their existence. I indicated that the Government themselves paid small attention to the Bill as a necessity, but that it would be a Cabinet convenience. I quite admit that I was surprised at the result of that division, but it certainly does not substantiate the idea that the Government have lost the confidence of the House or of the country.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, near!

The PREMIER: Indeed, I believe I am perfectly justified in saying that the action of the House has created a sympathy with the Government.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

The PREMIER: If I were to study the interests of members of the Government themselves I should perhaps accept the advice of the hon. gentleman and ask for an immediate dissolution.

Mr. McDONALD: You are not game.

The PREMIER: However, I place my duty to the country above any private convenience of Ministers, and I wish the next general election to be conducted on such lines as will insure the electors giving a satisfactory mandate to those whom they return to this House. Under those circumstances, and seeing that the majority of the House still support the Government—as will be seen in their action during the work of the session, with which we intend to proceed—I am by no means inclined to follow on the lines indicated by the leader of the Opposition. We have some useful work to do this session, and I hope that work will be accomplished. I have every reason to believe the hon. gentlemen sitting on this side will support the Government in carrying through that useful work, and I see no reason why this should be a barren session. We have wasted, if I may use the word, a lot of time up to the present. I may say that matters which occupied four days in Committee of Supply last session have this session occupied more than eight, and if such an endless flow of talk is persisted in it will reduce our ability to proceed with that legislation we desire. I may tell the hon. gentleman briefly that having the assurance that we have not lost the confidence of our supporters we intend to proceed with legislation. If the leader of the Opposition doubts it, he has his own means of testing it, if he chooses to do so, and I shall be quite content to see him do so, because the Government are not anxious to hold office one day longer than they possess the confidence of the majority of hon. members. Believing that the Government possess the confidence of the majority of hon. members of this House, it is my intention to proceed with the Estimates and ordinary measures of legislation, notwithstanding the division of last Thursday evening.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. McDONALD: Apart from the question dealt with by the leader of the Labour party and the leader of the Government, there is a grievance I want to bring up. In passing, however, I would just like to say that though the hon. gentleman states that he attached no political significance to the Bill, he has carefully avoided telling us anything about the Bill. He has told us a good deal about three of the clauses, but not about the 4th. In due course he will know a little about that 4th clause, and I do not hesitate to say that if this House knew the meaning of that 4th clause he would not have had as much support as he received on Thursday night.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is out of order in discussing the provisions of a Bill which has been disposed of.

Mr. McDONALD: I am not going to pursue that further; I shall have a full opportunity of doing so later on. What I rose for at present to bring before the House is this: I have noticed during the few years I have been here that, with the exception of one period, there has always been an attempt to evade the straightforward answering of questions asked in this House. During the time the late Premier was here there

were fuller and more satisfactory answers given to questions than ever there were before or since. I would like to draw attention to this, because this is a most important matter. It will be remembered that I gave notice of the following questions, which the hon. member for Barcoo, Mr. Kerr, asked in my absence:—

1. What was the cost of the trip of the Honourable J. R. Dickson and Honourable Sir S. W. Griffith to the Gulf in May, 1886?

2. What were the amounts paid, and the separate amount paid to Honourable Sir S. W. Griffith and Honourable J. R. Dickson?

What sort of a reply was given? It was this—

1. The cost of the trip was £1,605 2s. 5d.

2. £1,405 2s. 5d. paid by the Chief Secretary's Department; £200 by the Treasury.

It can be plainly seen that there was an evident attempt to evade the answering of this question. When a question on a public matter is asked like that it is only fair to this House and to the country generally that a straightforward answer should be given. Now, I happen to be fortunate enough to hold in my hand the exact amounts paid during that trip.

The TREASURER: A good deal more than I have.

Mr. McDONALD: The hon. gentleman may not have them, but if he went to the Treasury books he would find these amounts there.

The TREASURER: Have you been there?

Mr. McDONALD: How could I get there? The hon. gentleman knows that it is impossible for me to get into the Treasury. I do not want to get off this question; I want to read to the House the exact particulars, and I earnestly hope that the House will give its unanimous consent to the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government to reply to this matter. The cost of the trip to the Gulf in the Queensland Government steamer "Lucinda," in May, 1886, was as follows:—Coal, £515 8s. 3d.; extra crew, £295 10s.; piloting "Lucinda," £94 1s. 6d.; wines, spirits, etc., £148 9s.; groceries, £95 12s.; meat and poultry, &c., £48 7s. 11d.; washing £14 8s. 4d.; ice and sundries, £11 19s. I wish you to mark the sundries. I now come to the most important item: Cash paid to the Hon. J. R. Dickson, £200; cash paid to the Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith, £50; cash paid to the private secretary, £10 15s.; Cobb and Co.'s coach from Normanton to Torrens Creek, £120; total, £1,604. This document is dated from the Treasury, 19th March, 1890.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who is it signed by?

Mr. McDONALD: The hon. gentleman can come and see who it is signed by. The point I want to get at is this: What became of that £200, and how was it disbursed? I have been told that it is the custom when hon. gentlemen take a trip like this that they should receive a certain amount of petty cash to give "tips" and that sort of thing at the various places they may call at. But assuming that that is so, I want to know how it is that if the Premier at the time, the Hon. Sir Samuel Griffith, could do with £50, the Treasurer should get £200.

The TREASURER: Perhaps he paid the bills.

Mr. McDONALD: He could not have done that, as I have an account here showing that the washing cost £14 8s. 4d. and ice and sundries £11 19s. That is where the ordinary bills came in.

The TREASURER: What about the hotel bills?

Mr. McDONALD: It is all here. I want to know what became of this £200; why the Treasurer at that time should receive £200 when £50 was sufficient for the Premier; and why the questions I asked did not receive a straightforward answer, because anyone with half an eye can see that they were not answered straight-

forwardly. I hope the House will give the Premier the fullest opportunity to reply to what I have stated. I have nothing more to say on the subject now and no further comments to make upon it.

The PREMIER: With the permission of the House I will answer the hon. member.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I am only sorry he did not bring the matter up earlier, because it is a matter of ancient history now. It is now twelve years since that trip took place, and there is a difficulty in getting vouchers for expenditure which took place so long ago. It must be remembered that on that occasion there was a large party on the "Lucinda"—some twenty gentlemen I think—and we visited all the ports along the coast right round to Normanton. From Normanton we took the steamer "Vigilant" and went up the Albert River to Burketown. We visited Sweer's Island and went back to Normanton. The greater portion of the expenses to which the hon. gentleman has referred were incurred in connection with the "Lucinda," for coals, for victualling the ship; and the washing, I suppose, was connected with the crew. With regard to the cash out of pocket, so far as my recollection goes, it was simply this: When Sir Samuel Griffith and I left, in company with another gentleman, to go overland we each had some money, and I was called upon to act as banker, and the amounts cover the ordinary expenses of the journey. We went from Normanton to Cloncurry, from there to Richmond Downs to Hughenden, and from Hughenden to join the rest of the party at Townsville. The cash referred to was the money actually expended on the trip. I may say that neither Sir Samuel Griffith nor myself drew a single penny for travelling allowance at the time, and the whole of the money was paid to cover ordinary current expenses.

Mr. McDONALD: Are there any vouchers for these amounts?

The PREMIER: I do not know if there are. The Audit Office could say that.

Mr. McDONALD: None were presented for this amount of £200.

The PREMIER: It is a matter of ancient history—a matter of twelve years ago. The accounts were passed by the Audit Office and settled, and I cannot be expected to answer paltry questions of this character. But if the hon. member insinuates that Sir Samuel Griffith or I received any fee or travelling allowance whatever beyond the actual expenses of the trip—cash out of pocket—I give that a point-blank denial.

Mr. McDONALD: I want to know where are the vouchers for this amount.

Mr. HAMILTON: Why did you not get them where you got the list?

Mr. DANIELS: The hon. member asks why did not the hon. member for Flinders get the vouchers from the same source as he got the list, but as it happens there is an account of these amounts, but there are no vouchers at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There is not a particle of evidence that there are no vouchers.

Mr. DANIELS: The Premier was asked, and he says he does not know where they are, and it was on account of the evasive answers given to the questions of the hon. member for Flinders that the matter was brought up now.

Question put and passed.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

CHARITABLE ALLOWANCES.

The PREMIER moved that £67,850 be granted for charitable allowances. The vote was £2,750 more than the provision asked for last year. There was an apparent increase of £50 to

the Salvation Army at Townsville, but that had previously been paid to the Prisoners' Aid Society at Townsville, and appeared on the last Estimates in the prisons vote for contingencies, but was now proposed to be paid direct to the Salvation Army, the same as in Brisbane. There was a new item of £200 for the Boys' Home, Brisbane, an increase of £2,000 in the amount for hospitals generally, and an increase of £500 in the amount for benevolent societies. The total expenditure for last year was £68,400. The total expenditure for benevolent societies was £4,164 4s. It would be observed that the vote for charitable allowances was gradually increasing and becoming a very large item in the Estimates. There had been several discussions in the House during the present session concerning provision for the destitute generally, and the time was approaching when the size of that estimate in connection with other matters would demand something more than casual criticism on the Estimates. This estimate was based on the same lines as the vote of the preceding year, but since he had been in the Home Secretary's Department he had been impressed with the desirability of establishing uniformity with regard to benevolent societies and hospitals. Of course as long as they had the sick and poor with them, they would have to make provision for them; and while he recognised the good work which was being done by many of those institutions, he thought more care should be exercised to see that the best and most charitable intentions were not frustrated. He might add that the Salvation Army was doing excellent work in its retreat and other institutions, and was affording a safety valve to the State in regard to discharged prisoners and others whom the army took under their care.

The HON. G. THORN should like to know who had recommended Dalby as a site for a hospital for consumptives. He knew the district well; but while he believed that there was no better climate in the world than that of Dalby for healthy people, he held that it was no place for consumptives or for those who were inclined to consumption. He was not going to mention names, but he could bring forward evidence before a select committee to prove that Dalby was not a proper place for consumptives. Surely there were no doctors in Brisbane so insane as to recommend it as a site for a consumptive hospital! He had always been led to believe when at school that for consumptives an equable climate was required, but in the Dalby district it was no uncommon thing for the temperature to vary 35 degrees in twenty-four hours. The Government could have got a much more suitable site for such a hospital in the Port Curtis district, where the temperature was much the same, day and night, summer and winter, and where the rainfall was not great. Look at the valuable lives which had been lost through the Government sending consumptive patients to Dalby. Some persons had come from there to Brisbane in the last stages of consumption, and had died here, but he contended that if they had not been sent to Dalby such mortality would not have taken place.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I would point out that the discussion cannot take place on this vote. There is a special vote for the consumptive hospital at Dalby on page 107 of the Estimates, and this discussion should take place on that vote.

The HON. G. THORN: The vote before the Committee was for hospitals generally.

The CHAIRMAN: The consumptive hospital is a special vote.

The HON. G. THORN: Cannot I discuss the question on this vote?

The CHAIRMAN: No.

The HON. G. THORN: Are you quite sure?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes. I am sure the hon. member will see that himself, and that he would be the last to infringe the Standing Orders.

The HON. G. THORN must, of course, bow to the ruling of the Chairman, but he understood that tenders were about to be accepted for building a hospital for consumptives at Dalby.

Mr. KERR: They have been accepted.

The HON. G. THORN was very sorry to hear that, and hoped the Government would not proceed with the erection of the buildings. He regretted that the matter could not be discussed on that vote, as it might be Christmas before they got to page 107 of the Estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not anticipate that surely, but in any case the proper place to discuss the matter was on the vote for the consumptive hospital at Dalby.

Mr. BELL just wished to say that the opinion of the hon. member for Fassifern on the climate of Dalby was not worth twopence, and carried no weight. If the hon. member had anything to say against the establishment of a consumptive hospital at Dalby, he should have said it when the matter was before the House twelve months ago; now that tenders had been accepted for the erection of a building, anything he might say would not affect the matter.

The HON. G. THORN had never thought that any responsible person would recommend that a hospital for consumptives should be established at Dalby.

The CHAIRMAN: This discussion is out of order.

Mr. DUNSFORD: The Premier stated the other night that he expected local hospitals to keep their own consumptives. That statement required a little clearing up; they should know definitely what was the Premier's intention in regard to these hospitals. If it were to be understood that this hospital was not to take the treatment of consumptives off the hands of the general hospitals, then he did not see that the hospitals in the Central and Northern districts would reap any benefit at all. Many thousands of people died in this colony from this dire disease, which stood first on the list in their statistics, and he thought pneumonia came second. The medical fraternity did not understand the disease, and special efforts were being made to cope with it throughout the whole of Europe, and therefore he should like the Premier to make a short statement as to the intentions of the Government. Were the local hospitals to look after their own consumptives, or was there to be a system of centralisation for their special treatment? Consumptives drifted from various parts of the colony to Brisbane, and it was the duty of the Government to do something for them, because there was a general impression in the country that such people would receive special treatment at Roma or Dalby. If they were not to hope for that treatment, the Government should let it be fully understood.

The PREMIER: The policy of the Government had been to provide special treatment at Dalby, and institute a lodging-out system at Roma for consumptives in the initial stages of the disease, where there was reason to think that the drier air might effect a cure. The Government had not committed themselves to establishing hospital accommodation for all patients. Relief would be given in cases where certificates had been given that persons in the first stages might be cured, but where there was no improvement the patient was to be notified that his term of probation would cease. He wished it to be distinctly understood that it was not intended to depart from this system in the case of the Dalby Hospital. Each

institution would have to deal with its own chronic cases, and he was sure that the present Home Secretary would not depart from that principle, because it was not intended that these two hospitals should be loaded with all the chronic cases. This was a matter that exercised the mind of his predecessor, who felt that the necessities of the case would be better met at Dalby than at Roma, where a lodging-out system had been established that appeared to answer very well. The late Home Secretary did not decide upon Dalby without taking the advice of several medical men, all of whom concurred in his view.

The HON. G. THORN thought that wherever there was a chance of saving life that chance should be offered, but he would not send consumptives to Dalby. He contended that he knew as much about the question as the doctors, and a climate like that of Roma or Dalby was not adapted to consumptives in any way. A doctor who recommended either place ought to be cashiered at once and have his diploma taken from him. He knew many valuable lives that had been lost through going to these places. There were two girls of eighteen and twenty years of age; the former died and the other was expected to die soon, but he advised her father to take her away and she was walking about now, and he considered that he had saved her life. There was a dry belt of country in the Central district, and he thought that somewhere about the mouth of the Fitzroy River would be a very suitable place for a hospital. There was a very equable climate as compared with other parts of the colony, and his opinion was shared by one of the most respected men who ever sat in that House, Mr. Archer. Perhaps Sir Horace Tozer was anxious that the patients should die more rapidly. That was the idea in the early days, and perhaps that was why they were sent to Dalby. He did not blame the hon. member for Dalby for working the oracle, but if it was not too late he hoped the Government would see their way to cancel the tender and erect the hospital in the Central division.

Mr. BELL: In a parliamentary sense the criticism of the hon. member was really of no importance, but he had made certain observations in regard to Dalby to which, in the public interest, he wished to give an emphatic contradiction. His references to the climate of Dalby were absolutely inaccurate. The hon. gentleman indicated the Central district as being a suitable locality for phthisis patients, but unfortunately while the winter months were dry, the heat of the summer was so great as to completely nullify any benefit which the patients might have derived. It was necessary to go to the Darling Downs for a climate which was not too hot in summer or too cold in winter for consumptive patients, and he did not think any medical man would support the hon. gentleman's advocacy of the islands in Keppel Bay as suitable for such patients.

The HON. G. THORN merely wished to remark—

The CHAIRMAN: I trust the hon. gentleman will stop this discussion. The junior member for Charters Towers asked the question as to what was to be done with consumptives in the local hospitals, and that question having been answered, further discussion on the subject must stand over until we arrive at page 107.

The HON. G. THORN could assure the hon. member for Dalby that he knew a good deal about the requirements of consumptive patients, and was anxious that a proper site should be chosen for the hospital. Many English patients were sent to the Island of Madeira, and frequently recovered. Brisbane was not a bad climate for

such cases. He remembered seeing two consumptive patients carried ashore here forty years ago, and one had only recently died. The Central district, he maintained, was a still better climate for such patients. He certainly did not believe any sane doctor would recommend the Darling Downs as a suitable climate for consumptives.

