

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 1898

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 2 NOVEMBER, 1898.

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

PETITION.

CASE OF JAMES MUIR.

Mr. FOGARTY presented a petition from James Muir and 178 other electors of Drayton and Toowoomba in reference to an alleged wrong suffered by James Muir.

Petition read and received.

LOCAL WORKS LOANS BILL.

On the motion of the TREASURER, it was formally resolved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Local Works Loans Act of 1880, the Local Works Loans Act Amendment Act of 1890, and the Local Works Loans Acts Amendment Act of 1894.

PASTORAL LEASES EXTENSION BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the HOME SECRETARY, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Council for their concurrence.

ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

That, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for the despatch of business at 3 o'clock p.m. on Monday in each week, in addition to the days already provided by Sessional Order; and that Government business take precedence of all other business on that day.

I may say that I called "Not informal" to this motion, which otherwise might have gone as formal, because I desired to inform the House the reasons that induced me to alter the form of this motion from that of which I gave notice yesterday afternoon. I had intended to ask the House for the rest of the session to give the

Government an additional day for public business, and that day, according to ordinary precedent, I selected as Friday; but understanding later on that Monday would be a more convenient day, particularly for country members, and also for gentlemen having commercial matters to attend to—Friday being mail day both for Northern and British mails—it seemed to me that I was consulting the convenience of hon. members generally by providing for Monday instead of Friday. I made the alteration under the authority of the Standing Orders, which allow a member who has given notice of motion to somewhat amend it before it is published. I trust this will be found convenient to hon. members. I am sure we all feel the necessity for an additional day; and though it is a considerable strain upon hon. members to give further time, yet the business of the country is such that it must be proceeded with, and I trust hon. gentlemen will render every assistance to enable us to proceed with legislation and close the session within a satisfactory term—before Christmas at any rate. I may say that it is the desire of the Government in asking for this additional sitting day that every hon. member, whichever side of the House he may sit on, who has practical legislation before the House should have an opportunity of determining it before the House rises. Hon. members who have legislation on the business-paper at the present time with which there is rather a remote prospect of dealing under our present sitting days may accept my assurance that there will be an opportunity afforded them of dealing with their measures before the session is concluded. Under these circumstances I think hon. members may without discussion accept this motion.

Mr. GLASSEY: I am very glad to know that the Premier will afford every facility to private members to bring forward the various proposals which now stand on the business-paper. Personally it is quite immaterial to me—and I think I may say the same for other members on this side—whether we sit on Friday or Monday. Possibly the balance of opinion is in favour of Monday. I think there can be no objection to the proposal now made; at least I do not see any serious objection to it. I sincerely hope that members who have to submit various matters standing on the order paper will be given an opportunity to have them discussed freely and fully, and that there will be no desire to curtail discussion. The session is advancing, we are getting into the hot weather, and the best thing the Government can do is to hurry on with the work and bring the session to a close at the earliest possible date.

Mr. CURTIS: I think the convenience of hon. members who live at some distance from the metropolis will be better considered if Friday is made the additional sitting day instead of Monday. If Monday is adopted I shall have to remain here the whole of the time; I shall not be able to leave Brisbane at all, and several other members will be in the same position. I shall be glad to hear that the Government will be willing to select Friday as the additional sitting day instead of Monday, but if Monday is selected I should like Friday also to be included, because if we have to be in attendance here on Monday we might as well be here on Friday. I should prefer Friday.

Mr. BOLES: I fully concur in the remarks made by the last speaker. I understand from the leader of the Government that the object in having an additional sitting day is to further the business of the country. In the past Friday has always been chosen as the additional sitting day, and I see no reason why that practice should be departed from on this occasion. But if the business of the country really requires it, I am

prepared to sit every day in the week right up to Saturday. Of course, I quite understand that Ministers would be rather taxed by sitting every day of the week, but, as the leader of the Government has pointed out, it is to the interest of the country that we should get on with the business. If Monday is appointed an additional sitting day, then I hope the Government will also take into consideration the advisableness of sitting on Friday as well, and let us get on with the business, but I think it would be more convenient to sit on Friday in preference to Monday.

Mr. STEWART: The sudden desire to get on with the business of the country that has blossomed out so unexpectedly on both sides of the House is absolutely amusing to one who, like myself, advocated at the beginning of the session that we should sit four days a week. I have not the slightest objection to sitting four or even five days a week now; but the position taken up by some hon. members seems to me to be rather curious. One hon. member objected to this motion because he would have to be here all the time, and another member said the same thing. I have got to be here all the time; I do not consider myself entitled to be absent from the House when the business of the country is going on. I think the Government are very much to blame in not having been ready to go on with the business at the beginning of the session. A farmer gets up early in the morning and does most of his work before the sun has obtained any power; he does not lie in bed until 10 or 12 o'clock and then rush out to do a day's work. But that is exactly what the Government have done. During the cool months that Parliament has been sitting the Government have been in bed fast asleep. The Labour party have knocked at their bedroom door time and again, but no response has come from the sleepy Government.

Mr. DANIELS: Yes; they snored.

Mr. STEWART: They snored very loudly so loudly as to drown all attempts to awaken them. Now at last they are awake, and when the weather is too hot to sleep or work, or do anything as it should be done, they want to rush on with business. Hon. members opposite know that perfectly well, and I say again that it has been the settled policy of the continuous Government to keep back their principal measures until the last hours of the session, in the hope that they will be rushed through without discussion. Would any honourable individual desire that any measure that he or the Government may propose should be rushed through without discussion? What is the inference to be drawn from this course of conduct? Simply that the Government fear discussion, and rely upon their huge and servile majority more than on the merits of the measures they bring forward. That is the position of the Government, and I challenge the Premier to say whether I am right or wrong. Was the hon. member prepared to go on with these measures when the House met at the end of July? I know he was not at the head of the Government at that time, but those hon. members who sit with him were. Those hon. members who believe themselves to be so well able to manage the business of the country were in power then, and either they had not a single measure to go on with, or they have deliberately waited till the hot weather.

Mr. ANNEAR: Keep cool.

Mr. STEWART: "I am as cool as a philosopher." If every other hon. member was of the same mind as I am—and I think a great many on this side are—we would keep the Government here until April or May of next year discussing the business they may be inclined to bring forward.

This sort of thing ought to be obstructed in every possible way. I do not think this practice of rushing legislation through is in the interests of the people. It is not in their interests that we should sit sweltering in a temperature of 90 degrees or 100 degrees passing laws.

The HOME SECRETARY: You want to sit here during February.

Mr. STEWART: Not if it can be avoided; but if the hon. member and those who are associated with him persist in continuing to do what I believe is not in the interests of the community, then perhaps it may be the business of those who sit on this side of the House to compel hon. members to sit here during February, and give the Government a dose of their own medicine. I may say now that I think the Parliament of this colony should sit from May until October, when the weather is fairly cool, and hon. members can discuss measures with comfort to themselves, and I believe to the advantage of the country.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is too much discussion.

Mr. STEWART: No man or party which has a good case is afraid of discussion. There can be no greater proof of a bad case than a fear of discussion. Why should hon. members opposite, who are so conscious of their well-doing, be afraid of the light?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have overdone it.

Mr. STEWART: The hon. gentleman says we have overdone it, but I remember one historical occasion when the hon. member, who was not then sitting on the front Treasury bench, taunted the Opposition with not criticising the Government. He said he was the only man in the Chamber who had the courage to speak; that he was the only democrat in the House; but now he is on the front Ministerial bench and says there is too much talk.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Only twaddle.

Mr. STEWART: Of course, when any hon. member says anything that the hon. member does not agree with it is called twaddle. That is a mere matter of opinion, but whether it is twaddle or not the country is the ultimate arbiter, and so far the country has decided in favour of twaddle. I admit that, but I believe the country is waking up. There is no doubt that the community has been suffering from what I may term temporary aberration.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now wandering from the question.

Mr. STEWART: I admit that I am now rather off the track, and I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker, for pulling me up.

The HOME SECRETARY: Temporary aberration.