Mr. CALLAN: He probably knew more about the locality to which the hon. member for Farnham referred than that hon. member did. He had frequently been on the islands at the mouth of the Fitzroy which the hon. member indicated, and judging by the number of sand-flies and mosquitoes there he should say the career of consumptive patients would very soon be brought to an end. If the hon. gentleman's knowledge of consumptives was as great as it was on the climate phase of the question, it was not worth $\frac{3}{4}$ d.

Mr. FINNEY asked if an inebriate asylum had yet been established, and whether there were any patients in it?

The PREMIER: A portion of the Brisbane Hospital had been proclaimed an inebriate asylum, with accommodation for six or eight patients, for whom a certain rate of pay was allowed. Portion of Dunwich Asylum had also been proclaimed, so that the Act was being given effect to in a tentative form. The matter was one which the late police magistrate, Mr. Pinnock, had been very ardent in bringing under the notice of the Home Secretary, and, no doubt, the present Home Secretary would pay attention to it. When the Act was passed it was thought that private retreats for inebriates would be established, but, so far, there had been no development in that direction, and no doubt before very long some institution would have to be established exclusively as a home for inebriates.

Mr. FINNEY hoped the Government would bring this institution into prominence, because the public did not seem to know anything about it, as far as he had been able to learn since his return from the old country. He believed there were plenty of people who ought to have an opportunity of getting into the asylum and becoming respectable people, instead of being brought before the police courts time after time.

The PREMIER recognised the force of the hon. gentleman's remarks, but cases had occurred during the absence of the hon. gentleman where it had been difficult to get a conviction; and as to the voluntary system, the Brisbane Hospital afforded an opportunity for anyone who felt that the disease had taken a hold upon him or her to make special arrangements for treatment. So far the actual necessities of any cases that had presented themselves had been fully met, and if the hon. gentleman was aware of other cases no doubt the Home Secretary would afford him every facility for the care of the individual. No doubt the Government would have to afford large assistance, but he sincerely hoped the faculty themselves would establish homes and receive people who were able to pay.

Mr. BATTERSBY wished to know how much Brisbane received out of the vote of £1,500 for lock hospitals. There was £200 for the Industrial Home, Brisbane; £200 for Female Refuge, Brisbane; £200 for Holy Cross Retreat, Brisbane; Rescue Home for discharged prisoners, Salvation Army, Brisbane and Townsville, £250 for one and £100 for the other. That was the first vote he saw for any place outside Brisbane. Then there was the Maternity Home, £100; St. Mary's Rescue Home, Brisbane, £100; Benevolent Asylum, Rockhampton, £500; Inebriates Asylum, £1,000; and Boys' Home,

Brisbane, £200. He did not object to that; he thought it was a good institution. [The hon. member then repeated the items.]

Mr. McDONALD: Tedious repetition!

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has read the list over before. The Premier is waiting to answer him, and he will see that there is no occasion to repeat what he has said.

The PREMIER: The amount voted last year for lock hospitals was £1,500. Of that amount Brisbane received £925 18s. 6d., Maryborough £17 2s., and Rockhampton £112 15s. 10d.; leaving a balance of £444 4s. 5d. unexpended.

Mr. McMASTER: In connection with the item "Benevolent Societies, £3,500," he wished to know whether the Lady Musgrave Lodge received anything from the vote? The matter was brought before Sir Horace Tozer some time ago, and he promised that the lodge should receive Government assistance.

The PREMIER: The Lady Musgrave Lodge is not included in the item.

Mr. McMASTER regretted to hear it, and hoped the hon. gentleman would see his way to render that institution some assistance. He would like to take £400 or £500 off the first item and give it to the Lady Musgrave Lodge, which had been of great assistance to the Government. When immigration was in full swing it was instituted for the purpose of taking new arrivals and domestic servants who had no homes, and giving them lodging at a small rate till they could find homes or situations. At that time they took a large number straight away from the depot until they got situations, and so relieved the Government of the expense of keeping them at the Immigration Depot. It was true there had not been much immigration of late years, but he was very glad to see that the Government intended reviving immigration, and the lodge could still give assistance. It was labouring under great difficulties financially, but was doing good work. He had seen the report of the lodge for last year, and speaking from memory he thought that 460 girls and nurses had taken advantage of the lodge to stop a few nights or a week at a time. The Government commenced to assist them some years ago by giving them a piece of land at Toowong, which was still vested in trustees for the lodge, but the land was unsuitable for a building and they had built somewhere on Spring Hill. They wanted the Government now to take the land back at a reasonable valuation and they wanted something more. He had introduced a deputation from the lodge to Sir Horace Tozer last year to get some assistance from the Government. He knew they were going to see the Premier or the Home Secretary again soon and had asked him to introduce the deputation, but as the vote came on before they had been able to do so he thought it as well to mention the matter, because the institution was a deserving one and ought to be assisted. Prevention was better than cure, and a home to which girls could go and be taken care of while they were out of a situation was more worthy of assistance than some of the other institutions on the vote, especially than the first item on the vote. That was a vote he had always objected to, and it was better to assist institutions which would prevent persons going to such places. He had advised the authorities of the lodge to write to the Minister that they intended to see, and let him fix his own time for the deputation. It was not a new institution, but one which had done good work for a number of years, and having drawn the hon. gentleman's attention to it, he would leave it at that.

The PREMIER: The matter had not escaped his observation. No direct appeal had yet been made to him on behalf of that institution, but

the hon. member—ever active in benevolence—was not likely to let the grass grow under his feet in making application for an institution which he considered worthy of assistance. Before the deputation waited on himself or the Home Secretary, in whose department it was, he would advise the hon. member to see whether the Lady Musgrave Lodge could not be amalgamated with another institution of the kind known as the Governesses' Home. It was unwise to have so many institutions of the same kind, but he was aware that they had been started in boom times when it was hoped they would be supported by private benevolence. The request for assistance would have more weight if the ladies in charge of those institutions could see their way to consolidate them, and then present their claims to the Government, concerning which he made no promise, but that he would give the fullest consideration to their representations.

Mr. McMASTER had not the slightest objection to make the suggestion, but it would come with more force from the hon. gentleman to the deputation. He would intimate the matter to the authorities of the Lady Musgrave Lodge in his reply, stating his intention to go with their deputation when the Minister had fixed a time to receive them.

Mr. BATTERSBY: Last year they paid £65,100, and this year they were being asked for £67,850 for these charitable institutions, and he wanted the Premier to say what contributions, if any, were made by the outside public for keeping up those institutions?

The PREMIER: The principle adopted was to give £2 for £1 for maintenance and £1 for £1 for buildings. He need not read out the list he had, but if any hon. member desired to know the amount paid to a particular institution he would be prepared to tell him.

Mr. STEWART: The hon. gentleman in charge of the vote seemed to view its increase with considerable alarm, and vaguely hinted at some probable change in the management of those excellent institutions, our hospitals. Any change likely to impair their efficiency was not to be desired, but if the hon. gentleman could suggest anything likely to make the need for them less such a proposal would be welcomed by that Chamber and by the country. For instance, although a large amount of the food daily consumed was more or less adulterated, neither the State nor the local authorities had taken any steps to do away with it. For instance, tea—an article of most common consumption—was largely adulterated, and neither the State nor the local authorities had taken a single step to remedy it.

Mr. McMASTER: Yes they have. Both the Customs and the local authorities.

Mr. STEWART: There may have been isolated cases of interference.

Mr. McMASTER: No, there have been hundreds of them.

Mr. STEWART: What they wanted was not an odd case of interference here and there, but constant attention to the question. His opinion was that there was a great deal of adulteration yet. Then with regard to butcher's meat, they knew that hundreds of thousands of diseased animals were killed for use. Of course the Bill now before the House would, if passed and properly administered, go some way to cure that matter. Then there was the question of alcohol. He read lately a report of the Health Officer of Rockhampton, in which it was stated that a large amount of disease was caused by the consumption of raw spirits of an impure character. That was a matter the Government should take up, because, whether rightly or wrongly, people consumed a great deal of alcohol in one form or another, and so far as the revenue was concerned it was a very good thing

that such was the case. Another fertile cause of disease was the sanitary condition of our towns. All our municipalities were lax in that particular. Brisbane was no better and no worse in that respect than municipalities elsewhere, and he knew that in Rockhampton there was a great want of proper attention to sanitary matters. If that matter was properly attended to it would very much minimise the need for hospitals and such relief as was granted under that heading of "charitable allowances." Then there was the question of overcrowding. In many cases the proprietors of land cut their allotments into such small fractions that houses and conveniences would have to be built so closely to one another that in a climate like this it was absolutely impossible for the people to live in such places with anything like decency, comfort, or health. There should be a minimum size for allotments, and lands should be divided into business, suburban, and country lands.

The PREMIER: That is already provided for by statute.

Mr. STEWART knew that it was provided for, but what he was contending was that the minimum size was too low for the comfort and health of the people. Another matter that required very urgent attention in a climate like this was that of water supply. Last year the Brisbane Board of Health reported against the use of tank water, and he had not the slightest doubt that the water collected in tanks, in an atmosphere such as that of Brisbane, must be injurious to the health of the community. He held that municipal councils, and other bodies responsible for such supplies, should be compelled, in the interest of the public health, to filter the water supplied. Some attention should also be given to the sanitation of shearers' huts and dwellings in the bush generally. A very large amount of money was spent on hospitals in the back country, and he had not the slightest doubt that typhoid and diseases of that character were largely induced by the sanitary conditions which prevailed there. With respect to benevolent societies, it would be admitted that if they could improve the condition of the people generally there would be less need for institutions of that character. They were continually hearing that the country was becoming more and more prosperous, and he quite admitted that there was a slight increase in their prosperity, though not nearly so much as it ought to be considering the amount of wealth the colony produced; and the hon. gentleman in dealing with the question under consideration might turn his attention in that direction. The State contributed two-thirds of the amount spent on hospital relief, and one-third was contributed locally. At present the local subscribers elected the committee of management of a hospital, but he believed that the administration would be improved if the committee were elected by the local ratepayers who contributed double what the local subscribers contributed. Under such a scheme the local subscribers would still have the voice they were entitled to in the management of the hospital. The hon. member for Fassifern instanced the Central district as being an excellent place for consumptives, and the hon. member for Fitzroy said he did not believe it would be a good place for them.

Mr. CALLAN: I did not say anything of the sort.

Mr. STEWART thought the hon. member did, but in any case he was not going to enter into that question. There was one place in the Central division which, it appeared, was not a good place for either consumptives or any other persons, if they took the hospital figures as any criterion of the state of health that prevailed there, and that was Mount Morgan.

The chlorination works at that place were probably the cause of very much of the disease reported. Charters Towers, with a population of 23,290, received last year for its hospital £3,140, but Mount Morgan, with a population of 6,371, received £2,845, or nearly twice as much as Charters Towers. Gympie, with a population of 13,628, received less than half of what was received by Mount Morgan—£1,159. Croydon, which being a new place and away in the far North, might not be expected to be healthy, received £930, although its population was 4,241. What he wished to know was whether there was a greater amount of sickness at Mount Morgan than in any other portion of the colony, or whether the people there subscribed more liberally than elsewhere? So far as he could gather, all the money subscribed was spent, which showed there was need for those subscriptions, but if too much money was not being spent at Mount Morgan, then too little was being spent elsewhere. He should be very glad if the Premier would give them all the information he could, because the subject was a most interesting one, and some light should be thrown upon it.

Mr. CRIBB thought the matter that had been referred to by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was very important. Those who had taken an interest in the Lady Musgrave Lodge were entitled to every credit, and it was only a reasonable thing that their efforts should be recognised in some way by the Government. The committee of that institution were in financial difficulties, which were principally owing to the position taken up by the Government in regard to some land at Toowong. The Government had granted them a site, but they found it was not convenient, and had built their institution elsewhere, being under the impression that they would be able to dispose of the land that was first granted to them. If the Government could see their way to take back that land and make them a liberal allowance instead, it would be a very great assistance to the institution.

Mr. SMYTH: There had been considerable trouble at the Gympie hospital in consequence of the police taking men there suffering from *delirium tremens*, because there was no accommodation at the lockup. He had referred to this matter on several occasions, and one Home Secretary had told him that accommodation would be provided at the lockup, but nothing had been done. Only last week the police took a man to the hospital suffering from *delirium tremens*, and it took three nurses to look after him. He hoped the Home Secretary would look into the matter and not allow these people to be taken to the hospital where they might disturb patients who might be at the point of death.

The PREMIER had been given to understand that the only cases of the kind taken to the hospital were epileptic cases, and that there was sufficient accommodation for ordinary cases at the lockup. Of course if the accommodation there was not sufficient, the matter must be attended to forthwith. If the hon. member reported any such case, he would request the Home Secretary to consult with the Commissioner of Police, and the deficiency would be remedied.

Mr. GLASSEY wished for some information as to the amount of money spent upon country hospitals as compared with those in the metropolis and near it. It was also necessary that they should have some more detailed information with regard to the £60,000 that was being asked for hospitals generally.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Speak up.

Mr. GLASSEY regretted that the building was constructed in such a way that an hon. member had to raise his voice to a very high

pitch in order that he might be heard. It ought to be possible to alter it so that hon. members might be heard, which was extremely difficult, as there was nearly always a great deal of conversation going on. He had never been favourable to the system of hospital Saturdays and hospital Sundays, and the everlasting begging that was practised, although people ought to be as benevolent as possible. He thought the State should be a little more benevolent than hitherto, and grant more substantial amounts to these institutions, so that people in need should have no difficulty in obtaining the treatment they were entitled to receive. Of course he was aware that a large number of people were induced to come to Brisbane for advice, and attended that admirably managed institution the Brisbane Hospital. He only regretted that such an eminent man as Dr. Jackson, who had rendered such splendid service to the hospital, was about to retire from his position. The Ipswich Hospital was also a model institution—presided over by Dr. Thornton, than whom he knew of no man more admirably adapted by nature and by training for such a position. He should be sorry to see any hospital throughout the colony placed in a position of pecuniary difficulty, and it was for that reason that he asked what amounts of money were paid by the State—more particularly to the larger institutions in and around the metropolis.

The PREMIER: The information was obtainable on page 59 of the Auditor-General's report. He had a list up to the 30th June containing what the hon. member asked for, but he would not weary the Committee by reading it through. The following were the larger amounts, over £1,000, paid to various hospitals:—Bairdine, £1,023; Brisbane, £4,933, and £3,042 for emergency patients; Children's Hospital, £2,449; Blind, Deaf, and Dumb Institution, £2,090; City Ambulance, £2,304; Lady Bowen Hospital, £464. There was a total amount of £14,000 paid to Brisbane institutions. Bundaberg received £1,090; Charleville, £1,196; Charters Towers, £3,403; Gympie, £1,333; Hughenden, £1,090; Ipswich, £2,793; Longreach, £1,375; Mackay, £1,211; Maryborough, £1,168; Lady Musgrave Lodge, £387; Mount Morgan, £3,051; Rockhampton, £4,179; emergency patients, £182; dispensary, £362; Lady Norman Institution, £293; and Children's Hospital, £334—or a total of about £6,000. Toowoomba, £2,875; Townsville, £2,304; emergency patients, £760, or £3,000 in all; Winton, £1,103. There were a large number of other hospitals, all of which received proportionate assistance, and hon. members would be aware that a great number of patients found their way to the Brisbane institutions from all parts of the colony.

Mr. BATTERSBY was glad to hear the answer which the Premier had given to his question, but he would point out that while Nanango was on the list read out by the hon. gentleman, there was no hospital there.

Mr. MAUGHAN: There was a very excellent country hospital at Nanango; in fact, one of the best in the coastal districts. It had only been opened for six months, but was in charge of a first-class practitioner. With reference to the Boys' Home, he wished to know if the £200 included salary paid to some officer of the State or whether it was managed by a private person.

The PREMIER: The institution had been removed to Woolloowin, and was managed by a gentleman well known in the city, with the assistance of a matron and her husband. The £200 was to assist the institution, which was doing good service.

Mr. DUNSFORD asked for information about the ambulance corps. In a mining town like Charters Towers, where accidents unfortunately

were only too numerous, a corps of that sort would be useful, and he would like to get full information on the subject, so that if they desired to start one he could advise them what had to be done. In connection with this, he wished to say that there ought to be some proper system of inspection of drugs. He believed the drugs people swallowed caused more disease than the epidemics that were going round. In these days of competition and adulteration, very few drugs sold by chemists were pure, and he had heard medical men say there was no guarantee that a prescription would be made up with pure drugs as it should be. There was inspection of water, of drink, and inspection of tea, and it was time there was inspection of drugs, because it was very important that anything given to sick persons should be pure.

The PREMIER: If the good people of Charters Towers established an ambulance corps and made an application to the Government for assistance, it would be treated by the Home Secretary, no doubt, in the same way as the Brisbane Ambulance Corps; at the same time it would depend upon the functions to be performed.

Mr. DUNSFORD: On what basis is the endowment?

The PREMIER: He could not say at the present time.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING, ETC.

The PREMIER moved that a sum not exceeding £32,648 be granted for Government Printing, etc. This vote was only £31 more than the amount voted last year. There was an increase of £12 to the assistant engineer and £20 to the lithographer. The engraver and electrotyper was placed for only six months' salary, as he was retiring on his pension; but the reduction made on that account appeared to have been absorbed in some of the other items. There had been correspondence in connection with this matter recently circulated for the information of hon. members, from which they would see that the Public Service Board made an investigation about two years ago into the working of this office. In their report they made certain recommendations which were submitted to Sir Horace Tozer, and he gave effect to some of them at the time and the others he held over for further consideration. The employees in this department had received the advocacy of the hon. member for Toowong, and it would be found that most of them had received some satisfactory increase. This was a large and increasing department, and he might say at once that he was inclined to think that it would be satisfactory that a committee of experts should be appointed during the recess to inquire into its working, to see that each man received his fair wage and that the work performed was full value for the expenditure incurred by the State. He did not say that in any way as depreciating the efficiency or ability of the employees of the department. There were some excellent workmen there, but he understood from what had recently come under his observation that there was a feeling among some of the lower paid officers that men placed over their heads were receiving larger remuneration than they were entitled to, and that some efficient men were passed over and received less than they were entitled to. He believed that the Government Printer acted impartially and in the true interests of the State, but in so large a department—having no less than 176 employees—there was always some dissatisfaction and some grumbling. He believed that could be largely discounted, as the Government Printer was well able to manage

the department. At the same time he thought it well to ascertain whether those who had written on the subject had any just cause of complaint. He understood that the remuneration of employees in the department at the present time was fixed in accordance with the rules of the Typographical Society—at least, some of them. However, it would be well if during the recess the department was investigated by printing experts to satisfy the Government that the work done there was worth the money expended upon it, and that the men employed were receiving fair and substantial remuneration for their services.

Mr. GLASSEY: This was a large estimate dealing with one of the most important branches of the Government service, and with one of the best institutions in the colony. He had visited many Government Printing Offices in many parts of the world, and he must say that the work performed in the Queensland office compared favourably with any of them, even with the great printing office in Washington, where 3,000 hands were employed, so far as efficiency and quality and cost of work were concerned. He took this opportunity of thanking the Premier for the courteous way in which he had agreed to postpone the consideration of this vote until they had before them the correspondence between the Government Printer and the late Home Secretary, and the result of the investigation of the Civil Service Board and their recommendations. He must take some exception to the exclusive remarks of the Premier with reference to the advocacy by the hon. member for Toowong of the claims of those employed in that department. He would be sorry to take from the hon. member for Toowong any credit that was his due, but some of the kudos for the amelioration which had taken place in the condition of employees in that department was due to others. The men in that department had had fairly warm and capable advocates on his side of the House who had never failed in publicly and privately advancing their interests. He complimented the Premier on his decision as to the necessity for appointing two or three experts to thoroughly investigate the department during the recess—to go fully into its working, and place those engaged in it in their proper places, and see that they were remunerated in a just manner for the services they performed. He was sorry to say there were many persons in that department who were not sufficiently remunerated. He was not going to say that there were any who were too highly paid, but the time had come for a thorough reorganisation of that branch of the Government service, because, notwithstanding what he had said of the efficiency of the department, persons in it were not placed, so far as their salaries and promotions were concerned, as satisfactorily as they ought to be. There were persons recommended for advances in the minutes of the late Home Secretary who were not entitled to those advances, and there were persons receiving very low wages whose claims should be considered before some who were higher up in the service, and who were, to say the least, moderately well paid. There was one paragraph in a letter from the Government Printer to which he wished to direct special attention, as it bore on his contention that those who were least remunerated should be considered before those in the higher grades were promoted. It was as follows:—

Clause 25.—This is not strictly correct; overtime is scarcely ever paid to anyone during recess, and never unless, on some rare occasion, the Government urgently requires important and confidential work done. Then, of course, I put on only reliable and the most trustworthy men I have in the office to do it. It must that a recommendation such as that contained in this clause will not be entertained for a moment. If I am to be

hampered with any such condition it can only result in disaster. The status of mere casuals should not be allowed in any way to interfere with the smooth working of the office. Take, for instance, the necessity which arises during each session of Parliament of having on very short notice to issue important reports, commissions, etc., to members of Parliament and others. I am compelled to employ, say, the publisher and other classified officers, who alone can do the work, to do it at night after the ordinary business of the day is done, to be ready for the morning's delivery. How can I consult a Minister or await his decision in a case of this kind? Some discretion must be reposed in any Government Printer.

He entirely agreed with the statement that some discretionary power must be reposed in any Government Printer, and also with the minute of Sir Horace Tozer, who said—

It is not so intended; all that is asked is that the grease should not be laid on the fat pig.

That was very explicit, very expressive, and absolutely true, and hitherto the grease had unfortunately been laid to a very large extent on the fat pig. He held in his hand a document containing particulars with regard to persons employed in different branches of the Government Printing Office, from which he intended to quote. He was not going to give names, but facts. From that document he found that a gentleman who was enrolled, at folio 148, in the bookbinding branch had been twenty-three years in the service, that he was receiving £2 10s. per week. Another officer in the same department, who had been twenty-one years in the service, and was married, was receiving £2 10s. per week. Another married man, who had been eighteen years in the service, was receiving £2 5s. per week; another married man, who had also been eighteen years in the service, was also receiving £2 5s. per week. A man, who was a son of one of the overseers, and had been nine years in the service, was receiving £1 10s. per week, and was now recommended for an increase of 10s. per week. In the composing room a man who had been fifteen years in the service was receiving £2 5s. per week, and he was not recommended for any increase; he was a single man. Another single man in that branch, who had been twelve years in the service, was receiving the handsome sum of £1 5s. per week, and he was recommended for an increase of 3s. per week. Another man, who was married and had been in the service for twelve years, was receiving £1 15s. per week, and was recommended for an increase of 3s. a week. A young man of nineteen years of age, who had been in the service for six years, was receiving £1 5s. per week, and was recommended for an increase of 10s. a week. Another young man, a son of the Government Printer, who had been in the service for five years, was getting £1 5s. per week, and was recommended for an increase of 10s. per week. He had taken this information from the report of the Public Service Board for 1898, and was at a loss to know upon what basis promotions were made and increases recommended. He did not find any fault with the son of the overseer being promoted, and was reminded that this was one of those automatic increases; but he did not know upon what principle these increases were granted. The next man on the list had been eight years in the service, and received only £1 per week, and the increase proposed to be given him was 5s. per week. A little lower down on the list was a man twenty-two years of age, who had been eight years in the service, and received £1 5s. per week, but he was recommended for an increase of 10s. per week. It was not usual for a man in that position to receive such an increase, but considering the small wages he received, there was something to be said in his favour. He did not complain about this increase, but contended that substantial increases should be given to

others as well. Another man in the same branch received £1 per week. He was twenty-two years of age, and had been nine years in the service, but his increase was only 5s. per week. He merely pointed out these matters to hon. members so that they might observe the recommendations of the Public Service Board, and the peculiarities of some of the increases recommended by the Government Printer. The next man on the list was described as the "assistant pressman." He was twenty-seven years of age, unmarried, twelve years in the service, £1 5s. per week, and was recommended for an increase of 3s. per week. He would require to be unmarried on such a salary. The next man was a married man, £1 15s. per week, twelve years in the service and recommended for an increase of 3s. per week. The next man had been six years in the service, an apprentice. He was nineteen years of age and received £1 5s. per week, and was recommended for an increase of 10s. per week. How could these recommendations be reconciled? Of course he would be told that these increases were automatic, but they were peculiar all the same. Then the son of the Government Printer, an apprentice, twenty-one years of age, and five years in the service, received £1 5s. per week, and was recommended for an increase of 10s. per week. He would like to know how that tallied with the man who had been twelve years in the service at the same salary, and who was recommended for only 3s. per week increase. The whole thing was absolutely preposterous, and the sooner there was an investigation into the working of this department the better, in order that men might be placed in their proper positions, and receive reasonable amounts of remuneration, and that the system of promotions might be placed on a better basis. The next man on the list was twenty-two years of age, ten years in the service, receiving £1 per week, and he was recommended for an increase of 5s. per week. The next man was twenty-three years old, nine years in the service and described as a "reviser." He received £1 per week, a very small wage, and was recommended for an increase of 5s. per week. Then he came to a most important room, the railway ticket room. In that room two men were employed, one of whom received £3 3s. a week after twenty-seven years' service, while his assistant, who had served fourteen years and took charge every year during the absence of the head of the room, received only £1 10s. a week, and was recommended for only 3s. a week increase. In the machine-room there were also glaring inconsistencies. He found one man, who had been fifteen years in the service receiving £1 5s. a week, was to have an increase of 4s. Another, twenty-nine years of age, fifteen years' service, and also drawing £1 5s., received 4s. increase. Again, a man of twenty-seven years of age, with fourteen years' service and a salary of £1 5s., received also 4s. increase. Another young man of thirty years of age, with twelve years' service and with £1 5s. a week, received 4s. increase. A young man of twenty-four received £1 a week, after nine years' service, and was given an increase of 5s. a week. Another young man, with sixteen years' service, drawing £1 a week, received 5s. increase. There were also a number of men called "clickers" who were recommended for promotion. They had been getting £3 6s. a week, and were to have 3s. extra, in consequence, it was said, of their superior skill and length of service; yet he had documents to prove that their service was not longer than that of many others, and their skill was not greater in many instances than other persons in the department. He would mention one particularly hard case, and name the man to whom he referred. His name was Egan. He had been

thirty-one years in the service, formerly drew £210 a year, was retrenched in 1893 to £173, and had never been restored. He was a most competent man who had occupied a superior position for many years, and yet men who had only served for fifteen years had been put over his head and given £3 9s. per week. He asked the Minister how those inconsistencies could be defended? The department seemed to be in a thorough state of demoralisation, and certainly wanted overhauling and reorganising, in order that the principles of fair play and equity might be established. He would not use a harsh word towards the Government Printer, but there certainly seemed to have been favouritism shown for a long time past, and hence the inconsistencies which were apparent to even a casual observer.

The PREMIER did not propose to follow the hon. member through all the details he had entered into. He took it that the head of the department had to consider the merit of the different officers. It was not length of service alone, but ability to discharge the duties of the various offices which had to be taken into consideration when making promotions. If the Government Printing Office were merely used as a benevolent asylum, with a rule that length of service should carry with it continued promotion irrespective of merit, then the hon. member's arguments might hold good, but it must be remembered that the printing office was a practical, operative branch of the service where the Government were not supposed to pay higher wages than those paid by similar institutions outside. Indeed, he understood that the Typographical Society regulated to some extent the wages which were paid, and which were based on the efficiency of the various officers. Any action he had taken had been on the lines of his predecessor. The Public Service Board had held an inquiry into the merits of the different officers, and with regard to those who were termed "clickers," the board reported as follows:—

There are some compositors who from long service or ability have been chosen to act in the capacity somewhat similar to that of sub-foreman, as they are called upon to distribute the matter to be printed amongst their fellow-workmen in the enclosure or dock in which they are engaged, doing what the Government Printer says is the work of "clickers," although they are not known by that term. As they are superior workmen, entrusted by the overseer with responsible work, in addition to their ordinary duties, it would tend to the better organisation of the staff of the composing room if they were given a recognised status, and it is recommended that they be styled "clickers" and raised to the classified division, each with a salary of £179 ss., or 6d. a day more than their present wages. Their names are—G. A. Patullo, F. T. Rose, H. L. Silvester, W. Hexton, E. J. Boldero, and J. Wrigley, all of whom are old and trustworthy officers.

In addition to the above there is an officer in the Lithograph Branch, C. F. Rose, who is deserving of promotion to the classified division. It is stated by his superiors that he is an officer of high-class attainments, performing duties of a very special and artistic character, similar to those of an officer who has lately been placed on the classified list. It is recommended that he also be placed in that division on a salary of £150 a year, which is a few pounds more than he now receives.

The report had been placed before Sir Horace Tozer, who had instructed the Government Printer to report upon it, and upon receiving the report of that gentleman, Sir Horace Tozer made certain marginal notes, upon which he (the Premier) had acted. The Government Printer at the conclusion of his report said:—

In reference to Appendix B, I enclose a table showing:—

1. The names of all employees on the permanent and supernumerary staffs
2. The daily rate paid to each on 30th June last.
3. The amount of increase I recommended in my present Estimates; approved by yourself, and paid them since 1st July.

4. Certain further increases I recommended, as the result of numerous letters of application made to you, and referred to the board for report; and, finally, the increases as recommended by the board in their present report. In connection with these I would respectfully recommend that, as the year is now advancing, matters be allowed to remain as they are, and that for next year the board's recommendations be the basis of the annual increments, from July next. This, I think, will satisfy all parties, especially if I may promise alterations in the direction indicated.

Of course that referred to the year 1897. Upon that Sir Horace Tozer minuted—

Pay all provided for on Estimates. Consult Public Service Board; arrange as to remainder, and promise, after 1st July next, balance. Those too high reduce, as per arrangement with Public Service Board.

Upon reading the recommendations of the board, the report of Mr. Gregory, and the minutes of his predecessor in office, he had minuted that the automatic increases referred to previously should be paid, and that the increases recommended to be given to the "clickers" of 6d. a day should be paid. He had, therefore, merely fulfilled the recommendations of the Public Service Board, and the promise which Mr. Gregory had made under the authority of Sir Horace Tozer. He might say that that remuneration would not be paid until after this Estimate had been passed. He therefore attached no blame to himself in connection with the Estimate. He really could not follow the hon. member with regard to individual payments being too high or too low. He had to accept, in connection with a large establishment like the Government Printing Office, the recommendations of the head of the department, who had been so long connected with the institution; and having before him the report of the Public Service Board, the minutes of his predecessor, and the recommendations of the Government Printer, he had believed he was on very safe ground. The Government Printing Office must not be regarded as a benevolent institution. The State expected to get a certain amount of work in return for their pay, and so long as the officers received fair pay such as the Typographical Association would sanction, or as other printing offices were paying in the city, they had no cause for complaint. Since the matter had been ventilated, he might say that he was exceedingly dissatisfied with the representations which he had received—during the time he had been Home Secretary—from the officers of the institution. It seemed to him that instead of cordiality existing, there was a spirit of almost jealousy against any special officers being selected for increased remuneration, if that remuneration was not given all round. He could not see that remuneration should be given all round when officers were not equally competent. Officers in an industrial institution like the Government Printing Office should be paid according to their efficiency. With a view to removing discontent and dissatisfaction he had felt it incumbent upon him to promise—and he recommended the present Home Secretary to fulfil that promise—that they would have the whole establishment investigated by a committee of experts in the printing trade to say what amount of work should be received in return for the large sum of money paid annually, and whether there were any grounds of complaint in regard to the remuneration paid. He had fully investigated the matter as far as a layman could, with the assistance of the Government Printer, who informed him—and he made no secret of the matter—that if it were a private establishment he could work it much more economically than it was worked at present. He told him that he had to keep on men with whom he could very fairly dispense, and that boys could perform a great deal of the work that men were doing at the present time. He did not want to displace

those men, but he mentioned the fact to show that a great deal of the dissatisfaction which was expressed was expressed by men performing boys' duties, but who expected to receive the remuneration paid to men who had much more work to perform. However, all that would be set at rest by the committee of experts, who, regardless of political influence, would determine what remuneration would be paid to those officers, and until they had that report they could do little more than accept the Estimate as it stood. He hoped that before next year an entirely disinterested report would be submitted to the Committee, on which they could judge for themselves as to the remuneration paid to officers of the institution.