Mr. STEWART: I do not wish to detain the House longer, but would merely suggest to the Premier—who I hope will not be Premier much longer—that if he continues in office during next session, in the interests of the country he will—

The SPEAKER: Order! This is entirely foreign to the motion before the House, which relates to sitting days for the remainder of this session, and not next session.

Question put and passed.

SUSPENSION OF THE STANDING ORDERS.

The TREASURER, in moving—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended for this day as will admit of the reporting and receiving of resolutions from the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means on the same day on which they shall have passed in those Committees; also of the passing of an Appropriation Bill through all its stages in one day—said: I called "Not formal" to this motion simply because I am asking for a larger

amount than usual. I am asking for sufficient money to carry us on to the end of the year, and hope there will be no occasion to ask for another Appropriation Bill until the end of the session. Year by year I find the Estimates are growing larger, and lately the amount asked has not been sufficient; therefore I am going to ask for £675,000 altogether. That is the estimated amount that it will take to carry us on till the end of the year.

Mr. GLASSEY: It is not my intention to oppose the resolution, but it certainly is my intention to take very strong exception to the large amount which the Treasurer is asking for. Where is the necessity for asking for that sum? The House in the ordinary course of business passes the Estimates, and provision will then be made without the necessity of asking for £600,000 now. When we get into committee I intend to ask the Treasurer to reduce the amount he now proposes to ask for, and depend upon the House getting through its business in the ordinary course and passing the Estimates.

The SPEAKER: I think the hon. gentleman will see that this discussion of details is irregular. The Treasurer incidentally mentioned the amount as a reason for calling "Not formal," and the hon. gentleman is out of order in discussing now the amount which is going to be asked for later on.

Mr. GLASSEY: At all events, I intimate now that I will ask the Treasurer to reduce the amount which he has mentioned.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

The TREASURER moved—

That a further sum, not exceeding £675,000, be granted towards defraying the expenses of the various departments and services of the colony.

Mr. GLASSEY hoped the Treasurer would give the Committee some substantial reason why he asked for this large sum. Members of the Opposition had no desire to hamper the hon. gentleman; they desired that he should have abundant means for carrying on the affairs of the colony; but he thought the hon. gentleman was asking for too much. He had given no reason for asking for so much as £675,000, and it had been already pointed out that in the ordinary course of business the Estimates would be passed in the course of a few weeks. He was not by any means disposed to be suspicious as a rule, but one of the weapons which Parliament must retain for its own defence was the granting of Supply, and he was not disposed to grant more than the usual amount instead of voting sufficient to carry on the affairs of the country until the end of the year. It was possible that if the Government got this large sum they might adjourn the House for a few weeks without taking Parliament into their confidence. It might be considered by them that in consequence of certain things happening it would not be wise to go on with business at present, and they would have enough money at their disposal to be independent of Parliament until the end of the year. If the Treasurer asked for a month's Supply, then, so far as they could see, the session would terminate in ten days or a fortnight after that, and there was therefore not the slightest necessity for asking for such a large sum of money. He hoped the hon. gentleman would not press his proposition.

The TREASURER: The leader of the Opposition was under a mistake. The passing of the Estimates did not help the Treasurer one bit, unless an Appropriation Bill was also passed. If his proposal was not accepted he would have to come down in the first week of December and

ask for another Appropriation Bill. So far as he could discover it had not been the practice of Parliament to pass more than three Appropriation Bills during the session, and it had always been considered a formal matter. He hoped the session would not last to the end of the year, but that the Appropriation Bill would be passed, and they would be in their homes by that time. Last year they passed the last temporary Appropriation Bill in October, and the final one in December. He had already told the House that year after year their requirements were getting larger, and this year there was £300,000 more on the Estimates than during the past three or four years. The money he asked for would not be spent unless the House passed the money on the Estimates. The money they were spending now was based on last year's Estimates, but there were public works going on which had to be provided for.

Mr. McDONALD: The hon. gentleman said that if he did not get the amount asked for now he would have to come down and ask for a further sum in December.

The TREASURER: We must have money for this month.

Mr. McDONALD understood that the Civil servants were paid on the 28th of the month. They would be paid on the 28th of this month, and before the 28th of December the final Appropriation Bill should be passed. He quite understood that there were other payments to be made, but not sufficient to justify them in granting such an enormous sum. If they passed the amount asked for the Government might force through all the measures on the paper, before touching Supply, and it would give them the whip hand over the House. After having got all their measures through they could then turn round and pass the Estimates in a night or two without discussion. If matters took their ordinary course, the final Appropriation Bill would be passed a week before Christmas, which was some time before the Civil servants were paid, so that the amount asked for was really not required. Of course, if the Government intended sitting until January or February, they should tell the Committee, as they should be given some idea of what legislation the Government intended going on with. He hoped that the Committee would not grant the appropriation asked for. If the Government were determined to force the vote through, he hoped hon. members on that side would make a firm stand against it.

Mr. GLASSEY quite understood that, pending the passage of the final Appropriation Bill, it was necessary to ask for temporary Supply. He was fully satisfied that in the ordinary course of events they would have prorogued by the middle of December, and by that time the Appropriation Bill would be through. Although the Treasurer said that it was customary only to ask for so many temporary appropriations, that was no justification for asking for such a large amount. It was not wise for Parliament to place itself entirely at the mercy of the Government. It should always retain in its own hands the power to grant Supply. He would be very sorry to have to move an amendment, but if the Treasurer would not agree to accept a lesser amount he would be compelled to move that the amount be reduced. The Treasurer should be content with not more than £400,000, which would be sufficient to meet all demands on the Treasury.

The PREMIER: The amount asked for by the Treasurer comprised three items—£450,000 from the consolidated revenue, £25,000 from trust and special funds, and £200,000 from the loan fund. It was quite true that the amount was larger than had been asked for previously, but considering that the services of the colony were neces-

sarily larger than formerly, they really should be more elastic than they had been previously. He did not see why they should necessarily be restricted to the £500,000 which had heretofore been asked for under temporary Appropriation Bills. The Government had no desire or intention of extending the session till January. They hoped to close the session by the 10th or 17th of next month. He would be very sorry to sit beyond Christmas.

Mr. McDONALD: Why ask for Supply till the end of the year, then?

The PREMIER: The services of the country demanded larger appropriations year by year, and the Treasurer had doubtless framed his application on what he conceived to be sufficient to carry him on till the end of the year, when the final Appropriation Bill would be passed. It was really more a matter of sentiment with hon. members than any practical reason which led hon. members opposite to object to the vote.

Mr. McDONALD: You opposed it yourself when Sir Hugh Nelson asked for a temporary appropriation.

The PREMIER: Very likely. In the early part of the session it was the duty of Parliament to keep a stringent hold upon the purse-strings, and not give the Government possession at such a stage of the session of a large sum of money which would enable them—he would not say to defy Parliament—but to enable them to proceed in a perfunctory manner with the business of the country. They could see clearly the end of the session before them. It was coming in a very few weeks, and under the circumstances, although the Treasurer might have asked for less, he saw no danger. His hon. friend had based his demands upon what he conceived to be the reasonable requirements of the country, and the expenditure was being confined to the lines of last year's Estimates. The leader of the Opposition was beating the air in objecting at the present time, as he had admitted that notwithstanding their voting Supply on the Estimates-in-Chief the Treasurer could not deal with the money until the passage of the final Appropriation Bill. At an earlier period of the session he might have been justified in objecting to such a large grant, but he had no doubt that there were numerous claims coming in for settlement at the end of the year—perhaps more rapidly than at other seasons of the year. The appropriation now asked for was not intended to in any way delay the passing of the final Appropriation Bill, but simply to provide the Treasurer with the money he required for the services of the country. He could not find fault with the hon. gentleman for objecting to any large demand being made by the Government; at the same time after the explanation given by the Treasurer, the hon. gentleman might withdraw his objection.