Mr. GLASSEY wished to remove from the mind of the hon. gentleman the impression that he regarded the institution as a benevolent one, where persons were supposed to be paid certain wages, irrespective of their ability. He contended that ability and length of service, but particularly merit, should be the recognised principle. He did not wish to draw any invidious distinction, but could it be contended for a moment that a man who had only been in the department for fifteen years should be placed over the head of a man who had been thirty-one years in the service—a man who had formerly been paid £210 a year, and who had held the position of foreman of the *Hansard* composing staff for a number of years? What he contended was that there should be equitable treatment and reasonable remuneration all round. As to the Government Printer saying he could dispense with the services of so many men in places where boys might be employed, it was possible that a man equal in ability to the Government Printer but very much younger in years, could be found to do the work of the Government Printer, for about half the salary paid at present. There was nothing in that argument; it was a mere subterfuge to say that those men could be displaced by boys. If it was to be a recommendation that the institution could be worked cheaper in that way, by all means let the cheapening come in at once, and let it commence at the top. He said this without attempting in any way to disparage the ability or the honour of the Government Printer.

The Hon. G. THORN thought that the hon. member for Bundaberg had made out a case, and if what the hon. member stated was correct the salaries were in many cases too small, considering the length of service. The Premier should remember that those men had votes in and round Brisbane, and he was astonished at the Government allowing the hon. member for Bundaberg to take the wind out of their sails. Why did not the Premier say he would have an inquiry and see that the wages were increased? Only last session the Acting Premier promised that the salary of the Government Printer should be increased to the amount received by the former Government Printer, and he thought the Premier should see that the promise was carried out. He wished to see fair play dealt out all round—to the head of the office as well as to the others. Other Civil servants had been put back to the positions they occupied before the retrenchment, and it was the duty of the Premier to see that the men in the Government Printing Office were put back to the rate they received before the retrenchment.

Mr. FINNEY: Looking over the report of the Public Service Board and the report of the Government Printer, he could not help saying that he fully agreed with a great deal of what fell from the hon. member for Bundaberg. There were a great many anomalies in the department that were hard for anyone to understand. He could not understand why one man should get an advance of 10s. a week and another man twice or thrice

as long in the service get an advance of only 3s. a week, but he did not want to go into details or to mention names. He took a great deal of trouble in connection with this department even before he got into Parliament at all, and he found that a good many of the men were not paid what they should be paid, considering their ability and experience. There was one man—a skilled mechanic—who had been twenty-two years in the department, and was now getting a salary of £130 a year. That man was promised an advance by Sir Horace Tozer in 1897, but if he had got it at all it was only recently; in fact, he believed he had not got it yet. There were many others placed in the same position, but he mentioned this as an example. It was a very small thing that a man twenty-two years in the service should get an advance of 6d. a day, particularly a man with a long family and twins amongst them. Here was a memorandum he had from Sir Horace Tozer, dated 11th December, 1897—

Memo. for Mr. Finney.—All that I promised as for *Hansard* has been carried out. —'s name appears on the Public Service Board register. I have since sanctioned an increase of his wages. Whatever rights classification gives he has. I have recently laid it down so clearly in my recent decision on the Public Service Board's report that there will no longer be any room for growling.—HORACE TOZER.

No doubt Sir Horace Tozer thought that that would put an end to all dissatisfaction in that department, but he did not believe it had been carried out. Whose fault that was he did not know. He saw that the Public Service Board had taken up some of the points which he had put strongly before the late Home Secretary, one of which had reference to deductions for late attendance. It had been the practice for the department to stop an hour's pay from a man if he was five minutes late. That was a most unjust way of doing things, and the Public Service Board said the following:—

DEDUCTIONS FOR LATE ATTENDANCE.—The deduction made by the office for late attendance is a subject of grievance, as the workmen do not think that one hour should be deducted from them for being ten minutes late. Doubtless late attendance is a hindrance to business, and an annoyance, but the board consider that the deductions should be more in accordance with the time lost, such as a quarter of an hour for ten minutes, or half an hour for twenty minutes. It was represented that in Sydney the door is closed ten minutes after the hour of opening, and if the men arrive after that time they cannot commence work until the end of the first hour.

Another burning question was sick pay, and the recommendation of the Public Service Board on that point was as follows:—

SICK PAY.—RECOMMENDATION.—The members of the permanent and supernumerary staffs brought up the question of pay during sickness. The board have already made a representation to the Honourable the Home Secretary on this subject, which has been favourably considered, but pay should only be granted subject to evidence of sickness satisfactory to the Government Printer being forthcoming in each case.

A man might be sick for a day or two, not seriously ill, but still incapacitated from attendance at his business, and surely it should be sufficient for such a man to state what happened! If it was a serious case he might get a certificate, but a man should not be asked to produce a certificate for every little sickness that might disable him from doing his work for a day or so. That clause might be interpreted in such a way as to prove an engine of annoyance and worry to the people who had to submit to it. That he hoped had been remedied, because Sir Horace Tozer told him that sick pay had been granted. He saw in one report from the Government Printer the statement—

The granting of pay whilst absent through sickness to the employees of this office will increase my expenditure by about £500 per annum.

How the Government Printer could say it would come to £500, £600, or £200 a year he could not tell, as there might be more sickness in one year than in another, and he did not see how that gentleman could strike an average. At all events, people a long time in the service should be treated liberally and fairly as one would treat a member of one's own family. If heads of departments would act on those lines they would do pretty well what was correct. The Government Printer further on said—

Am I to understand that the promised increases and payment of wages whilst sick are not to be granted?

Sir Horace Tozer had told himself that sick pay was to be granted. He found on inquiry that the mechanics were looked upon as different from clerks, but he could not see what superiority clerks had over anybody else, and on the ground of humanity it would be just as uncomfortable for a mechanic to have his pay stopped as it would be for a clerk.

The PREMIER: You will see by a note on page 14 that sick pay is authorised.

Mr. FINNEY: The hon. gentleman refers to this note at the foot of the page—

The automatic increases must of course be paid as they accrue, also sick leave for short periods, and incidents be covered by supplementary appropriation as necessary. The Cabinet, however, has declined to recognise general increases in fixed salaries.—J.R.D., 19-9-98.

It was a question what a "short period" would be taken to mean. If a clerk was sick for a month he got his pay, but if a mechanic working in the same department was absent through sickness he might get only a day's or a few days' pay. The same rule should be applied to mechanics as to clerks. There should be some rule laid down so that the men might know upon what principle they were paid, and upon what grounds advances were made. The suggestion made by the Minister to have a thorough examination into the working of the department was a very good one, and he sincerely trusted that the result would be that there would be an equitable distribution of salaries and advances to the different classes of employees in the Government Printing Office.

Mr. BATTERSBY: This matter had cropped up every session. The simplest way to get rid of those grievances would be for the Government to call for tenders for all the printing required by the different departments, and let it out by contract. If that were done the cost would be less than it was under the present system, and he hoped the Government would seriously consider his suggestion.

Mr. TURLEY was surprised at some of the statements made by the Minister. The hon. gentleman stated at the outset that his information was that the men in the Government Printing Office received the highest rate of wages paid outside for the same work. The hon. gentleman must have made a mistake in that matter, because as far as he (Mr. Turley) was able to get information, persons employed in the best printing offices outside received £3 a week, which was reckoned a standard wage, while in the Government Printing Office the rate was only £2 16s. The hon. gentleman had admitted in previous sessions, in the course of debates affecting the wages of Government employees, that the Government should set an example to outside employers, and be in the first flight as far as wages were concerned. But now he stated that the Government Printer informed him that if the work of that department were done by a private printing establishment it would cost considerably less than it did at present. Could the hon. gentleman point to one solitary Government institution that could not be worked for less than

its present cost on the same principle? Could he not fill the positions in his own department with men who would do the work for lower salaries than were now paid to those officials? And could he not get men to fill any Government position in the colony at considerably less wages than were paid at present? He (Mr. Turley) ventured to say that he could even get men who would fill the position of Under Secretary for £800 or £400 a year.

The PREMIER: Not fully trained men.

Mr. TURLEY: The hon. gentleman could get competent business men, for the stress of competition was so severe that many men were glad to work for considerably less than the value of their work would be. But it was not a sound argument to say that men should not receive an increase because they would find among the unemployed a number of men who would do the work for 50 per cent. less than the Government now paid for that work. He was perfectly satisfied that the Government might, as the hon. gentleman had stated, conduct that establishment at considerably less than its present cost, but that would simply be by sweating those who were employed there, and surely the hon. gentleman was not in favour of paying every man who was in the service the lowest possible rate on which he could subsist and bring up his family. If the hon. member followed that out, he would make a very great difference in the Government employment. When they were discussing a salary of £700 or £800 a year the Premier was always ready to contend that such an officer was worth the money; had been a long time in the service, and worked hard, and if a reduction were proposed he would be the very first to oppose it. But why did the hon. gentleman apply his present arguments to the Printing Office? Because it had always been looked upon by the hon. gentleman as an interference with private enterprise or the work carried on by other printing offices. Influence had very often been brought to bear in various directions; people in charge of offices outside had always endeavoured to secure a large portion of the work done in the Government Printing Office, so that they might be able to make something out of it. There was an instance not long ago when endeavours were made to get the *Agricultural Journal* taken away from the Government Printing Office on the ground that the work could be done cheaper.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: And better.

Mr. TURLEY: There could be no work that could be done better by outside offices than by the Government Printing Office, although he admitted that it could be done cheaper. If they called for tenders for the work there was no doubt they could get it done cheaper, but what sort of labour would be employed? Boys and girls sweated down to the last possible half-penny. And did the hon. member wish to have work turned out by sweated labour? It would be a disgrace to the Government if they attempted to interfere with work done in the office by getting it done outside. The hon. gentleman said he would obtain a report on the office from a committee of trade experts, but who were likely to be the experts? Men who had been using influence in Brisbane for years past to get as much work as possible out of the office. A few years ago they had a debate extending over two or three days when it was proposed to subsidise a newspaper for printing the debates of that House. The object of the Government then was to get the support of that paper for anything they might think fit to carry out, but they got that support for nothing now. His principal object in rising was to refer to the remark of the hon. member for Toowong that there had been a reduction in the rate of wages. Because £2 16s. per week

was the standard rate in the New South Wales office, it was considered that the same rate ought to prevail in Queensland; but he did not see any reason for that. No hon. member would suggest that because a certain rate of wages ruled here, it should also rule in Townsville. That would not be advocated for a moment; hon. members would at once say that there was a difference in the circumstances which required to be taken into consideration. It was always recognised by the Public Service Board that higher salaries should be paid to men in the far West and North. The hon. member for Toowoong also pointed out that this reduction took place about eighteen months ago. It did not take place in the year when they were carrying out their retrenchment schemes.

The PREMIER: What reduction do you refer to?

Mr. TURLEY: The reduction from the standard rate of £3 per week. The hon. gentleman knew that the wages paid to competent compositors was £3 per week, and he believed that rate was being paid in the best offices in town, but still because £2 16s. was being paid in New South Wales it was considered that no more should be paid here.

The PREMIER: £2 15s. is paid in New South Wales.

Mr. TURLEY: A number of men who were on the supernumerary staff were receiving £3 per week, but now they were on the permanent staff they were receiving less, although they worked just as hard as before.

The PREMIER: But they get more money annually under the new arrangement. They are employed permanently now instead of intermittently at 10s. per day.

Mr. TURLEY: They were employed permanently before. The hon. gentleman had been misled, because he seemed to think these men were employed one week and off the next; but, as a matter of fact, they did not lose a day from year's end to year's end. There was enough work to keep them as fully employed then as they were now. As soon as they were put on the permanent staff they had to accept a reduction of wages. He thought the Government should pay as high a rate of wages as private firms paid, and the hon. gentleman had admitted that as a good principle to go upon when he sat upon the cross-benches. No matter what work the Government were carrying out they ought to set a good example and maintain the rate of wages at the highest possible standard.

The PREMIER: Either he or the hon. member was labouring under a misapprehension. From the statement made by the hon. member concerning the discontent shown by those who had been translated from the permanent supernumerary staff to the permanent staff, it would appear that they had suffered a reduction, but he said distinctly and emphatically that the fact was: that they were receiving larger annual remuneration when drawing £2 16s. a week than if they were temporarily employed at 10s. per day. Moreover, the £2 16s. per week was not forced on the men; they voluntarily accepted the position when they were given the choice. It appeared they thought they had been degraded, but that was not so, and if he thought they were suffering any injustice, he would immediately remedy it. As a matter of fact, the outside rate was £2 15s., although the typographical society had endeavoured to raise the rate to £3 a week, which the masters had refused to agree to. Therefore, for all practical purposes, £2 16s. was the established rate of wages at the present time. He had not the slightest desire to reduce the rate of wages paid by the Government to its efficient officers. He considered, with the hon. member, that the Government should pay the full rate, and expect in return good and loyal service.

He did not think, however, that the officers should lose sight of the fact of the permanency of the work in a Government department. If a man conducted himself properly in a Government department there was no fear of his losing a day's pay or of losing his position through insolvency or many of the other casual circumstances incidental to private employ. On the question of sick pay, referred to by the hon. member for Toowoong, the interpretation of a short term of sick leave was a fortnight, which could be allowed by the Government Printer himself. Longer leaves were referred to the Minister, who never, to his knowledge, refused to allow the sufferer to receive his pay during the time he was ill. Indeed, to show that the Government had been most generous in that respect, the Government Printer informed him that since the new rule came into force £500 had been spent as sick pay. Under all the circumstances the men should be well content with the wages they received. Of course men who possessed superior qualifications and held responsible offices, received wages varying from £3 6s. to £3 9s. per week. He wished to point out that the hon. gentlemen must have been supplied with incorrect information. He had no desire to mislead hon. members in any way, but the facts which he had given were backed up by undoubted authority. In order that the men might have an opportunity of ventilating any grievance they had got, his hon. colleague, the Home Secretary, would cause an inquiry to be made by competent experts, as to the character of the work and the remuneration allowed.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: A number of grievances had been brought under his notice by employees who received wages varying from £1 to £1 15s. a week. He had gone into the details of the cases and was quite satisfied that when he brought them before the Home Secretary they would command his sympathy and attention. He was glad to have the assurance that experts would be appointed to examine and report on the department. That could result in nothing but good, and he was quite content to let the matter rest there, and not delay the passage of the Estimates by going into details. Some cases had been brought under his notice which were positively vexing—cases of men who had been in the service for many years without any promotion, but he was satisfied that when those cases came under the notice of the Home Secretary, a remedy would be found for the existing state of affairs.

Mr. STEPHENS was glad to hear that a committee of experts was to be appointed. He knew that a great many hands had had their wages reduced by 4s. a week by being placed on the permanent staff. It was all very well to say that they were paid sick pay, but many of them had not missed a day for four or five years. They did not anticipate being reduced 4s. a week when they asked to be placed on the permanent staff. While those men had been reduced from £3 a week to £2 16s., others who were doing practically the same work were being increased from £3 6s. to £3 9s. a week. He did not want to condemn the working of the Home Secretary's Department altogether, and he was glad that the hon. gentleman had seen his way to give increases to some of the poorer paid men. If the matter was to be referred to a committee of experts, he had no doubt that there would be some alterations made in the office.

Mr. GRIMES hoped that the advice given by the hon. member for Fassifern to look after the employees in the Government Printing Office because they had votes was not going to be the order of the day. They should equally consider

those who had no votes. He hoped that the committee of experts would also inquire into the real grievance of the Government Printer himself. When he was induced to join the department he had the prospect of becoming Government Printer much earlier than he had received the appointment, and had given up a lucrative appointment to enter the service. Promises had been made in that Chamber in times past, and he was surprised that there was no appearance of the fulfilment of those promises, in spite of the fact that since he had taken charge the expenditure had been considerably reduced, not so much by a reduction in wages as in consequence of his good judgment in the purchase of materials.