Mr. GLASSEY hoped hon. members on his side were actuated by more than mere sentiment in their objection. They were actuated by the principle that Parliament should keep a hold on the purse-strings. He was not suspicious that the Treasurer was likely to do anything wrong, or that the Government intended anything wrong in asking for this increased amount, but it was not wise for Parliament at any time to lose a firm hold on the finances of the country. Where was the necessity for pressing this large amount? If the necessity should arise for asking for a further sum in December that further sum would be granted. In the meantime he should feel it his duty to press for the reduction of the vote by £175,000.

The TREASURER: If they passed the amount asked for they would still be keeping their hold on the purse strings. The fact was that the amount voted year after year in the

past was not now sufficient, because the accounts were growing larger year by year. Over £700,000 had been spent since the last £500,000 was voted, and in order to pay accounts to that amount advantage had to be taken of lapsed votes of last year. He could not spend it, unless it was granted, and unless this sum was granted now he would have to come for another in December or at the end of this month.

Mr. McDONALD: What extraordinary engagements have you to meet in December?

The TREASURER: There were the Civil servants' salaries, the endowments to local authorities, and a lot of items that did not come in till the 2nd or 3rd of the month.

Mr. McDONALD: The same thing applied last year.

The TREASURER: Except that we had not so much money to spend last year. As a matter of fact the Treasurer should have asked for money a week ago. The Under Secretary had explained to him that though £250,000 was sufficient four or five years ago it was not sufficient now, and if he was in the position of Treasurer next year instead of asking for £250,000 he would ask for about £350,000 or £400,000.

Mr. GLASSEY still held that it was unwise for Parliament to vote large sums that were not absolutely needed; but after the explanation that had been given, and seeing that they wanted to get on with the work of the session, he would not move the amendment he had intended.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; and the Committee obtained leave to sit again at a later hour of the day. The resolution was reported, received, and agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS.

COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the TREASURER, £450,000 was granted from the consolidated revenue fund; £25,000 from the trust and special funds; and £200,000 from the loan fund.

The House resumed; and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The resolutions were reported, and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 3.

This Bill, founded on the resolutions of the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, and covering a vote on account for £675,000, was passed through all its stages without discussion or amendment, and ordered to be transmitted to the Council for their concurrence.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved that £9,851 be granted for salaries in the Public Works Department. There were a few small increases, all of which he thought were very well deserved, and he was sure they would meet with the approval of the Committee. He had no remarks to make in connection with the vote, but would be pleased to give information to any hon. member who might desire it.

Mr. GLASSEY wished to congratulate the hon. gentleman upon his appearance for the first time in connection with the Estimates of his department. So far as the Estimates were concerned he was sure they would not be cavilled at, because all the increases there were very well merited. Most of them were given to officers who were drawing very small salaries, and that was the right direction in which to travel. Of course it was impossible to establish a full equilibrium, but it was only fair and just that those who were doing useful work should be reasonably and fairly paid for it.

Mr. CORFIELD was very sorry that there was no increase to be given to the Under Secretary, Mr. Robertson, who was a most deserving officer.

Mr. GLASSEY: He is very well paid, and I shall oppose any increase.

Mr. CORFIELD: He ought to be placed on the same footing as the other Under Secretaries, and there should be no great difference in their salaries. This gentleman was entrusted with the expenditure of large sums of money, but it was rather unfortunate for him that his department was not a revenue producing one. Of course they could not increase the Estimates, but an expression of opinion now might justify the Government in giving favourable consideration to his case as soon as possible.

Mr. SMITH: Nearly every officer in the department had received an increase except the Under Secretary, and he wished to emphasise all that had been said in regard to that officer, who was paid at least £100 less than any other Under Secretary in the service, although he controlled the expenditure of large sums of money. He hoped his services would be recognised on the Supplementary Estimates, or if not then, certainly next year.

Mr. PETRIE: He was not prepared to advocate any man's claim, but still he thought the officers of this department had been badly treated in the past. He agreed with the hon. member for Gregory that there was a difficulty in connection with this department because it was not a revenue-producing one, but a spending one. He noticed with pleasure that there were some increases given to officers who received small salaries. The accountant, for instance, well deserved the increase of £20 which was given to him, because he had been in the department for some thirteen years, and did not receive as much as other accountants in the service. It might be urged that he was a very young man with plenty of time before him, but still he was able to do the work, and had even acted for the Under Secretary when the latter had been away. He noticed that the accountant in the Chief Secretary's Department received £300; in the Home Secretary's Department, £480; in the Department of Justice, £300; in the Treasury, £500; in the Lands Department, £370; in the Audit Department, £450; in the Post Office, £550; in the Railway Department, £500; and in the Department of Public Instruction, £400. The Department of Justice would not have more than £40,000 or £50,000 to expend; but the accountant in the Works Department supervised the expenditure of over £200,000, yet he was the worst paid of any accountant in the Government service. He did not consider the Government Architect a bit overpaid. He understood his duties, and was entitled to all he got, if not more; but he would like to see some arrangement whereby the position of the chief draftsman would be bettered, and his title altered to that of assistant architect. In New South Wales they had a Government architect at £1,064, principal assistant £700, one assistant at £425, and three at £400, besides a chief draftsman at £470, and several other draftsmen at from £325 to £425. In Victoria they had a general inspector at £1,000, architects at from £500 to £600, five assistant architects, eleven draftsmen, and fifteen inspectors. The draftsmen's salaries went up to £350, and the inspectors ranged from £250 to £300. In Western Australia they had a superintendent getting £700, with an assistant at £500. He did not think the Victorian department had the same amount of money passing through it as the Queensland department. All buildings, bridges, and works were under the Government Architect here, and the superintendence was done at an absurdly low cost in this

colony. Even in 1890-91 the total departmental expenditure was £8,622; in 1897-98 the total was £4,337, and this year £4,985. That would show that the department had been sadly neglected. Unfortunately for the department when a new Minister was appointed he went to the Works Department, and before he became familiar with the work he was transferred to another office. He knew that the present Minister was anxious to do justice to the officers of the department, amongst whom there had been considerable dissatisfaction. The hon. gentleman had adjusted a number of grievances of contractors in reference to tenders, deposits, and quantities, and he hoped he would do the same for the officers. He took the opportunity of congratulating the hon. gentleman upon the able way in which he had so far succeeded in administering the department. As a rule he did not believe in bringing individual cases before Parliament, but having been intimately associated with the Works Department some years ago he felt it was only fair to the officers that he should say something in their favour. He should like to see the salaries of the accountant and other officers substantially increased, and he would ask the Minister whether it would not be possible to place an extra amount on the Supplementary Estimates for that purpose? He hoped the hon. gentleman would take the matter into his favourable consideration, and make a thorough inquiry into the status and emoluments of the officers of the Works Department.

Mr. DANIELS: He had been impressed with the remarks of the last two speakers in reference to the salary paid to the accountant in the Works Department who only received £240 a year, while all other accountants in the Government service received much larger sums. It was well known that the work performed by the accountant in that department was very heavy, and he could vouch for the fact that that gentleman had acted for the Under Secretary for months at a time. Surely he was entitled to a larger increase than £20. The department was expending an amount of £215,000 this year, yet the accountant received half the amount paid to the accountant in the Auditor-General's Department, who received £550.

Mr. CROSS said that the hon. member for Cambooya had broken new ground. He had always previously advocated increases in the lower salaries, but he was now advocating increases in salaries which he had formerly considered should not be raised. He protested against the attempt in that Committee to get the salaries raised of officers in the position of the one in question. The Minister in charge of the department should be in a position to know exactly whether an increase was justified. He believed that the hon. member for Cambooya had once expressed the opinion that £300 was sufficient salary to pay an under secretary, and yet he wanted that particular officer's salary raised. He certainly would not give any assistance to increase the salaries of officers in such positions unless the Minister recommended them and justified them, and no justification had been given in the present case.

Mr. STEWART did not rise to advocate any increases in salary, as Civil servants as a rule were perfectly well able to look after themselves. He rose to complain that no annual report was now published by the Department of Public Works. At one time they had published reports containing most valuable information regarding public buildings, but for some reason or other the practice had gone out of fashion. He would like to know if the Minister intended reviving that excellent practice? He also observed that the offices of Colonial Architect and Engineer of

Bridges were conjoined. He did not insinuate that the present occupant of the offices was not competent to erect bridges as well as to draw plans for buildings, but the two professions were usually quite distinct. He observed that in 1888 there had been an Engineer of Bridges as well as a Colonial Architect. He recognised that possibly there was not the same amount of work now going on, but it appeared to him that it would be better to have two officers. Another question on which he wished for some information was in regard to the vote of £2,200 for postages, travelling expenses, and incidentals. £2,288 was spent last year, and he wished to get the details of the expenditure. Taking the Estimates as a whole, the items contingencies, incidentals, postages, and fuel amounted to an immense sum, and they ought to have the details.

Mr. O'CONNELL: It was a matter of doubt whether hon. members were justified in advocating increases in salaries, but there was one thing on which they could all agree, and that was that fair treatment should be meted out to all officers of similar standing. If they looked at the next Estimates they would find that the Under Secretary for Justice was set down for an increase of £100. He had not the slightest objection to that increase, but the Under Secretary for Works, on the other hand, had been passed over for years. Then, again, the new Under Secretary for Lands was receiving only £50 less than his predecessor, who had filled the position for many years. If the heads of departments found themselves treated in a different way to other Under Secretaries, they would naturally think they were not giving satisfaction. If advances were to be given at all, they should have the preconceived idea of making advances in all the departments on the same lines. It was quite a right thing for men holding responsible positions to be highly paid. He believed they were often able, by close attention to their work, to save the country a great deal more than the salaries they earned. At the same time he was perfectly satisfied that the raising of salaries in one department, while the officers in another department were ignored, must give rise to a great deal of heart-burning, which had a certain amount of justice in it. He hoped the Government in making these advances would introduce some general system. There should be a regular fixed salary for a newly appointed Under Secretary, and after a certain number of years his salary should increase automatically if he gave satisfaction, till it reached the maximum amount.

Mr. STODART also hoped the Minister would take into consideration the Under Secretary's salary. His predecessor got £800 a year, if he remembered rightly. Mr. Robertson was a very competent officer; he had been thirty years in the service—during several of which he had occupied his present position—and he should be put on a par with other Under Secretaries.

Mr. GLASSEY was astonished at commercial men advocating an increase to a man drawing a salary of £600 a year. Could any of them say that the head of a business department received such a salary as that? It was all very well to be generous with the taxpayers' money, but he declined to join in the chorus for increasing this salary. He had not the slightest fault to find with Mr. Robertson, who was eminently fitted for his position, but he was remarkably well paid. If a searching investigation took place as to the value of the services rendered to the State by some persons in the various departments, there would be sweeping reductions all round; and many years might not elapse before that took place. It was very seldom that hon. members advocated increases to men getting from £100 to £150 a year.

Mr. FINNEY: You are wrong there. Besides, they are down here for increases.

Mr. GLASSEY: He had already complimented the Minister on increasing the salaries of officers in the department who were not drawing too much; but he would oppose any increase to those gentlemen drawing high salaries. To talk of putting all Under Secretaries on an equal footing was preposterous. Could anyone place the Under Secretary in the same category as Mr. Dutton, who was qualified to fill almost any position in the State?

Mr. FINNEY: Perhaps Mr. Dutton is underpaid.

Mr. GLASSEY: Mr. Dutton was not underpaid. He believed Mr. Dutton was well satisfied with his position, but in time he would doubtless be deserving of advancement. It was always an unpleasant thing for a member to go against the claims put forward by other hon. members in regard to increases. He had to do business with those gentlemen whose salaries he criticised, but he was determined to do his duty irrespective of frowns, smiles, blessings, or curses; and as long as he was there he would set his face strenuously against increases to those gentlemen who were receiving a fair amount—and in some instances more than a fair amount—for the work they performed. He did not wish to depreciate the excellent services rendered by Mr. Robertson, but he must criticise the suggested increase in the interests of the country. In his opinion there was room for a reduction of salary in the case of most of the Under Secretaries.

Mr. CALLAN: He did not pretend to be a commercial man, but he was connected with a good many commercial institutions—with some of them as a director—and he did not know of a single instance in which the heads of commercial institutions were not paid twice as much, and possibly a great deal more than twice as much, as the amount received by the Under Secretary of this department. He knew one institution whose manager was paid £1,500 a year, and he grumbled, and another whose manager received £1,800, and he was hardly satisfied. With regard to Mr. Robertson, it was unfair that he should be kept at £600 a year, while another officer who had been placed at the head of a department for only about eight or nine months was paid £750 per annum.

Mr. GLASSEY: He is getting a great deal too much.

Mr. CALLAN: Then he hoped that when the hon. member for Bundaberg became Premier of the colony he would cut down the salary of the Premier from £1,300 to £800 a year, and the salaries of the other Ministers to £500 a year. However, in view of the very strong expression of opinion in favour of an increase to the Under Secretary for Works, who had been a long time in that position and was receiving a very much less salary than was paid to others in similar positions, he hoped the Minister would in future consider favourably the suggested increase.

Mr. BATTERSBY thought that as there was a considerable sum of money passing through the hands of the accountant he was entitled to an increase from £220 to £240 a year. If he was not worth £240 a year they had better close up the office and let the Under Secretary do the work, or get a boy to do it for £10 or £15 per annum. He was pleased to see that a slight increase was given to the clerks, and that the salary of the typewriter was increased from £60 to £70 a year.

Mr. DRAKE noticed that there was an amount of £60 asked for on the Supplementary Estimates for increases to three draftsmen. He should like to know whether those increases were intended for the draftsmen included in that vote, and which of them. The draftsmen in that depart-

ment were hardly so well treated as the draftsmen in other departments, and they were not generally so well treated as draftsmen in other colonies. For a long time they had been working with no increases, or with very slight increases.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The draftsmen referred to by the hon. member were on the Supplementary Estimates last year, and by some inadvertence their increases were omitted from the Estimates-in-Chief this year, so that the amount appearing on the Supplementary Estimates was simply a restoration of the sum voted last year. He was very pleased to endorse a great deal of what had fallen from hon. members with regard to the capabilities of officers of the department. The Under Secretary was a very competent officer, and the work he did was quite equal to that done by many under secretaries in other departments who were receiving higher salaries than £600 per annum. He really thought that Mr. Robertson was entitled to some increase on his present salary, and if he (the Secretary for Works) was in office next year he might endeavour to remedy the present state of affairs. Mr. Robertson was as well entitled to £700 a year as many other under secretaries in the service. With regard to the accountant, who was a very competent officer and had large sums of money passing through his hands, he was deserving of a larger increase than the £20 which appeared on that Estimate. Nearly all the other officers received increases. With reference to the remarks of the hon. member for North Rockhampton concerning the absence of the annual report on buildings, he understood that the publication of that report was discontinued two or three years ago because it was considered too expensive. However, the information regarding any work that was going on was at the command of any member who chose to call at the office and get it. Personally, he believed it would be a good thing to have an annual report published showing how buildings were progressing, etc. With respect to the increase of £200 in the item for postages, travelling expenses, and incidentals, the business of the department was increasing very considerably, and that necessitated the appointment of an additional inspector, whose salary was included in the vote. The expenses of temporary foremen and draftsmen, as well as travelling allowances, were charged to the item "Postages, travelling expenses, and incidentals." Travelling expenses were a very large item.

Mr. STEWART: Are their salaries paid out of this amount?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No, but some of their allowances were. He could get the information for the hon. member as to how much was paid in travelling expenses, and how much in postage.

Mr. McDONNELL thought that if there was one man in the service who deserved an increase of salary it was Mr. Brady, who was acting as Government Architect and Engineer for Bridges. He believed that ability should always be recognised, whether in the case of a professional man or any other, and he might remind them that in the year 1890 these two positions were held by different officers, the Architect receiving £600 a year and the Engineer for Bridges £700. But Mr. Brady received only £750 altogether. Mr. Brady's work in connection with the designing and construction of Victoria Bridge stamped him as an exceedingly able man, and he quite expected that his ability would have been recognised by the Government. That was not only his opinion, but it was also that of practical men outside.