Mr. McDONNELL thought it would be very unjust to increase the salary of the Government Printer before giving reasonable increases to the low-paid hands. The Government Printer received £500 a year, besides a house and other emoluments, and was very well paid. Since he had been appointed Government Printer there had been two reductions in the pay of the men, while during the same time he had himself received an increase. He did not rise so much to deal with the question of wages, as to take exception to the manner in which the Government Printer appeared to have ignored the recommendations of the Public Service Board and the minutes of Sir Horace Tozer. In the first place a lump sum of £15,500 was put down on the Estimates for readers, compositors, machinists, storekeeper, pressmen, bookbinders, and others, while the fact of placing a large number of these people in the unclassified division entitled their salaries to appear on the Estimates as salaried officers. The Public Service Act provided that those men should be paid annual salaries, and that they should receive the usual time for sick leave and holidays. He understood from the Premier that the amount of £500 spent in sick pay had been given only to the men in the classified division. One part of the minute of Sir Horace Tozer was to the following effect:—

The regular permanent staff should appear in the lists of the Public Service: those who are professional in the proper sense should appear amongst the professional qualifications; those purely clerical in the ordinary divisions; and others, whose work is mechanical and in the nature of a tradesman's work, should be classified in what is termed the unclassified division of the classified service.

As regards these, the ordinary general rules of the Public Service should apply as to pay, hours, and leave; but whenever these would clash with the practice and the requirements of the department as a printing office, then the practice must prevail.

He understood that effect was not given to that minute, and that practically the Government Printer made himself the sole judge in the matter. Further, he said—

Those who appear on this list I leave to the Public Service Board after consultation with the Government Printer. I agree with the general recommendation of the Public Service Board as to increases, which, outside those already provided for, will operate after 1st July next. These permanent hands should only be employed on overtime work in cases of absolute necessity, to be determined by the Government Printer.

Those men were still treated by the Government Printer as daily wages men. Under the Public Service Act there was no class known as wages men; they were all put down under the Act as salaried officers, and it was a grievance with a number of the employees of the Government Printing Office that the benefits of the Act were not afforded to them. The Minister had given his explanation as to the question of short periods of sickness; but he would ask how it was that this department was singled out in this matter of short periods of sick leave? With reference to the fines said to be remitted

on appeal to the Government Printer, in a great many cases the men were not aware that they had been fined until they went to receive their pay, so that there was no chance to make an appeal to the Government Printer. He presumed that the committee of experts referred to by the Premier would be practical men who knew the trade in all its branches, and he hoped it would include a representative of the employees. He would like to get an explanation from the hon. gentleman with reference to the £15,500 that was bulked on the Estimates for persons employed in the Government Printing Office. In the Estimate for hospitals for the insane the salaries of cook, laundress, messenger, baker, and other employees were given, but in this Estimate there was nothing to show the number of compositors, machinists, bookbinders, improvers, apprentices, or readers.

The PREMIER wished to clear away any misconception that existed with regard to the transfer of men from the permanent supernumerary staff to the permanent staff. Those men were informed of the new conditions attending their being changed from one staff to the other, and though the change involved an apparent loss of 4s. a week, the annual payment was actually more than they had received at 10s. a day. In addition to that they had now the benefit of holidays being paid for, and also sick pay, so that they had no cause of complaint. With regard to the rules of the Public Service Board not attaching to the Government Printing Office, the hon. gentleman had failed to read the minute of Sir Horace Tozer of the 11th December, 1897, as follows:—

The Government Printing Office is in the nature of a special expert department to which it would be out of place to apply the general rules applicable to ordinary clerical divisions of the Public Service.

The regular permanent staff should appear in the lists of the Public Service; those who are professional in the proper sense should appear amongst the professional qualifications; those purely clerical in the ordinary divisions; and others, whose work is mechanical and in the nature of a tradesman's work, should be classified in what is termed the unclassified division of the classified service.

As regards these, the ordinary general rules of the public service should apply as to pay, hours, and leave; but whenever these would clash with the practice and the requirements of the department as a printing office, then the practice must prevail.

Those who appear on this list I leave to the Public Service Board after consultation with the Government Printer. I agree with the general recommendations of the Public Service Board as to increases, which, outside those already provided for, will operate after 1st July next. These permanent hands should only be employed on overtime work in cases of absolute necessity, to be determined by the Government Printer. The overtime should be specially entered in a book for that purpose, and be considered by the Public Service Board annually.

The next staff is that called the supernumerary staff. These should be paid by the week or month as is the general practice, be allowed pay when absent through illness properly certified, and have the usual leave. They should be eligible for promotion to classified positions when vacancies arise. Whenever possible these men should be paid by time and not by piecework, and in like manner should not work overtime unless absolutely necessary. Their regular hours should be determined by the Government Printing Department and not by any rule of the Public Service as such.

The remainder are no part of the staff—they are occasionals, and should be called such. They work according to the rules of the trade in this department, either by time or piecework, and if there is overtime they should as a general rule get it. Though they have a just claim to get on the staff they neither get pay when sick nor leave. From the 1st January, 1898, these should receive 10s. for a day of eight hours.

It would be clearly seen from that that Sir Horace Tozer drew a distinct line of demarcation between those who were workmen in the printing office and the regular permanent staff under the rules of the Public Service; but as far

as was practicable all the privileges of the public service were extended to them. The hon. member also referred to another matter dealt with by the Public Service Board. In the 23rd article of their report, headed "Deductions for late attendance," they said—

The deduction made by the office for late attendance is a subject of grievance, as the workmen do not think that one hour should be deducted from them for being ten minutes late. Doubtless late attendance is a great hindrance to business, and an annoyance, but the Board consider that the deductions should be more in accordance with the time lost, such as a quarter of an hour for ten minutes, or half an hour for twenty minutes. It was represented that in Sydney the door is closed ten minutes after the hour of opening, and if the men arrive after that time they cannot commence work until the end of the first hour.

The Government Printer, referring to that, said—

The rule referred to has worked very well in the past. A workman personally explaining to me that the absence was unavoidable does not have the rule enforced against him.

And in a marginal note Sir Horace Tozer wrote—

The rule is satisfactory. Men should be punctual.—H. T.

Under those circumstances he did not see that there was any substantial ground for the complaints urged against the department; and the promise he had given of a special investigation ought to remove all apprehension that strict justice would not be done to the employees.

Mr. McDONNELL: The point he had referred to was that the workmen often did not know, until they came to receive their pay, that there was any deduction made for lost time, so that they had no opportunity of making a personal explanation at the time to the Government Printer. He also asked a question, which the hon. gentleman had not answered, why the wages or salaries of the unclassified officers of the classified service were not paid under the rules of the Public Service Act. It was their grievance that they were paid as wages men instead of receiving annual salaries. He understood that some time ago a petition was presented by those men to the Home Secretary on the subject, but was not aware what answer they had received.

The PREMIER: The petition reached him too late for consideration, the Estimates having already been framed. The matter was not yet decided, but, without giving any distinct promise, if he could see his way to place those men on the Estimates in a more individual form he would do so.

Mr. DIBLEY had no desire to vote for higher wages to men who did not deserve them, but it was the general opinion that the Government Printing Office was one of the poorest-paid establishments in the service. The Premier said there were a lot of men there doing boys' work. He did not think that was correct. He himself had a boy working there, and his opinion was that he was doing a man's work for a boy's wages. That was about true all round. In the Government Printer's report he stated that it was the practice to give the young people employed in the office a few shillings' increase every year. He knew young men who had been working there for fifteen years, and who were now not getting more than 25s. a week, so that their annual increments must have been very small. Those were not compositors, but men who worked about the office in various capacities. It was all very well to say they should go elsewhere where they could get more wages, but they had been reared in the office and at twenty-five or thirty years of age they were hardly fit to seek their living in some other walk of life.

Mr. SIM: He had been accustomed to consider that the Government Printing Office, like

private establishments, was carried on on commercial lines. For that reason it struck him as peculiar that in such an establishment, supposed to be under skilled supervision and manned by the best talent to be found, it should be necessary to call in a committee of experts to determine whether the men were being well paid or not. Would any first-class printing office in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, or London call in a committee of experts to determine any such thing? The whole thing proved that there was something wrong in the management of the Government Printing Office now or in the past. If the head of the department was not able to run it on Government lines and on business principles, and had to call in a committee of experts to determine between himself and the employees of the State as to whether they were well paid or not, he was not fit for his position. The crux of the position was that if there were not grievances existing there would be no need for the committee of experts, otherwise every printing office in the colony would be asking for the services of a committee of experts.

The PREMIER: They have not parliamentary criticisms levelled against them.

Mr. SIM: They did not require criticism, or if they did their employees would be out on strike or calling for a committee of experts. He was glad members were alive to the requirements of the service, and that members on his side kept a watchful eye—for the interests of the employees—upon those who were over them—men who, as the hon. member for Woolloomgah had said, were receiving after fifteen years service a weekly wage which men in the district he came from would receive for two days' service on the roads. He rose to protest against any institution carried on on the lines of the Government Printing Office requiring the assistance of a committee of experts to determine what should be done in justice to those employed by the State.

Mr. GLASSEY desired to say a word or two for the female employees of that department, but before doing so he would refer briefly to what the Minister was likely to do with regard to sick pay. He understood that the hon. gentleman had agreed that one fortnight should be allowed. He saw the hon. gentleman also referred on page 14 of the papers to the fact that—

The automatic increases must of course be paid as they accrue, also sick leave for short periods, and incidents be covered by supplementary appropriation as necessary. The Cabinet, however, has declined to recognise general increases in fixed salaries.

In looking over the increases recommended he saw that some of the girls were very poorly paid. He wished to put in a word for those employees, though they could not be considered as voters—he wished they were. He hoped the Minister would see his way clear in bringing that matter before the Government Printer to provide for some increase of the wages paid to female employees. There was a considerable difference noticeable between the wages paid to men and women in the department, and he must confess he could never see why there should be a difference in the amount paid for female labour and male labour when both were engaged on the same work. He observed that a lady named Carey was recommended by the Public Service Board to occupy a leading position in the department, and she was to get the handsome sum of £1 15s. a week! She was getting £1 10s. a week now as forewoman. He had no objection to the recommendation to the position referred to. As far as his information went, the lady was a very competent person for the position. But could the Minister believe for a moment that he could, with any show of grace or reason, offer

the paltry sum of £1 15s. a week to a man to fill such a position? The wages offered were altogether out of proportion to the services to be rendered and the responsibilities of the position. He knew nothing at all about her, but for the position she occupied Miss Carey should be paid at least £2 10s. a week. He thought the wages paid to young women in the department were not anything like what they ought to be.

Mr. McMASTER was in the happy position that he had not been very much appealed to by those who had grievances in that department, though he was often appealed to to get employment for young people in the Government Printing Office. He had been surprised to hear the statement made by the hon. member for Carpentry about the manager of the department. He understood the hon. member to say that if the manager of the department knew his duty, and did it properly, there would be no necessity for calling in the proposed expert committee, and that the necessity proved that that gentleman did not know his duty. The hon. member must know that Sir Horace Tozer had stated to the Committee over and over again what a practical man the Government Printer was, and what a saving he effected in the office after he took charge of it; and yet that officer received £100 a year less than was paid to his predecessor. He (Mr. McMaster) was quite satisfied from what he knew of that gentleman that if he was given a free hand to work the Government Printing Office he would work it very differently from the way in which it was worked now.

Mr. SIM: You are giving him away now.

Mr. McMASTER was not giving him away, for that officer had not a free hand altogether at present.

Mr. SIM: You are giving the Government away.

Mr. McMASTER: He was not giving the Government away. Hon. members on the other side made statements on hearsay, and when the Premier replied to them he knocked their statements into smoke by his explanation. It had been complained that though some of those men had been placed on the permanent staff their wages had been reduced, and that they did not know that their wages were to be reduced. But the Premier after consulting with the Government Printer informed them that those men were given their choice, either to go on as they were or to accept a position on the permanent staff at a reduction of 4s. a week, and they accepted the latter arrangement, which carried with it certain holidays, and pay for sick leave for a certain period. As to the complaint made by his colleague that the men did not know when they were fined until they received their wages, he could understand that if a man came five or ten minutes late he might think it was not noticed by the Government Printer or overseer, and would not report himself as late, and in such a case he would not know of the fine until he went to get his wages. He hoped the Government would deal fairly with both the Government Printer and the hands in the establishment. If they were going to do justice to the employees they ought also to do justice to the gentleman who was responsible for the management of the whole establishment. He was sure the hon. member for Carpentry did not intend to cast any reflection on the Government Printer, but his words would bear that interpretation—that because the Premier had stated he was going to appoint a committee of experts to inquire into the working of the department, therefore the Government Printer was an incapable officer. He for one should be very glad to see the report of that committee after they had made their investigation.

Mr. SIM wished to say very emphatically that he had not the slightest desire to reflect on the Government Printer in the remarks he had made. He believed the Government had no better officer, and no more capable man in charge of a department, than the Government Printer, and that the Government Printing Office was as well managed as any institution in the country. What he wished to convey was that, in his opinion, the Government were going to call in a committee of inquiry to put things right in an establishment where they should be put right within its own walls without any such assistance. But the hon. member for Fortitude Valley gave the Government away when he said that if the head of the Government Printing Office had a free hand things would be very different from what they were.

Mr. SMITH: He meant the Public Service Board.

Mr. SIM: If it was the Public Service Board who were to blame, then the sooner they were removed the better for the country.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition must bear in mind that although it might seem a very small thing for a man to be five or ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour late, the penalty for which he could get relieved from if he chose to see the Government Printer and make a satisfactory explanation, yet it was not his own delay alone that had to be considered, but also the delay caused to other men who were waiting to go on with their work. Hence it was that punctuality was absolutely necessary in the management of a large institution. In regard to the young women, he agreed to a great extent with what had been said by the hon. member, but if the hon. member referred to page 15 of the report he would find that there were no less than twelve young women down for increases. The increases might be small, but it was the intention to improve their position, and no doubt larger provision would be made in future Estimates. In regard to Miss Carey, who was at present receiving 35s. per week, there were circumstances which rendered it desirable that she should not receive an increase, because he understood that other arrangements were pending by which she would be removed to a happier sphere.

Question put and passed.

CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES.

The PREMIER moved that £1,404 be granted for the inspection of factories and shops. The Estimate was £150 in excess of last year's Estimate, provision being made for an extra inspector, who was appointed in November last, at that salary. He did not think it necessary to say much about this department, which was being conducted upon lines of prudence, and with a desire to bring the Act into operation in the least embarrassing manner to manufacturers, although in such a manner as to show them that the law was fully alive, and that any offences committed against it would be taken notice of by the Executive.

Mr. GLASSEY: The hon. gentleman might give them some information as to the scope of the Act, and as to what the Government intended to do in the way of extending its operations. Although the Act was passed as an experiment, it was intended to cover as large an area as possible—that whatever benefits it might confer should be conferred upon as many people as possible. He wished to know more particularly whether the various factories and mills in the Bundaberg district would be brought under its operations, and he had in his mind more especially the Millaquin factory, where the sanitary arrangements were not of the very best? The first consideration ought to be to make the conditions

under which men worked as good as possible. Of course he had no desire that the employees should be provided with palaces, but there should be good drainage and good water; sufficient space should be provided, and above all the machinery should be protected. The number of boiler explosions had become simply appalling, and in many cases the results had been serious. This could be remedied to a great extent by extending the provisions of the Act. Hon. members would remember an explosion which occurred recently at Ashfield, in the Bundaberg district, whereby two persons lost their lives. A number of boilers were idle during a portion of the year, and when they were put to work again they were not inspected, and very often they were in charge of incompetent persons. He contended that those having charge of boilers and machinery ought to pass some examination to show that they were competent. The Act was passed for the purpose of extending protection, and, although the Premier said he was satisfied with its operations, he had grave doubt about it.

The PREMIER: The Act came into operation at a time when the colony was slowly recovering from a very great commercial depression, and being somewhat drastic in its character it had to be brought into operation very carefully. It had not been brought into force to the extent they might like, more especially in regard to steam boilers, although if the hon. member referred to the report of the Chief Inspector he would find a good deal in reference to boilers, and the security and safety of employees. The principal object had been to pay more attention to sanitary matters—for which there was a great necessity—and to the conditions under which women and others worked in factories. He claimed that Mr. McLay had performed very satisfactorily and delicately the duties of his very important office. He admitted that it might be necessary for the Government to face the matter of boilers, and appoint a competent inspector, but he might point out that the Act itself was somewhat defective in regard to this. He would quote a few paragraphs of the report, which was very instructive—

PROTECTION OF MACHINERY AND PREVENTION OF FIRE.—The protection of dangerous parts of machinery has been receiving the careful attention of inspectors, and, where possible without unduly interfering with the operation of the machinery, more or less effective safeguards have been or are being provided.