Mr. McMASTER was very glad to hear the remarks of his colleague in regard to the recognition of ability, and he also agreed with the hon. member for Musgrave, that officers holding similar positions should receive as nearly as possible the same salaries. He had often wondered why the Under Secretary in this department had been kept below other Under Secretaries; but supposed that he must be an easygoing man who did not trouble his Ministers much so far as looking after his own pay was concerned. There were two officers in this department who, if they were not very careful men, might lose amounts equal to their salaries in a fortnight.

Mr. GLASSEY: But members of Parliament must also be careful of the money of the public.

Mr. McMASTER agreed with the hon. member, but it was possible to be "penny wise and pound foolish." It was not wise to "spoil the ship for the sake of a pennyworth of tar." When they had a faithful servant they should pay him well, because he would take very good care to earn his own salary. It was very disheartening for a man to see three or four other Under Secretaries in the same building drawing larger salaries than he was, while perhaps he was doing more work than they were. He was very pleased that the Secretary for Works had recognised the worth of the junior officers in the department, but still all the responsibility rested with the superior officers—in fact their responsibility was greater even than that of Ministers whose instructions they had to carry out, and see that the money of the country was spent judiciously. A great deal had been said about the department not being a revenue-producing department, but it was just as necessary to have good officers there as in a department that did produce revenue, because if the money were wasted the receipts from the revenue-producing departments would have to be increased to keep the others going. It seemed as if the officers in this department had been neglected in the past, and the last straw had broken the camel's back. He had never asked why these officers had been kept back, but he could not help noticing that increases had been given to those in other departments, and he was very glad that the Secretary for Works had promised that the matter would be attended to next year if he were still in office. No doubt he would be in the Government. Of course, the same Government would be in power.

Mr. FINNEY: Don't prophesy.

Mr. McMASTER: He would prophesy that the Government would be in power. They heard a great deal about what the leader of the Opposition would do in the way of reducing high salaries. He would never take a penny off. Possibly he would be inclined to raise them, for he was not so hard-hearted as some people might think. He was sure the Minister would see that justice was done to all the officers in the Works Department. Something must be radically wrong when the hon. member for Cambooya and his hon. colleague both advocated increases in salaries.

Mr. HAMILTON: If they wanted good men, whether labourers or under secretaries, they must pay them well. If the wages paid outside the service were higher than those paid inside to men of the same calibre, then the service would suffer through having the good men withdrawn from it. The hon. member for Bundaberg on one occasion said that no man should be paid more than £300 or £400 a year.

Mr. GLASSEY: I never said so.

Mr. HAMILTON: I think it was £600 the hon. member mentioned. When they compared the salaries paid in the Government service with those paid outside, they were not large. The

present manager of Broken Hill receives about £4,000 a year. Was that a bigger concern than the Works Department of Queensland? The Under Secretary for Works had certainly greater responsibilities and more work to do. The metallurgist at the same place receives £1,800 a year, and his predecessor used to get £3,000. In Western Australia the Lake View Consols Mine paid its manager £2,000 a year. Coming to New South Wales, Anthony Hordern's manager received £4,000 a year, and his English buyer £5,000. The manager for the Chillagoe Company received £10,000 a year. Those salaries were paid on strictly commercial principles, and because the men were worth them. The leader of the Opposition would probably object to a man like General Kitchener getting more than £500 a year. Such men were cheap at any price.

Mr. GLASSEY: What ridiculous comparisons!

Mr. HAMILTON: To come to Queensland: All the Under Secretaries received larger salaries than the Under Secretary for Works, and no man could say that they were paid too much. In private establishments in Victoria, New South Wales, and here chief clerks received £1,000 a year. No one would say that the Under Secretary for Works was not eminently capable for the position he held, and therefore it would be a fair thing to increase his salary. He also quite agreed with the statement that the accountant was a good man and ought to have his salary increased. In reference to the Government Architect it was incalculable the amount of money that a good man in that position might save, and they had in Mr. Brady a really good man. He remembered one Government Architect, whose name he would not mention, who built houses in such a way that holes had to be knocked in the walls to get into the rooms. Mr. Brady's estimates were always reliable, and his plans also. He never made mistakes of that description.

Mr. PETRIE asked if there was any probability of the titles of the accountant and chief draftsman being altered. He should like to see the accountant called "Chief clerk and accountant," and the chief draftsman called "Assistant architect." There was a good deal in a name for those two officers. He was pleased to see that some of the smaller salaries had been increased, but he was afraid that the whole department had been overlooked and neglected for some time past.

Mr. NEWELL: It must be most gratifying to the Under Secretary for Works and the other officers of the department to hear the way in which they had been spoken of. He had no doubt that whatever had been said was well deserved, and he thought that some recognition of Mr. Robertson's services ought to be made. He could not have held his present position for so long if he had not been a capable man, and it would be only a reasonable thing to give him some recognition.

Mr. FINNEY: After the admission of the Minister about the Under Secretary it was a waste of time to say anything further. The hon. member for Bundaberg was not a believer in high salaries, and he believed that the hon. member—than whom there was no kinder-hearted man in that House—was conscientiously trying to do his duty. But if the hon. member ever became Premier he would find that he would be perfectly helpless without the assistance of his Under Secretaries. He would find that it was to his advantage to pay them the best salaries he could afford. The Under Secretary for Works was a very old officer. He was very steady and sober, and was always at his work, and after what the Minister has said of him he should show his consistency by giving him the same salary that was paid to the other Under Secretaries.

The hon. gentleman had also told them that the accountant was a good man. If so, then he was underpaid. If he wanted an accountant, he would be willing to give more than that officer was getting to get a good man. The Engineer for Bridges could save his salary fifty times over in a year if he was a good man, or if he was a botch he could lose it fifty times over. But Mr. Brady was an excellent officer; all his work was very creditable to him. He knew by experience that the highest paid men were the cheapest to an employer, and that the lowest paid men were the dearest, because they took up the time of the good men in teaching them their work. They should never grudge giving the heads of departments the largest salaries they could afford. He noticed that the draftsmen's salaries ranged from £240 to £100. £100 was a miserable salary to pay a draftsman. He paid his porters and watchman more than that. He supposed people could be got to work for such salaries, but they did not expect to be kept for long periods without receiving adequate advances. He hoped the Secretary for Works would take notice of the remarks that had been made by so many hon. members, and that he would put the men in the department on a better footing.

Mr. McDONNELL presumed that the two typewriters at £60 and £70, and who were down for increases of £10 each, were females.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They are.

Mr. McDONNELL: While he agreed with a good deal of what had been said about the higher paid officers in the department, the lower paid ones should also receive consideration. Those female typewriters had to work the same hours as the other clerks, and it was only another illustration of the common practice of paying females less than was paid to males for the same work. They should pay females a fair remuneration for their labour.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There was a great deal in what the hon. member had said, but they must recognise that the two typewriters were receiving increases this year, and probably they would receive similar increases next year. He was very pleased to hear the opinions expressed by hon. members regarding the merits of the officers of the department, every word of which he thoroughly endorsed. He believed the department was extremely well-manned, and all the officers with whom he had come in contact seemed very competent and industrious men, and were possibly deserving of some consideration. Probably next year they would be placed on a better footing.

Mr. BATTERSBY hoped that more females would be utilised in the Government service as typewriters. If they employed females alone for such work it would do a great deal of good in sending our young men on to the lands of the colony. Some years ago—about 1888 or 1889—the late Engineer for Bridges, Mr. Daniels, was dismissed for incapacity, and Mr. Brady was appointed in his place. Some years afterwards the Colonial Architect, Mr. Connolly, was dismissed, and the charge of that branch of the department was given to Mr. Brady. The amount received by Mr. Connolly was £600 a year, and he believed Mr. Daniels received £550 a year. Those two together amounted to £1,150 a year, and Mr. Brady was doing the work for £750. No fault had been found with Mr. Brady, who was a straightforward capable man, and he hoped the Committee would drop interfering with that officer.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Nobody is interfering with him. Objection has been taken to raising the salary of the Under Secretary.

Mr. PETRIE would like to have an assurance from the Minister that something would be done in regard to changing the titles of the accountant and the chief draftsman.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He had no objection to carrying out the hon. gentleman's suggestions. It could not be done just now, but it would probably be done next year. It did not follow, however, that the change of title would carry an increase of salary.

Mr. HAMILTON: He had been informed by a competent authority that Mr. Daniels was not dismissed for incapacity, and it was only right to make the statement to the Committee. With regard to the typewriters, though theirs was a mechanical occupation it frequently commanded high payment outside, and it must be recollected that those officers had a certain position to keep up in the public service, and it was a difficult matter to do so on a small salary.

Mr. GLASSEY: In reply to a statement made by the hon. member for Cook, he desired to say that he had never said that £300 or £600 a year was enough for any man. Nor did he think Mr. Brady was overpaid; in fact, he would go further, and say he was underpaid. He was a professional man. But he could not say that the Under Secretary was underpaid. He knew of excellent clerks in the Government service getting from £120 to £130 a year.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: How long have they been in the service?

Mr. GLASSEY: Ten or twelve years perhaps. He thought he might say there were clerks who had been twenty years in the service, and were now getting £150 or £160 a year. He did not say that they occupied the position of an Under Secretary, but he ventured to say that if some of those men were put to the test with others drawing £500 or £600 a year they would come out on top. It was a mistake to say that he had ever alleged that £600 a year was sufficient remuneration for any man, whatever services he performed. He might have said concerning the very high salary of £3,500 paid to the Chief Justice that there was no man in the colony worth that money in that position, and he said so now, without in any way undervaluing the great ability of Sir Samuel Griffith. He hoped that in discussing the Estimates, when members like himself took exception to certain increases, they would be allowed to express their opinions freely, without motives of a questionable character being attributed to them, and that members generally, in voting sums of money, would have some regard for the persons who had to find that money as well as for those who received it.

Mr. STEWART: There had been a great deal of special pleading on behalf of the more highly-paid Civil servants. He remembered that on one occasion when members on that side were pleading for another section of Civil servants, the hon. gentleman in charge of that Estimate said if those employees of the State were not satisfied they could leave. He reiterated the hon. gentleman's statement with regard to those highly-paid Civil servants; if they were not satisfied, the door was open and they could leave. But he did not find that any man who had got a nice cosy billet in the public service was anxious to get out of the dry into the wet—into the pouring rains, the droughts, the trials, the troubles, and disasters under which those outside the service had to work. From the highest down to the lowest paid, the servants of the State were better off than the men outside the Civil Service, and that remark held more especially with regard to the highly-paid Civil servants. If they were not satisfied with their positions let them go outside and get the £5,000 a year which the hon. member for Cook said was

paid to the manager of Broken Hill. Without any disrespect to those officers, he maintained that if they were to leave to-morrow they could get quite as good men in their places.

Mr. HAMILTON: That remark will apply to lengthsmen as well.

Mr. STEWART: It would apply to lengthsmen, but there was this difference: that lengthsmen got barely enough to live on, while the highly-paid Civil servants got more than enough. The hon. member said that Civil servants had to keep up a position.

Mr. HAMILTON: I referred to a £70 a year typewriter.

Mr. STEWART: Did they pay men for keeping up a position? He had always understood that they paid them money for services rendered, but now in appeared that they were paid cash to maintain a certain position, and the higher the position they had to maintain in Brisbane society the more they had to get from the State. Member after member on the Government side had deplored the position of the poor Under Secretary who was getting £100 a year less than his neighbour, but they had not a single word to say in favour of the typewriter until she was mentioned by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. They had very little sympathy with anyone except the fat, cosy, well-paid officers in the service. He wished to know from the Minister whether they were likely to have an annual report from this department in future?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I promised that there should be.

Mr. STEWART: He also wished for some details regarding the amount down for travelling expenses and postage. It was not businesslike to bunch things together like this.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he was sorry he had not the detailed information, but a statement could be prepared, and the hon. member could see it if he called at the office.

Mr. HAMILTON said the hon. member for Rockhampton North said just now that if any member of the service were not satisfied with his position they should let him go. Would the hon. member consider that fair treatment to lengthsmen? He was surprised to hear such a remark coming from him. The hon. member also stated that he (Mr. Hamilton) had said that officers were paid large salaries to enable them to keep up their positions. Of course it was hardly necessary for him to contradict any statement made by the hon. member, because they all knew him; the only statement he made was in regard to typewriters, who received a mere pittance of £70 a year, which was insufficient to enable them to live and keep up a decent position. As for the hon. member's remark that hon. members on this side did not supplement his statement, that was because the Secretary for Works had said that it was his intention to make some further increases with regard to typewriters' salaries next year.

Mr. BATTERSBY hoped the Government would be able to see their way to employing young girls as typewriters. He had often seen young men employed at this work who would have been far better trying to make a living outside, while the typewriting should be left to girls who could not make a living otherwise.

Question put and passed.

BUILDINGS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved that £61,949 be granted for buildings. There were a number of new buildings required in connection with the different departments, and he should be glad to give hon. members any information concerning them that they might wish.

Mr. DANIELS was sorry that there was nothing in the vote for a new post office at Pittsworth, which was promised last year, or in the early part of this year, and was urgently required. Tenders were called for the work some time ago, but as they were all over the estimate of the Government Architect none were accepted, although Mr. Brady acknowledged that the lowest tender was a reasonable one considering that the price of material had gone up since he made his estimate. The present building was a tumble-down rookery not worth more than £30, and yet the Government were paying £104 a year rent for it. Over 5,000 mails were received there every year, exclusive of the parcels post. It was the distributing centre for twelve other offices; the revenue from the sale of stamps was £450 a year; and from the telegraph office, £120, exclusive of railway business. The value of money orders passed through was over £1,300, and £4,000 worth of postal notes were sold. The savings bank deposits for twelve months exceeded £4,000, and there was a steady increase in that department. The reason given by the Secretary for Works for not going on with this work was that where there was a chance of the railway line being continued, business was likely to fall off, but he might point out that this district did not depend upon through traffic. It was the centre of an agricultural district which was permanently settled, and which would continue to go ahead. The tender which the Government refused to accept amounted to a little over £1,100, and they were paying £104 as rent, or 9 per cent. on the estimated cost of a new building. The building would be placed in the centre of the township, near a lot of Government land whose value would be greatly enhanced. Already £520 had been paid in rent, and that sum in itself would have put up a substantial building. The urgency of the case had been recognised for a long time, and must be apparent to those Ministers who had recently passed through Pittsworth. There was some talk about enlarging the railway station, and allowing the stationmaster to have charge of the mails and the telegraph station; but was it reasonable to think that such an arrangement could be carried out in an important distributing centre like Pittsworth, which found occupation for a stationmaster and assistant and several other railway officials? He should very much like to know why the money had not been put on the Estimates for the erection of the building.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The lowest tender received by the department was £1,197, and it was considered too high. The Postmaster-General had assured him that he had made satisfactory arrangements with the owner of the building they were using for a renewal of the lease. In the future, no doubt, the hon. member expected the railway to be extended beyond Pittsworth, and probably the work at the post office would then be reduced by one-half. That was the usual thing when a railway was extended. In the meantime, the Postmaster-General assured him that he had no difficulty in carrying on the work of the office satisfactorily.

Mr. DANIELS: The reason a renewal of the lease was obtained was that the owner of the building for which the Government were paying £45 a year wanted to pull it down, and they made arrangements for a renewal for six months at £104 a year. With regard to the population falling off if the railway was extended, he did not know that that had been the case with Toowoomba or Warwick.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: What about Dalby?