In the interim report, reference was made to the bad treatment (mostly from ignorance) to which land boilers are frequently subjected, and to the unsatisfactory nature of the provisions of the Act with respect to the testing of these.

With a view to minimising the risk of accident arising from such usage of boilers, and also to assist in the preservation of these, a set of suggestions and instructions to steam boiler attendants have been carefully prepared and just recently issued by the department, which action, I have reason to believe, has been much appreciated by many users of steam.

I have every confidence, after most careful inquiry in many reliable sources of information, in saying that the provisions of the Act with respect to boilers are quite inadequate to secure that immunity from accident which I assume to have been the object of the legislation in framing subsections 4 and 5 of section 28.

In the course of my inquiries on this subject, instances have been quoted to me of boilers having been tested by hydraulic test up to a pressure much in excess of that under which they failed immediately afterwards from steam pressure under working conditions.

It would appear to be absolutely necessary, before any reliance can be placed upon a certificate of the soundness of a boiler, that a thorough survey should be made, both inside and out, by a thoroughly trained expert, in addition to the hydraulic test provided by the Act.

Many boilers have been tested since the coming into operation of the Act, and as far as possible every endeavour has been made to see that only reliable

engineers' certificates were obtained; but there is no authority provided under the Act at present which would enable the department to refuse to recognise the certificate of any person making the test, however incompetent they may be. This might perhaps be remedied by regulation, but I have refrained from suggesting this course in the hope that the whole question of boiler inspection may be considered in the direction hereinafter indicated.

Then he proceeded to state that in the metropolitan district there were 173 boilers; Ipswich, 17; Maryborough, 22; Bundaberg, 8; Rockhampton, 25; and Townsville, 10; or a total of 255; and he went on to say—

And when it is considered that these numbers now stand at totals of 298 and 5,853 respectively, and that the above districts, which have been proclaimed under the Act, form a very small area of the colony, and that there is necessarily a very great number of steam boilers in use outside these districts equally and probably more subject to accident, I believe it would be well to consider the advisability of the appointment of an officer of this department to perform this duty, either within the boundaries of the above districts only—which I believe would give quite sufficient employment for him—or over the whole colony in the cases of boilers which are not subject to inspection under other Acts, in which event more than one inspector would have to be appointed.

He had read that recommendation some time ago, but recent events had prevented departmental reports being given that consideration to which they were entitled. He would consult with his colleagues in connection with the matter in order that the proper inspection of boilers might be maintained, and if necessary an amendment of the Act would be framed to deal with the matter, although he was afraid there would not be time to deal with it this session.

Mr. GLASSEY: The municipality of Bundaberg was under the Factories Act, but unfortunately Millaquin was outside the boundaries of the municipality. He did not say that was done designedly, but it seemed rather peculiar that the largest works in the district should be outside the operation of the Act. The Premier mentioned that there were eight boilers in the district, but he would point out that in the Musgrave electorate alone there were forty sugar-mills; so that the number of boilers, in place of being comparatively small, was exceedingly large. He wished to quote an extract from the report of the Bundaberg inspector, who said—

Some anomalies, owing to boundary fixed, were soon apparent, bakers and butchers outside the municipality delivering within same, and when called upon to comply, taking no notice; another anomaly being that all the large centres of employ, such as Millaquin refinery, Bundaberg foundry, gasworks, three sawmills, brewery, two distilleries, employing between them in all about 300 hands all the year round, are all outside present boundary. If it is intended to obviate the above state of affairs, I would propose that the boundary be as at present, with the addition of that portion of Subdivision No. 3, Woongarra Division, which includes Millaquin refinery, Bundaberg distillery, brewery, and sawmills, commonly called East Bundaberg; also that portion of subdivision 1 of portion 2, parish of Gooburrum, which includes the foundry; also all that portion of the parish of Gooburrum commonly called North Bundaberg. I think these additions would meet all requirements and bring a large number under the benefits of the Act.

The Minister would see at a glance that there were a number of factories and works which were outside the boundaries mentioned, and he would urge an extension of the Act, not only in the Bundaberg district but throughout the whole colony, in order that employees might receive the benefits it conferred.

Mr. McDONNELL: It seemed to him that the hon. gentleman had taken very little interest in the report, otherwise he would know that the Chief Inspector recommended the extension of the Act in the district mentioned by the leader of the Opposition. In fact, he mentioned a number of places that should come under its

provisions. It was no use the hon. gentleman saying that they could not extend the Act to those places, because the 3rd section provided that its operation might be extended to such localities as were declared by the Governor in Council to be districts for the purposes of the Act. Mr. McLay said in his report—

During my visit to the outside districts I consulted each inspector as to any extension or alteration of the boundaries of their respective districts which would, in their opinion, be an improvement on the present boundaries for the purposes of the Act, and, for the information of the Minister, I beg to quote the result of these inquiries. The principal large works outside Townsville are the Ross River Meatworks, about four miles out; North Queensland Meat Export Company's Works, seventeen miles out. These works employ at certain seasons about 500 men, and use fourteen boilers.

A few miles outside Rockhampton are the Lake's Creek Works, employing 800, while along the Central line, of convenient access therefrom, are about sixteen works, employing a total of about 600 persons.

I beg to refer to the report of the inspector at Bundaberg on this subject, and to endorse his recommendations thereon.

It seemed as if the Premier had been taking very little interest in the matter, otherwise he would long since have brought those districts under the operation of the Act, and that opinion was strengthened by the statement of the hon. gentleman that he was going to recommend that that action should be taken by his successor. He admitted that the Act had been of great benefit. As far as he could gather, the officers of the department were inclined to administer it in a just and reasonable manner, but they did not appear to receive that practical sympathy which they should receive from the Minister in charge of the department. He could not believe that an Act affecting nearly 20,000 employees and about 1,000 employers could be so smoothly administered that in two years not a single case would be brought against anyone. He knew that there were a number of cases in which action should have been taken, and every paragraph in the report showed the need for the support of the Minister. For instance, under the heading of "Records," the Chief Inspector reported that the greatest difficulty had been experienced in getting the records of the employees in factories forwarded within a reasonable time after 31st December last. One hundred and thirty-one notices had been sent out in the metropolitan district alone, and advertisements had been published in the daily papers, but finally a large number of them had to be called for. It had also been found that, although every precaution had been taken to explain to occupiers that those returns should form a continuous record of the employees engaged, not more than 5 per cent. of the occupiers had so kept them, and they had, therefore, been simply filled in as at 31st December, as nearly as possible. The 14th section of the Act provided a penalty not exceeding £20 if the returns were not forwarded by the 31st of December, and yet it appeared that not more than 5 per cent. of them had been sent in by that date. The Act had, by the 31st December last, been in force for about eighteen months, and every publicity had been given to its provisions, so that there was no excuse for such neglect, and yet no action had been taken on the part of the Government. There were other portions of the report which showed that the Act was being ignored in other respects. In Townsville, the inspector reported the Act was regarded as a huge joke. In Rockhampton, Bundaberg, and Maryborough the inspectors also made complaints of other parts in which the Act was not observed. While it was only right at first to give employers every opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of the Act, still after a reasonable

time had been allowed the Government should compel them to comply with the law, as people had to comply with other Acts on the statute-book. He would ask the Premier if the Government had any intention of amending the Act in the direction recommended by the Chief Inspector? He did not intend to go very fully into the question, as he had addressed the House on the subject on two previous occasions. It was very little use mentioning the fact now, but on the evening on which he had last spoken on the subject he had a conversation with the late Premier, and that hon. gentleman had given him the impression that he would be prepared to amend the Act in the directions recommended by the Chief Inspector, and, as far as possible, in the directions he (Mr. McDonnell) had indicated on that occasion. He had hoped that the hon. gentleman might have mentioned the matter to his colleagues, and that an amending Bill would be introduced. Of course the excuse might be made that the Act was only a piece of experimental legislation, and that it was too soon yet to amend it; but it was a common thing to pass a measure one session and then introduce an amending Bill the following session.

The PREMIER: How many do you assist to pass?

Mr. McDONNELL: There were on the paper a number of amending Bills, and last week they had a Bill to amend the Officials in Parliament Act.

The PREMIER: You did not support that.

Mr. McDONNELL: He would be very sorry to do so, from facts that had come to light since, and which the public would have an opportunity of knowing in a short space of time. There was no objection to amending Acts dealing with rabbits and pastoral leases, and other Acts that had come before them from time to time, and he thought the amendment of the Factories Act had a far greater claim on the Government to devote some of the time of the session to its consideration, seeing that it affected the lives of a large number of people in the community. The information contained in the report should be sufficient to induce them to introduce a Bill to amend the Act; and if they had any sympathy with the weaker class they would be ashamed to remain in power twenty-four hours without making some attempt to improve their condition. Even if the provisions of the present Act were taken advantage of by the Minister it would lead to greater benefit. Under section 41 the Governor in Council might, subject to the provisions of the Act, make regulations by which males under the age of sixteen years and females under eighteen years might be employed in the shops included in the schedule. In this report Mr. McLay and the lady inspector, Miss Smith, pointed out—particularly in the case of eating-houses and refreshment-rooms—the long hours; but up to the present no regulation had been made to give the benefit of the Act to this class of labour. Then there was power to make regulations providing for certain sanitary arrangements, but he failed to see that the Minister had taken advantage of the power. The lady inspector dealt with the way the provision relating to seating accommodation in shops had been evaded, and pointed out that only a small percentage of shops in Brisbane had made provision for seats for the employees as required by the Act; and he knew of his own knowledge that there were a large number of places where no proper seating accommodation had been provided. It was said that the girls could take a chair behind the counter and sit down, but very few girls would attempt to do that. The provision in the Act relating to this matter should be

enforced in the interests of the health of the people. This was what Miss Smith said—

In a number of shops seats have been placed behind the counter for the convenience of the female assistants; but some employers still refuse to allow the girls to sit down during business hours, saying that there is no time for so doing.

I am of opinion, however, that if the girls were to make use of seats at reasonable times, in the majority of cases they would not be interfered with. At present some of the girls are afraid to avail themselves of the permission conveyed in section 25 of the Act.

If there was a penalty for breaking the law in this small matter it should be enforced but it would be ignored as long as there was a Minister in charge of the Act who had not the courage to enforce it; and his impression was that the hon. gentleman at present in charge of the department was not in thorough sympathy with the Act and therefore did not give the officers of the department the support they deserved. The proper inspection of boilers was a matter that deserved consideration. There was no proper arrangement made under the Act for the inspection of boilers, but the Chief Inspector reported that a large number of those who had boilers were favourable to paying a fee if there was a qualified person appointed to make a proper inspection of boilers. The manager of the Colonial Sugar Refinery, at New Farm, had informed him that he tested all the boilers there once every three months. Under the Act boilers had only to be tested once a year. If the manager of that company recognised the necessity of so often testing the boilers at the refinery, there was far greater necessity for testing some of the very defective boilers elsewhere, which were at present a terror to the lives of people working in the vicinity. He hoped that a short Bill dealing with the subject would be introduced before the session closed. He would say a word or two on the question of overtime, particularly as it affected female workers. That matter might be dealt with much more effectually than it had hitherto been. Mr. McLay, in his report, stated that during the last four months of the year at least one firm worked some of their employees more overtime than was allowed by the law. There was a case where the law was actually broken, and yet no action had been taken by the department. When he spoke on the subject earlier in the session, the Home Secretary interjected that if any person who worked overtime and was not paid for it came to him he would disallow it, or words to that effect. The hon. gentleman had no power under the Act to enforce payment for overtime; but he had the power to make regulations that more than a certain number of hours' overtime should not be worked in any one week. In the case to which the Chief Inspector referred, the employers did not pay one single penny to those people who worked the overtime—chiefly dressmakers, the lowest paid class in the community. It was admitted by everybody that theirs was the most liberal Act in existence with reference to overtime. In Great Britain the authorities had put their foot down, and no overtime was allowed in the case of females. The same applied to a limited extent to New Zealand. In Victoria comparatively little overtime was worked, and when it was worked a reasonable remuneration had to be paid to the hands—not less than one and a-half times their ordinary rate of payment—and in addition tea money. In the New South Wales Act there was a provision for payment of overtime, and reducing the hours to a far less number than was the case in Queensland. Under the Queensland Act the Minister, he believed, had power to regulate how the overtime should be worked, and the Act should be strained to the utmost to prevent the excessive amount of overtime that had been worked in Brisbane since it came into

force. If payment was received for overtime it would not be so bad; but when that ill-paid class of workers had to put in several hours of overtime as well without remuneration, it was about time the Government stepped in. If the Government were sincere in their desire to have the Act properly administered, they would have long since brought in an amended Factories Act, which, he felt sure, would have received the support of both sides of the House. They wanted an amended Act to benefit those who worked under such conditions as were disclosed in the report of the Chief Inspector. To give an idea of the things that were going on, he might mention that some time ago he received a letter with regard to certain abuses in another town which the Act should rectify. The inspector at Ipswich was very definite in his condemnation of the sanitary arrangements of the factories in that town. He said in his report—

The sanitary arrangements in this town connected with both the factories and shops are, as a rule, most disgraceful; in fact, are anything but in accordance with the Health Act. There are very few establishments the arrangements of which are kept in a proper manner, and which I could pass.

He had a letter with him which he had handed over when he received it to the inspector of factories to take action. He did not, as a rule, bring into the House the names of persons or establishments, but if the Act of Parliament was not powerful enough, or those in power were not determined enough, to stop the abuses that existed, the people offending, and the way they were carrying on, should be exposed to the public. He did not consider any apology due to anybody for reading the letter, because he did so in the interests of the people who were supposed to be protected by an Act of Parliament, but who were not so protected. The letter was dated Ipswich, 2nd August, and was as follows:—

Seeing that you take a great interest in the working of the Factories Act, I would draw your attention to the beastly arrangements of the closets at the Ipswich Woollen Factory. To get to them men and women, boys and girls have to herd together down a passage about sixty yards, here they come to a platform for dyeing wool. Women go to the left, men to the right, to meet at the other side of the platform thirty yards further down. The closets are only about nine feet apart, divided by a flimsy wooden partition. Now, Sir, in this passage, and on the platform, there are men at work more or less all day. The women and girls have to pass and repass amongst them. It is a shame and a disgrace that any self-respecting and modest woman or girl should be subjected to such treatment; there is plenty of room for closets for the females at the other side of the mill, where there are no men at work, and common decency could be observed. If the inspector has power under the Act, then I say he is not doing his duty; if he has no power, then the sooner the Act is amended the better. To make matters worse, they are working a night shift of mixed sexes, principally young girls, and no light is provided at these closets; when not moonlight they are in absolute darkness. There are nasty tales going about the night workers, and whether true or false, no respectable girl should be liable to the imputations made through the shameless neglect of the directors or management to provide absolutely separate closet accommodation for the sexes. I wonder how they would like their own daughters or sisters to be treated like this. Trusting you will lay this before the proper authority at once or take what steps you think best to remedy these evils, and the sooner the better.

There was a letter received after the Act had been in force for eighteen months, a letter from one of the largest factories outside Brisbane. The only reference to that factory appearing in the report was a paragraph in the report from the inspector at Ipswich, who said—

The largest factories are the Government Railway Workshops, at which the employees are all males, and the works of the Queensland Woollen Manufacturing Company, the majority of the employees being females.

The latter works are most complete, the rooms being both airy and spacious; in fact, there is space for a considerable number more hands than are employed.

He did not think any factory should be singled out to be advertised like that through a Government report, particularly when the sanitary arrangements of that factory were in such a disgraceful condition. Before the matter was brought up he took the necessary action to find out if the complaint made was true, and if the authority for it was reliable, and his hon. friend the member for the Burnett could bear him out in that statement. He made the inquiries and found that the complaint was absolutely true.

The PREMIER: Did you report it to the Minister?