Mr. DANIELS: That was owing to wretched bad management in allowing the squatters to come right up to the boundary of the town. He

defied anyone to show him a finer agricultural centre than Pittsworth, and no agricultural centre was at all likely to lose its population, either by railway extension or anything else. There was no town in the colony of the size of Pittsworth without a post office belonging to the Government; and as for the present arrangement, whereby the Government paid 9 per cent. while they had trust funds locked up at 1 per cent., if that was financing, God preserve him from being a financier! The same kind of financing was carried on in South Brisbane, where the Government rented a building which cost £1,400 for £2 10s. a week.

Mr. DRAKE would take up the hon. member's challenge as to no place having a better claim for a post office than Pittsworth. He could assure him that the claim of Red Hill was of very much older standing than Pittsworth. It was an important and rising suburb of Brisbane, increasing in importance every day in consequence of the trams running through the district. The Government had already purchased a valuable site for a post office, and the matter of erecting the building had been under the consideration of the Postmaster-General for a considerable time. At present the post office was in a store which was, strictly speaking, in the electorate of Toowong, although the allotment which had been purchased for the post office, on the other side of the street, was in the electorate of Enoggera. Knowing that it had been a crying need for a long time, and that the Postmaster-General had been considering the matter favourably lately, he was surprised to find such a small sum placed on the Estimates for post offices throughout the colony. He hoped that the Secretary for Works would see his way to erect a post office worthy of the district.

Mr. BATTERSBY endorsed what had been said by the hon. member for Enoggera. It was time that Red Hill had a post office, as well as telegraphic or telephonic communication. He had a little grievance of his own to ventilate. Last year the police court, police station, and stables had been shifted from Woombye to Nambour, where the central sugar mill was located, but no provision had been made for quarters for the two constables, and the Government were paying 12s. 6d. per week for a residence. A building could be erected for something like £400, and if it was not done he would be very much annoyed, and would "roast" the Minister about it.

Mr. LEAHY: It was seldom he had the pleasure of supporting anything said by the hon. member for Cambooya; but there certainly was a great deal in what the hon. member had said about the post office at Pittsworth. He had been in the district the other day, and there was nothing ephemeral about the town, which, in the near future, would be a very large town. When he was there, on a Saturday evening, there was not standing room in the post office for the people who had come for their mails. He had seen no place in the colony which required more improvement in regard to its postal accommodation than Pittsworth.

Mr. DANIELS: The census returns gave the population of the district as 8,000. They were an agricultural population, were self-supporting, and during the six years that he had been member for the district they had not received a penny from the Government for roads or bridges or other public purposes. The post office was the first thing they had asked for.

Mr. GLASSEY had been in Pittsworth a few days ago, and was a little disappointed at the statement of the Minister that the Postmaster-General had made satisfactory arrangements. The hon. member for Cambooya had brought

the matter before the Committee seven times, and with justice. The post office was in a little, old, rickety building that would not bring more than 5s. a week in Brisbane, if it was not condemned, and it was a crying shame that the Postmaster-General should pay £2 a week for it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Are you sure he is paying £2 a week?

Mr. GLASSEY: Yes, that was what he was paying. The building was absolutely useless for the purpose, and it was a positive disgrace to the Postal Department. The conclusion one was driven to was that a useful work of that description was not being undertaken because the hon. member for Cambooya was the representative of the district—probably with a view to injuring the political prospects of the hon. member.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What nonsense!

Mr. GLASSEY: That was what the people thought, at any rate. What was £1,200 for a district like Pittsworth—one of the finest agricultural districts in the colony? Even if the railway were taken past it, the place must grow, on account of the large area of magnificent agricultural land in the neighbourhood. He hoped the Minister would impress upon the Postmaster-General the necessity of going on with the work. The postal work was growing day by day, and the accommodation was most inadequate. He trusted that false economy would not be practised any longer, but that a substantial building would be erected. He might mention also that the Railway Department had not sufficient shed accommodation there, and altogether the requirements of Pittsworth had been neglected in the past. He did not blame the present Minister, as he had only been a short time in office, and he was quite sure the hon. gentleman would not do an injustice to a district because of the particular shade of politics professed there. Even if £1,200 or £1,300 were required to put up a substantial building for a place like Pittsworth, the money would be well spent.

Mr. PETRIE asked whether the Minister had received an application from the Home Secretary's Department for a lockup and police station for Pinkenba? They had a policeman told off to look after the district, and he was most required there on Sundays and Saturdays. It was necessary that a police station and lockup should be erected there as early as possible.

Mr. ARMSTRONG hoped the more necessary requirements would be attended to first. He knew Pittsworth before the hon. member for Bundaberg came to the colony, but he could endorse the hon. member's statement that Pittsworth was the centre of a large and thriving agricultural district, and the district would support Pittsworth long after hon. members were dead and gone. The Minister had already said that he would require £10,000,000 to meet all the demands made upon him as Secretary for Railways, and if he was to give ear to all the requests for very necessary buildings in different parts of the colony he would require another £10,000,000 to pay for them. The hon. member for Enoggera complained that the post office in one portion of his electorate was in the hands of a storekeeper, but more than half the mails in the Lockyer district were delivered through storekeepers and private individuals. Still he held that the system worked sufficiently well for the day.

Mr. DANIELS: Have you got a post office at Gatton?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Gatton, as a matter of fact, was surrounded by a larger population than Pittsworth, and the hon. member for Bundaberg, who had been there, would support him when he said it was almost impossible to get into

the post office there to get one's mails. Though he knew improved accommodation there was necessary, he recognised that the exigencies of the country were such that they could not afford to do all that every hon. member thought necessary in his own district. He was prepared to leave such matters to the discretion of the Minister; and if he considered that Pittsworth required a post office more than Enoggera or the Lockyer, attention should be paid to Pittsworth first. Pittsworth would continue to grow to a certain extent, but if, as the hon. member for Cambooya hoped and prayed, the railway went beyond Pittsworth to Millmarran the progress of Pittsworth would be retarded to a considerable extent, and the postal matter left there would be reduced to one-half. The hon. member spoke of fifteen mails going out of Pittsworth, but they left as soon as the train arrived, and no accommodation was required there for storage. He knew the district perhaps as well as the hon. member, and taking Pittsworth, Brookstead, Green Hills, Southbrook, and Umbirom—what did they return to the revenue? They did not return as much as two places in his own electorate—Gatton and Laidley, or as much as Forest Hill and Grantham. Those questions, as he had said, should be left to the discretion of the Minister to be treated from a general point of view, and quite irrespective of the side of the House the member representing any particular constituency happened to be seated, instead of members yearly bringing forward, often from political motives only, questions of a purely local character.

Mr. BOLES: There were many places in the Central and Northern divisions where postal accommodation was greatly needed, and it was satisfactory to find that the Minister was giving some attention to those outside places. The hon. gentleman had already recognised the wants in that direction of an important place in his electorate; and he would like to lay before him the requirements of Miriam Vale, which was on the road to the goldfields, and round which a large amount of selection was taking place. He felt certain that if the wants of important outside places were fairly placed before the Minister he would treat them with consideration.

Mr. FINNEY: He was surprised to find that the Government had only provided £2,000 for post office buildings for the whole colony—a sum totally inadequate to erect the necessary buildings in places where there was already a dense population. The hon. member for Lockyer had lectured hon. members for bringing before the Committee the wants of their respective districts; he seemed to think it was wrong to do so. He (Mr. Finney) took a directly opposite view, and considered it was their duty to make known the wants of their electorates to Parliament. He had no doubt that Pittsworth was a very important district, and the hon. member for Cambooya had clearly pointed out that money was being wasted in paying an extravagant rent for a tumble-down humpy. He wished to refer to the Windsor road, where a post office was very much required. There was a very large population in that district and very little accommodation for the mails. Some years ago land was bought in the neighbourhood by the post office authorities, and it had been lying idle from that day to this. He hoped the Minister would take that matter into his consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Have you ever applied for a post office?

Mr. FINNEY: It had been applied for several times. He himself had spoken to the late Postmaster-General about it, and it was high time the matter should be attended to.