Mr. McDONNELL: He expected that interjection from the Minister, as it was one of the hon. gentleman's pet interjections. He received that letter on the 4th August, which was a Friday, and the hon. gentleman was at the Wellington Point show or some place else. The hon. gentleman was away on the following Saturday, and he called on Mr. McLay and read over the letter to him. He asked Mr. McLay to particularly note the date on which it was handed to him, as he intended—if no action was taken—to bring it before the House. He had been informed within the last ten days that there was no change in this place; and if the Act was to be enforced so as to benefit the people for whom it was intended, it must be enforced, particularly in connection with sanitary matters, without respect to persons or places. The Minister himself when speaking on those matters laid particular stress on the necessity for administering the sanitary provisions of the Act in a rigorous manner, but here was an instance of an open violation of the Act in which no effort had been made to remedy the abuses complained of. That simply supported the statement he had been making all along, that the Act was not administered as it should be, and that sufficient attention was not paid to its administration by the head of the department. From what he had seen and heard the officers of the department were desirous of administering the Act, but they found that in a number of places where improvements had been made at their suggestion, when they went there a short time afterwards the things of which they had complained were carried on in the same way again. He contended that in cases where there had been a violation of the provisions of the Act some action should be taken to teach people that the Government were sincere in their desire to have the Act properly administered. He did not advocate that there should be a lot of prosecutions, but that an example should be made of those persons who had been warned again and again without effect; and he believed that if that were done it would have a very good effect on those persons who were not disposed to adhere to the provisions of the Act. Prosecutions were necessary, not only in Brisbane and Ipswich, but in other places where the Act had been ignored and flouted, and the Government ought to show a certain amount of backbone in enforcing it.

Mr. STEPHENSON regretted that he was absent from the Chamber at the time the hon. member for Fortitude Valley brought some charges against the Queensland Woollen Manufacturing Company of having not provided the requisite sanitary conveniences for their employees. He had not seen or heard read the document from which the hon. member quoted.

Mr. MCMASTER: He read from a private letter.

Mr. STEPHENSON: If the complaint was from an inspector, it was extraordinary that

that inspector did not deem it his first duty to report the alleged defects to the company, with a view to having them remedied. He was one of the directors of the company, and although he attended the meetings of the board—which were held fortnightly—pretty regularly, he did not recollect any such report coming before the board since the Shops and Factories Act came into force. He was quite sure that the directors of the company were sufficiently alive to the interests of their employees and shareholders not to allow any imperfect sanitary arrangements to exist in connection with their works if the matter was duly brought before them. Of course it might be—although that was not probable—that the late managing secretary, who left for England some three or four weeks ago, had received some complaint which he had not put before the directors, but certainly he did not recollect that any report had come before the board complaining of defects in the sanitary arrangements. If the hon. the junior member for Fortitude Valley was so very desirous of attending to complaints made to him in private letters, he could find other places in Ipswich which were of much greater interest to him where action should be taken.

Mr. McDONNELL: Do they employ a lot of girls there?

Mr. STEPHENSON: Never mind whether there were a lot of girls there or not. He ventured to say that if the hon. member searched Queensland all over he would find very few places where girls were better paid, or their interests more carefully considered, than they were by the Queensland Woollen Manufacturing Company in Ipswich.

Mr. McDONNELL: What about the sanitary arrangements? That is what I complain of.

Mr. STEPHENSON: He was telling the hon. member that if he was so exceedingly desirous of remedying every grievance that existed he could find indifferent and vile sanitary arrangements in other places besides that to which he had referred. At the same time he (Mr. Stephenson) agreed that if the sanitary arrangements at the Woollen Company's premises were not in consonance with the Act they ought to be made so; and it was the duty of the inspector to lay those complaints before the company, in order that the abuses, if they existed, might be remedied. If the state of affairs was such as the hon. member asserted, and for confirmation of which he appealed to the hon. member for Burnett—

Mr. McDONNELL: No, I did not say that. I said the hon. member for Burnett could bear me out that I had made inquiries to see whether the source from which I received my information was reliable, and whether the statements were true.

Mr. STEPHENSON: That was a distinction without a difference. But if the circumstances were as the hon. member stated, then it was the plain duty of the inspector to call the attention of the management to the matter; and if it were not remedied, then it was his duty to take further action in another direction. Although he believed that this Act was a piece of over-legislation—

Mr. McDONNELL: That is the secret out now.

Mr. STEPHENSON: It did not matter whether the secret was out or not; he believed the Act was a piece of over-legislation. However, while it was on the statute-book it should be carried out in its entirety, and he was sure that if any complaint had been made by the inspector the matter would have been attended to. The hon. member ought to be quite sure that his correspondent was not actuated by improper motives. He should not allow himself to be made a vehicle to carry out the spite of some person who had a "down" on the company. No body in the colony was more desirous of pro-

viding every facility for insuring the health of employees than the Queensland Woollen Manufacturing Company.

Mr. McDONNELL: He did not want to enter into the wages, or the hours of labour or anything else; although if he chose to do so he could bring facts before the Committee that would not show the Ipswich Woollen Company up in the favourable light the hon. member had tried to describe. He supposed the hon. member had read the report.

Mr. STEPHENSON: I have not seen it.

Mr. McDONNELL: That was very strange, as it was a parliamentary report. And the inspector in the Ipswich district reported that the sanitary arrangements in that town connected with both shops and factories were most disgraceful, and not in accordance with the Health Act. The letter—in fact, he had received a second letter from Ipswich, and he had waited from the 4th August to the present time to see if any action would be taken in regard to it.

Question put.

Mr. McDONNELL was surprised that this matter was to be treated so lightly. Although he had spoken for half an hour, it appeared that the vote was to be allowed to pass without a word from the Government. It was a very important matter, and there should be some statement from the Minister in charge.

The PREMIER: The hon. member had been so diffuse in his speech, which had occupied about an hour, that when he ended one had forgotten what he said at the beginning. It was a second-reading speech; merely a reiteration of the speech made by him earlier in the session, to which he (the Premier) had already replied. The hon. member seemed to live in the atmosphere of the Shops and Factories Act. Instead of going to the Under Secretary for information, he endeavoured to get information from the inspectors and others.

Mr. McDONNELL: That is a false statement on your part.

The PREMIER: He was surprised that the hon. member had not yet learned the ordinary official course of correspondence. The hon. member went to his office, and because he was absent he went to the inspector's office, but he (the Premier) knew nothing about it.

Mr. McDONNELL: Do you think I am going to run about after you? You were down the Bay, in the "Lucinda."

The PREMIER: If the hon. member had any complaint to make he should have addressed it to the department, but his remarks had been so discursive that there was very little left for him to explain. He might say, in regard to what the hon. member referred to as "the official return I got the other day," that the Chief Inspector said—

I considered this so unofficial that, being very busy at the time with the annual returns, I simply ran up the figures in the register and sent them to him in a hurried note, of which even no copy was kept. The date was early in April of this year.

Then he proceeded to give information in regard to other matters. The hon. member instead of receiving his information from the head of the department, obtained it from the inspector, and therefore placed him (the Premier) at a disadvantage in replying to him. He could only say that the hon. member's speech was a reiteration of his former remarks amplified by quotations from the report of the inspector. Briefly, he contended that the Act was one which should be administered with great caution. But if the hon. member were in his position, he would create a complete revolution in business circles. He would raise such a tempest in industrial circles, that there would be a perfect panic. The hon.

member had no idea of moderation. If he would devote his attention to other social problems of equal importance to this, instead of endeavouring to find out the microscopical defects in the working of the Act, he might do more justice to himself and to the country. He (the Premier) was quite prepared to receive the charge that he had not instructed that the Act should be administered in anything like a drastic manner. He had, however, instructed the inspector to be particularly severe upon breaches of the sanitary regulations, and if the matter connected with the Ipswich Woollen Factory had been brought under his notice no favour would have been given to the company. The matter had not been brought under his notice, and he blamed the hon. member for that. He did not know that there was much more to be said. If the Act was to be administered more widely, especially in the direction indicated by the leader of the Opposition—of which he approved—a larger staff of officials would be required, for whom no provision was made on the Estimates. With regard to other abuses, he might say that no deterrent had been used by him to prevent the inspector putting the Act into full operation, although he was reluctant that it should be put in force until offenders had received full notice and persisted in breaking the law. With regard to records not being furnished, he was informed that not more than 5 per cent. of the factories had failed to furnish them. They were coming in gradually, and on the whole the administration of the Act—while it was not a menace to industrial pursuits—was gradually coming into operation, and its beneficial effects being recognised. As far as Ministerial action had been taken, no favour had been shown to anyone who had violated the law. He took considerable interest in the working of the Act. He was not antagonistic to it, but he was not so enamoured of it as to put it into the fullest operation and thus create embarrassment, disturbance, and terror amongst the industrial producers of the colony.

Mr. STEWART: Then you are opposed to it.

The PREMIER: No. He was not antagonistic to it; but he was not so enamoured of it as the junior member for Fortitude Valley, who would put it into operation regardless of consequences. Taken as a whole he thought the Act had been beneficial in its operation, chiefly on account of the moderate and careful manner in which it had been administered.

Mr. STEPHENSON regretted he was not present when the junior member for Fortitude Valley read the letter to which he had referred. The hon. member, in answer to an interjection of his—that he had not read the inspector's report—read a portion of the latter, but if he had been as candid as he claimed to be he would have read the portion referring to the employees as well.

Mr. KERR: He did.

Mr. STEPHENSON: Of course, if that were so, it altered the case to some extent. When the hon. member was reading from the Ipswich inspector's report he understood him to refer solely to the Woollen Company's premises, but it appeared now that that official's remarks had a general bearing, and were as follows:—

The sanitary arrangements in this town connected with both the factories and shops are, as a rule, most disgraceful; in fact, are anything but in accordance with the Health Act. There are very few establishments the arrangements of which are kept in a proper manner, and which I could pass.

I am by degrees getting these things altered, but it will take some time. This matter I consider is one of the utmost importance if the employees' health is to be considered as it ought to be, but, unfortunately, is the one that is most neglected.

If the sanitary arrangements were so disgraceful one would naturally expect the inspector to go on to report that numbers of the employees were dying from typhoid fever and other diseases, but he said—

The appearance of the female employees is, I think, somewhat remarkable, contrasting them with those I have seen in Brisbane and the large factories in England, as they all appear to be well grown and exceedingly healthy. I never see a sick or stunted person amongst them, a fact which I think the Chief Inspector was much struck with when he inspected my district.

A somewhat different complexion had been placed upon affairs since he had last spoken. He had been told by hon. members that the hon. member, Mr. McDONNELL, had read a letter that was exceedingly strongly worded; that it was a letter that should not have been quoted in that House, unless the hon. member was prepared to give his authority. At all events, in justice to the company, and as a matter of courtesy to himself as a director of the company, the hon. member might have informed him of his intention to read the letter. He now called the Chairman's attention to Standing Order 302, which said—

A document read or cited by a member may be ordered to be laid upon the table.

A letter which made such a strong attack upon a company as that letter appeared to do, and ignored defects in all other factories and shops, should, as a matter of fairness to the company which was attacked, to the community generally, and to the House, be laid on the table. He hoped that some steps would be taken by which the hon. member would produce it. He would appeal to the hon. member, as an act of justice, to lay it on the table in order that the company might know what the exact nature of the charge was, and whether the party or parties who made the charge were actuated by pure or other motives. He asked the Chairman if it was in his power to move that the document be laid on the table?

Mr. GLASSEY: Certainly not.

Mr. STEPHENSON: He was asking the Chairman and not the hon. member for Bundaberg for advice. He did not regard the hon. member as the "great Panjandrum" of Queensland yet, whatever he might become eventually.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will see that we are now in Committee, and that, according to the Standing Orders, the Committee shall consider such business only as has been referred to it. The business we now have before us is Supply. The matter raised by the hon. member cannot be entertained in Committee. If the hon. member wishes the letter to be laid on the table, it must be done while Mr. Speaker is in the chair.

Mr. McDONNELL: In reply to the hon. member for Ipswich, he could only say that the courtesy and humane feeling of which the hon. member spoke were very much wanting in the company the hon. member represented, and up to the present they had not done their duty to their employees. He had given his reasons for reading the letter. He had made inquiries to find out if any effort was being made by the company to remedy the existing state of affairs; and, no effort having been made, he considered it his duty to bring the matter before the House, and he was prepared to take the consequences of his action. There was no use the hon. member trying to bounce hon. members. They had a duty to perform as well as the hon. member, who was there to represent the Ipswich Woollen Company.

Mr. STEPHENSON: He is not here to do anything of the kind.

Mr. McDONNELL: Well, he was there to represent the people who had sent him there; to represent the weakest class in the community—

the very class whom the Woollen Company made their profits out of. He was not there to defend any sweaters.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that he is now wandering from the question, and I would ask him not to enter into a contentious argument, as he seems about to do.

Mr. McDONNELL reminded the Chairman that he had given the hon. member for Ipswich a great deal of latitude.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must admit that I only allowed the hon. member for Ipswich to reply to his remarks.

Mr. McDONNELL: The hon. member for Ipswich had made two or three speeches on the question, but he would say nothing further on it. The Premier seemed to make a point of the return which he (Mr. McDONNELL) had previously quoted in the House, and the hon. gentleman had said that he frequently went to the office in order to get information from the Chief Inspector and the clerks. He gave that statement a point-blank denial. It was absolutely false. He often went to the office to convey information to the Chief Inspector which he had received from people whom it would not do to be seen about the office. As to going there for the purpose of getting information, what value would that information be to him? He had gone to see that the Act was enforced, and he was not aware that even the Premier had the power, so long as he remained a member of that House, to prevent him going to any public office in the exercise of his duties. As to the inaccuracy of the return which he had quoted in the House, that return was in the handwriting of the Chief Inspector. It was dated 13th April, 1898, and was a return connected with the Chinese and European cabinet-makers that he had asked that gentleman to supply him with. It began:—"Dear Sir,—Please find herewith statement of employees in the cabinet-making industry as requested, as shown by our register." Then followed the numbers, which he had quoted before. He had kept the return, and he now produced it to show that he had received it from the Chief Inspector.

The PREMIER: The inspector says it is an unofficial return.

Mr. McDONNELL: He had asked the inspector for the information, and on that information he had made his statement. The Premier seemed to be vexed with the way he had dealt with the question, and had given him a lecture as to his conduct. When the Premier accused him of such things it was only right that he should make a few remarks. He had taken action in this matter, and his voice would be seldom heard in connection with this question if the Act had been properly administered. But he considered there was no need for any apology on his part for repeatedly bringing up this question. There were hon. gentlemen in the Chamber who brought up far less important questions from time to time, and as long as he was a member he would bring up this question as often as he considered right in the execution of his duty. He thought the Premier would have given the Committee some information on the subject of extending the provisions of the Act to places where it was not already in force, but the hon. gentleman had not done so.

The PREMIER: In extending the provisions of the Act I shall be guided by the recommendations of the Chief Inspector.

Mr. DANIELS: The Premier had lectured the hon. member for Fortitude Valley on his long speech, but he could not help noticing the length of time the hon. gentleman spoke himself, and said nothing.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. gentleman will confine his remarks to the question before the Committee.

Mr. DANIELS: He would do so. The Premier had told the hon. member for Fortitude Valley that he lived on the Act. That hon. member was doing his duty, and possibly members on the other side might live on, perhaps, next to nothing. Why could not the Premier say—as he had a right to say—that he would inquire into the complaints made, and, if he found them true, would have a stop put to the things complained of? Instead of that, he told the Committee straight out that he had not had the Act strictly administered, and that he did not intend to; therefore those evils were still going to continue. If they passed Acts of Parliament it was the duty of the Government to see that they were administered in the spirit in which they were passed.

Mr. STEWART thought every member of the Committee who was not biased by class prejudice must agree with the observations of the hon. member for Cambooya. He was surprised at the speech delivered by the Premier, who practically admitted that he dared not administer the Act as it should be administered—that if he did administer it as members on the Opposition side claimed it should be administered, it would produce revolution. The shopkeeping class would rebel and overcome the Government! What was the use of passing laws unless they were administered? This Act was deliberately and continuously flouted by the commercial classes in Brisbane, as was shown by the paragraph of the inspector's report relating to records. That showed that the Government were actually afraid to put the law in force against the shopkeeping class of Brisbane. Would that sort of conduct be permitted in any other class? They would be immediately brought up before their betters and sentenced. He did not see why any exception should be made in that particular case. The same difficulty had been found in getting records of overtime worked by females and youths under sixteen, but according to the report there was now some improvement in that respect. According to the report there was still a small minority who refrained from forwarding the records. In the name of common justice, why should not those men be compelled to comply with the law? All through, the report was of the same character. He ventured to say that if the Chief Inspector were to state the true facts, the displeasure of his superiors would fall upon him. After the speech of the Premier the shopkeeping class would be quite justified in treating the measure with even greater contempt than they had hitherto shown. What was the meaning of this lax administration? Did hon. members opposite think they were so guileless that they could not see through the thin subterfuge? The meaning was that if the law was administered as it ought to be, and as the country expected it to be, the propertied classes would have to put their hands in their pockets. They would have to provide better buildings, better sanitary appliances, more air space, and so on, and their profits would be correspondingly diminished. The Act was an attack on property, and hon. members opposite were advocating the interests of the property-owner instead of carrying out the wishes of the country.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT MEDICAL OFFICERS.

The PREMIER moved that £2,550 be granted for Government medical officers. The sum was the same as that asked for last year, with the exception of an increase of £50 to the medical officer at Charters Towers.

Question put and passed.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES (SUBDIVISION).

The PREMIER moved that £21,040 be granted for miscellaneous services (subdivision). "Incidentals" showed a decrease of £1,500, inasmuch as there had been a partition of the expenditure between the Chief Secretary's office and the Home Secretary's. The expenditure last year amounted to £6,632. The grant for cemeteries showed an increase of £100. Expenses under Elections Acts showed an increase of £7,000 required for the next general election. Relief of aborigines showed an increase of £500 required for additional demands. The total expenditure last year was £4,349.

At ten minutes past 11 o'clock,

The CHAIRMAN said: In accordance with Standing Order No. 171, I call upon the hon. member for Oxley, Mr. Grimes, to relieve me in the chair.

Mr. GRIMES thereupon took the chair.

Mr. MAUGHAN asked the meaning of the increase to the Queensland National Art Gallery. He did not offer objection to the amount, but he saw a curator had been appointed, and he would like to know if provision for his salary was made in the vote.

The PREMIER: Mr. Godfrey Rivers had gone home with the distinct title of "curator," but without salary. The increase in the vote was intended to provide additional purchasing power for pictures and copies of works of art.

Mr. STEWART asked for some details of the vote of £3,500 asked for incidental and miscellaneous expenses.

The PREMIER: The expenditure on that vote last year amounted to £6,624. It included expenses in connection with police magistrates and clerks of petty sessions, £725; repairs to court-house furniture, £321; departmental expenses—subscriptions to newspapers and books, £462; clerical assistance in police courts, £274; expenses of transfer of police magistrates and clerks of petty sessions, £132; Queensland Law Journal and Digest, £274; Salvation Army Home at Riverview, £252; and a variety of other items. It ran into a large sum last year, but of course a portion of the vote last year was in connection with items which belonged to the department of the Chief Secretary.

Mr. KERK: The hon. gentleman had referred to an amount of over £200 for the Salvation Army Home at Riverview, and he thought it would be better in the interests of the public that all grants to religious bodies should appear as such on the Estimates and not under the cloak of "incidental expenses" and "contingencies."

The PREMIER explained that the £252 for the Salvation Army Home at Riverview represented the provision made for the children taken over by the Salvation Army last year under Sir Horace Tozer's rule.

Mr. KIDSTON noticed that the amount for the Queensland National Art Gallery had been increased from £500 to £1,000, and the same thing had been done in connection with what was now called the "Public Library of Queensland." He would have no objection to those increases if the other principal towns of the colony were getting any share of such money at all; but when he asked for £50 last year to enable the Rockhampton School of Arts authorities to increase their museum, it was objected that the Government had not the money, because if they gave it to Rockhampton they should give it to the other principal towns in the colony. Unless a very good reason for so large an increase in the vote was given, he should move that it be reduced to the former amount.

The PREMIER understood that when the vote for the Public Library of Queensland was under discussion the matter was fully explained.

The Public Library vote for £1,000 was passed with a view of obtaining a larger supply of books, and the idea was that it should be a lending library for the principal towns of the colony. He had already explained that the £300 additional asked for the Art Gallery was in consequence of Mr. Godfrey Rivers, who had been secretary to the trustees, going home with the title of curator. He was going to Italy, and it was intended to give him a larger purchasing power to get copies of the old Italian masters, and photographs of the frescoes and other designs which ornamented the cathedrals of Italy. £500 or £1,000 would not go far in the purchase of high-class works of art, but Mr. Rivers could get some good copies in the studios of Florence. They must make a beginning, and he hoped that private beneficence would in time supplement their efforts.

Mr. McMASTER thought that if the hon. member for Rockhampton would take the trouble to find out the names and addresses of the people who visited the Art Gallery and Museum he would find that the larger number of them were country people.

Mr. KIDSTON had not the slightest objection to the money being spent in Brisbane if other towns in the colony which were trying to do something of the same sort also received a little encouragement, but they could not get a farthing. He therefore entirely objected to the increase in the vote, and moved that it be reduced by £500.

Mr. GLASSEY sincerely hoped that his friend, the hon. member for Rockhampton, would not persist in his amendment. Surely it was not asking too much that the capital of the colony, with its 105,000 inhabitants within a radius of five miles, should have £1,000 spent on it in providing pictures for the elevation of the people of the colony generally, or £1,000 for a public library! He should much prefer that the Government had taken into consideration the desirability of granting a certain sum of money for such purposes to centres like Rockhampton, Townsville, and it might be Charters Towers, in order to keep down that grumbling and jealousy; but surely they were not so poor that they could not afford to spend the small sum of £1,000 in providing some places of recreation and refinement such as an art gallery in Brisbane, not merely for the inhabitants of Brisbane, but for the inhabitants of the whole colony! If separation should take place the same thing would probably be done for Rockhampton and Townsville as the capital of the Central and Northern divisions respectively; a start must be made somewhere, and it was only reasonable that that start should be made in the capital. He hoped the amendment would be withdrawn.

Mr. ARMSTRONG urged, as a further reason why the amendment should be withdrawn, that the pictures which they were accumulating in the art gallery in Brisbane would be lent to Rockhampton and other places when they started an art gallery; so that although the vote was apparently for Brisbane it would ultimately benefit Rockhampton, Townsville, and other places in the North.

Mr. KIDSTON had no objection to making a start in the capital, but if the Government could not afford to give other towns in the colony a single penny he did not see any reason why that vote should be increased to £1,000. He would be quite agreeable to support an increase in the vote, provided other towns in the colony got a share of such expenditure. If he had an assurance that other places would get a share of the money he might be willing to withdraw his amendment. Otherwise he would not.

The PREMIER: They must bear in mind that art was very costly, and £1,000 would not go very far if spread over three or four places.

The proper course was to establish a nucleus, and when they had collected some good pictures and there were suitable buildings in the provincial towns, the pictures could be sent there for exhibition. If they were to have a gallery they must commence in a small way, and extend it by degrees by such assistance as the Treasury could give.

Mr. HARDACRE suggested that the vote might be placed upon the same basis as the subsidies to schools of arts. He knew it did not cost as much to buy books as pictures, but still the Government might make grants in proportion to the amounts contributed by the citizens. If there were such a fund available, it would be an incentive to the people of different towns to help themselves and to try to induce private owners to contribute their pictures.

Mr. FITZGERALD said he only rose because the hon. member for Rockhampton would not withdraw his amendment. In his opinion the vote was ridiculously small. The whole sum would not buy one first-class picture. If they were to have a gallery worthy of the name they must spend money upon it. If the Government were proposing to spend a very large amount there might be something in the hon. member's contention, but considering the small sum asked for, he was making a farce of the whole thing.

Mr. STEWART: He had no objection to people indulging in art at their own expense, but when the State was asked for £1,000 for the purpose of buying pictures he could not help thinking that it could be more profitably spent on an experimental farm in the Central district, for which he had been agitating for two years. Failing that, he would prefer to see the money spent in encouraging gold-mining, or any other industry whatsoever, so long as they got some value for the money. It would be time enough to spend money on pictures when they had it to spare.

Mr. DAWSON asked if it was intended to buy pictures or subsidise local artists?

The PREMIER: Mr. Rivers, the curator of the Art Gallery, had gone to England, and it was proposed that he should buy copies of the standard works of art which were the admiration of the whole world. He was not aware that any portion of the money was to be devoted to the encouragement of Queensland art.

Mr. KERR asked what the vote of £50 for the Art Society was for?

The PREMIER: That is to encourage local art.

Mr. HARDACRE desired to obtain information in reference to the public library.

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing in this vote with regard to that.

Mr. HARDACRE only wanted to ask a question. There was a good collection of books, and it seemed a pity that they were not made available to the public. Was there any chance of their being made accessible?

The PREMIER: The vote was passed on 13th September in connection with the Chief Secretary's Department. The object of the library was to allow people to read on the premises, but he did not think there was sufficient room in the present temporary building. However, if anyone wanted to refer to any work he could go there and do so.

Mr. HARDACRE was glad to hear the Premier's statement, as there were many works in the library which were not to be found in any other library in the colony.

Question put and passed.

GRANTS IN AID OF ROADS AND BRIDGES.

The PREMIER moved that £10,000 be granted in aid of roads and bridges. The vote was doubled this year; and, taken in connection with the increased endowment, it should be of

material assistance to the local authorities. The vote would be apportioned in proportion to the needs of particularly the outlying districts—especially goldfields, where assistance was more needed than in the more settled districts.

Mr. DAWSON asked if the hon. gentleman could give the Committee some information as to the amount that had been spent and the districts which had received grant?

The PREMIER: Last year all the £5,000 with the exception of about £200 had been spent. The division of Banana had received £50, Burrum £10, Beenleigh £30, Caboolture £234, Douglas £150, Glengallan £200, Granville £30, Hann £250, Herberton £200, Johnstone £183, Kilkivan £30, Maroochy £175, Nundah £270, Perry £100, Roma municipality £198, Tiara £150, Taroom £123, Thuringowa £564, Tinana £80, Tinaroo £300, Toowong shire—for draining Red Jacket Swamp—£750, Walsh division £200, Widgee £50, Woothakata £100, and Warwick £250.

Mr. KERR said that it was evident that the electorates represented by Government supporters received nearly the whole vote. The only electorate represented by a Labour member who received a grant was Roma. It appeared as if the whole £10,000 which was asked this year was to be dangled before the electors at the next election. It was time that the money was spent in localities which had, so far, received none of it.

The TREASURER said that before the last election the late Labour member for Woothakata had boasted that he had got more money out of the vote than the electorate of Cairns, which had then been represented by the late Premier. The money was spent mostly in the outside goldfields, where there were no railways. Places with railways did not need grants.

Mr. W. THORN hoped that now that the vote was to be doubled they would be able to get justice for other electorates. There was a great mileage of main roads in his district. They had been trying hard for the last four or five years to keep those roads in repair, but they had not, so far, been able to get a grant out of that vote. If the whole of it was to be given to hon. members on the other side, it was time they changed sides, so that justice might be done to the whole colony. He was not going to oppose the vote. Instead of £10,000, he would like to see £30,000 or £40,000 voted for roads and bridges, and he believed the Government would give assistance whether it was asked for by members on the Opposition side or on the Government side. Within the last twelve months between 30,000 and 40,000 acres of land had been taken up by homestead men in his electorate, and the rates they paid did not amount to sufficient to make roads.

Mr. KIDSTON was surprised at the hon. members taking exception to this vote. The Government must begin somewhere, and naturally they began amongst their own supporters.

Mr. ARMSTRONG asked the Premier to state upon what basis the vote was to be distributed, so that it might be known by the local authorities requiring assistance in the building of bridges or the making of roads?

The PREMIER: The principle on which the vote was administered last year—which he thought it was desirable to continue—was to grant one-third to the local authorities requiring assistance.

Mr. MAUGHAN agreed with the hon. member for Aubigny that the vote might well be increased, and he hoped it would be increased in the future. In his electorate there were several goldfields, some of them new and almost inaccessible for want of proper roads, and he hoped that more attention would be directed to the special wants of the local authorities in some of

the bush electorates, where it was impossible for the local authorities to carry out the works required without assistance.

The PREMIER: Though the principle of distribution was one-third, he should add that local authorities requiring assistance would have to show their financial position. He was not disposed to promise assistance to local authorities that had large sums lying at fixed deposit. Assistance would only be given to local authorities who could show that they were in financial distress.

Mr. NEWELL: The hon. member for Charters Towers was in the fortunate position of representing a rich electorate with a large amount of ratable property, where the local authorities did not require very much assistance. His electorate contained a large number of mines, which were very much scattered, some being 100 miles apart. It might be said to lie between the Gulf and Cairns, and in the whole of that vast area there were only two short railways—from Normanton to Croydon and from Cairns to Mareeba—and the few roads required a great deal of money to keep them in repair.

Mr. DAWSON: Woothakata had done very well in getting its little railway from Mareeba to Chillagoe, and he trusted that no application would be made from that electorate for any part of the £10,000. According to the list read out, the department had been in the habit of spending £5,000 in electorates represented by supporters of the Government. Would any of the extra £5,000 be expended in electorates represented by hon. members sitting on that side?

The PREMIER: According to the applications received so would the money be distributed.

Mr. McMASTER: That being the case, he should put in a claim for Booroodabin, whose roads had to carry the traffic from all the surrounding districts.

The HOME SECRETARY: He might say that his electorate had not had anything out of the vote.

Mr. GLASSEY: They must spend more money in aiding local authorities to make decent roads if they meant to have settlement. £10,000 for such a purpose was a mere fleabite. If it was £50,000 it would not be a penny too much.

The TREASURER: Hon. members who talked of the paltry amounts spent on roads and bridges forgot that they were spending £50,000 on the bridge over the Burnett, £50,000 on the bridge at North Rockhampton, and a very large sum on the Burdekin Bridge. There were hundreds of thousands of pounds being spent in electorates represented on the other side of the House.

Mr. DAWSON: Those are Government works.

The TREASURER: It was all Government money that was being spent, and when they were spending sums of £50,000 on those big works, they could not find money for the small works.

Mr. STEWART: The big votes are out of loan money, and these are from revenue.

The TREASURER: It did not make very much difference. £2,500 of the vote last year was spent in the Bundaberg district, and that was out of revenue, and a large portion of the vote was spent in the district of Carpentaria. It was unfair to say that the vote was spent in districts represented on his side of the House, as they could fairly say that all the money, whether from loan or revenue, was impartially spent in districts represented on both sides.

Mr. FINNEY called the attention of the Government to the Towong road, which was a highway for the dead from all the suburbs of Brisbane. Since the Government had done away with the toll on the road the Shire Council had not been able to keep it in repair, and unless the

Government gave them some help the road would be in such a state that they could not drive a corpse over it.

Mr. GLASSEY : The remarks of the Treasurer would lead to the inference that Bundaberg had been specially favoured ; but he must remind the hon. gentleman that the work to which he had referred was specially provided for in a special Loan Act passed ten years ago. In 1889 a Bill was passed for the construction of that work, and in 1890 a sum of money was actually passed for its construction, but it was in some way allowed to lapse. The Government of the day, to whom he gave credit for doing what their predecessors had failed to do, were after all only carrying out a contract entered into by the House years ago. He repeated that if settlement was to go on at a more rapid rate than hitherto they must be prepared to spend a much larger sum of money upon the making and maintenance of roads.

Mr. DAWSON : The Treasurer had spoken of unfairness, but the hon. gentleman's own statement was not fair at all. The hon. gentleman quoted the bridge over the Burdekin, but that had nothing to do with that vote, which was a sum placed on the Estimates to enable the department to render assistance to local authorities to keep roads in repair. That was quite a different thing from a sum from loan for a particular Government department to construct such a work as a railway bridge. The hon. member for Toowong had drawn a harrowing picture of the state of Toowong road, but he ventured to say that it was now in a better state of repair than any road they had got in the North.

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 a later hour of the day.

The resolutions were ordered to be reported at a later hour of the day.

TRUSTEES AND EXECUTORS BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Council, forwarding this Bill for the concurrence of the Assembly.

FIRST READING.

The Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Thursday, 10th November.

The House adjourned at twenty-eight minutes to 1 o'clock a.m.