Mr. McDONNELL wished to add his testimony as to the state of the post office at Pittsworth. Along with the leader of the Opposition he visited Pittsworth lately, and a number of the residents of the place took them to the post office. A more disgraceful Government building for a town like Pittsworth he had never seen. To pay £2 a week rent for such a miserable hole was simply squandering money. It was not worth 5s. a week, and yet the Government had paid £600 for it in the shape of rent up to the end of this year. Nobody with a particle of business capacity would rent such a building for a post office as that used in Pittsworth; and if the Government were desirous of doing a fair thing, the claims put forward by the hon. member for Cambooya would receive favourable consideration. The people there were very sore on the question, and had come to the conclusion that they were being made to suffer because the member for the district sat on the Opposition side of the House. It had been stated that if the railway were extended there would not be so much necessity for a large post office at Pittsworth; but there was a very fine post office being built in Toowong, a locality which the railway passed through. He did not object in the slightest to this post office being built in Toowong, but no place had a better claim to a post office than Pittsworth.

Mr. SMITH: No doubt post offices were required at the places that had been mentioned; but he would like to point out that there was a post office very much required in his electorate on the Proserpine River, where there was a thriving farming community.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS denied that the Government were actuated by any such motive as that attributed by the hon. member for Cambooya. If hon. members looked over the Estimates they would find that there were more public works being carried out in electorates represented by members sitting on the other side than in electorates represented by members sitting on the Government side, and an evidence of that was the fact that far more complaints came from the Government side than from the other side. He recognised the merits of Pittsworth; but Pittsworth was not Queensland. There were many other places worse off for postal accommodation, and he might mention that Clifton, which was equal in importance to Pittsworth, if not more so, had no post office at all. As to the question of renting the building used as a post office in Pittsworth, he might point out that in many cases it suited the Postal Department to rent a building.

Mr. DANIELS: Why did they call for tenders?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The tenders were all too high. All he could say was that Pittsworth would be dealt with upon the same liberal and considerate terms as other districts.

Mr. DANIELS did not think that was at all satisfactory. Those other places where the postal accommodation was insufficient either had buildings belonging to the Government or buildings for which the Government paid a low rental, but in this case the Government were paying £104 a year for this tumble-down old rookery—an amount equal to about 9 per cent. on the cost of a new building. They had a large amount of money for which they were only receiving 1 per cent., so that they would save 8 per cent. by erecting a building instead of paying rent. He did not want the Government to lose money over it, but when they could put money in the Treasury they would not do so.

Mr. McGAHAN: Reference had been made to the want of a post office at Clifton, and he would like to say that he made an appeal about twelve months ago to the Postal Department,

and was informed that the Government were not prepared to erect a post office there, but that if any person there was prepared to rent a building the department were prepared to take it for a period of twelve months. He would like to know if the promise which had been made by the Premier that a building would be either leased or erected for post and telegraph purposes at Clifton was going to be fulfilled? He did not ask the Government to spend £1,400 on a building, but, say, £400 to provide a place that would meet present requirements. Clifton was a more important place than Pittsworth. The Sydney mail trains passed through Clifton, and he had himself seen as many as 100 people standing about the railway platform unable to get their letters or send telegrams. There was another place in his electorate, named Killarney, where they had no post office, and it was of far more importance than Pittsworth. All he asked was that justice should be done to the people whom he represented. Members on the other side had simply got whatever they asked for, while members on the Government side got nothing; but he hoped the Secretary for Works would carry out the promise made by the Premier with regard to Clifton.

Mr. STORY was pleased to notice that the Minister had recognised the necessity for additions to the lands office at St. George, and hoped he would also recognise the necessity for additions being made to the lockup at Cunnamulla.

Mr. KERR noticed that a new lands office was to be erected at Longreach. He understood that the lands commissioner was to be stationed at Barcaldine, and should like to know if provision was being made for a new lands office at that place?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The original intention of the department was to erect a new lands office at Longreach, but on inquiry it had been found that Barcaldine would be a more central site for such offices, and the new buildings would therefore be erected at Barcaldine instead of Longreach.

Mr. CROSS did not want much for his electorate, but as it had been said that members on that side had only to ask for a thing to get it, he might mention some of his wants. He wanted a new post office, a new school of arts, a new court-house, a bridge over Sandy Creek, extension of railway from Clermont to Blair Athol and Copperfield, and a few other things of that sort, and hoped the Minister would bear those things in mind.

Mr. FITZGERALD pointed out that a new lands office for Longreach had been agitated for and promised some time ago. About this time last year he brought the matter under the notice of the Secretary for Lands, and the only plea for not building new offices then was that the Government had no money for the purpose, but new offices were promised, and he believed they were also subsequently promised by the late Premier. He did not begrudge Barcaldine getting a new lands office, but he would remind the Minister that Longreach was the centre for all the finest pastoral runs in the whole of that district, and that the land court business there had at present to be transacted in a little poky room, which was crowded on court days. He should like to know whether any additional accommodation was to be provided for the lands office at Longreach, or whether the business of the district would still have to be transacted in that little poky room?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS quite agreed with all that the hon. member for Mitchell had said. The original intention was to build new land offices at Longreach, but after

inquiry, and on the representation of the local land commissioner that Barcaldine would be more central, it had since been decided to erect the new buildings at Barcaldine. That was all he knew about the matter.

Mr. FITZGERALD: He did not begrudge Barcaldine anything, and the department could fix the head office where they liked; but what he wished to know was whether any extra accommodation was going to be provided at Longreach?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS quite recognised the requirements of Longreach, and he had as much interest in that place as the hon. member. If the present arrangements were not satisfactory, he had no doubt ample accommodation would be provided, and the hon. member would have no cause of complaint upon that score. It was settled that the central office would be at Barcaldine; but provision would be made for local requirements at Longreach.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON wished to know who settled it. The Cabinet or the land commissioner?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It was settled on the recommendation of the land commissioner.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Then the commissioner had decided erroneously. He knew the district intimately, and when they saw there were lands offices at Ipswich, Toowoomba, Warwick, and Dalby, and other places in similar relation to one another on the coast, they would admit that it was necessary to have one at Longreach, because there was more land likely to be settled there in the near future than at Barcaldine. The latter was the centre of the settled land, but Longreach was the centre of the land that was likely to be settled in the future.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Who knows better than the land commissioner?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Land commissioners were quite as much devoid of common sense as any other people. He was vexed to think that a lands office was not to be erected at Longreach, which was its proper place, because most of the selection business in future would be done there. Much of the land about Barcaldine had been selected, and yet they were to have a new lands office there in preference to Longreach.

Mr. KERR: You know nothing at all about it.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Did the hon. member mean to tell him there was as much work to do there in the next ten years as during the past fifteen?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, more.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON was very glad to hear it. He considered that Longreach required the best provision that could be made for the comfort of the people doing business with the Lands Department, because it was a district that would grow every year, and he hoped the Government would simultaneously erect lands offices at both places.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was not intended to abolish the lands office at Longreach, and anybody who wanted to do business there would be able to do it. The hon. gentleman had been hardly fair to the land commissioners, more particularly the officer concerned in this matter, Mr. Borton. A better commissioner could not be found in the whole service. He was one of the most capable as well as the most energetic and conscientious commissioners in the service, and thoroughly understood his business. He was constantly travelling round the district, and had come to the conclusion that Barcaldine—which would take in Aramac and Blackall—was the better centre. There would be lands offices at both Longreach and Barcaldine, but Barcaldine would be the centre.

There would be ample accommodation and comfort for the public at both places, and the hon. member did a great injustice when he said the decision had been arrived at for the benefit of the officers and not of the public. As for the extent of business which would be done, he could assure the hon. member that at the end of three or four years there would be more activity in that district, taking Barcardine as a centre, than there ever had been before.

Mr. FITZGERALD did not wish his remarks to be misinterpreted. He did not care where Commissioner Borton was settled; but last year a lands office was promised at Longreach, and he was glad to hear that proper accommodation would be provided there. At present there was not even sufficient accommodation in the Longreach office to hang up an ordinary map.

Mr. SIM called attention, as he had done on previous occasions, to the necessity for alterations at the Normanton post office. He believed £750 was on the Estimates eighteen months ago for the purpose of providing quarters for the officers, who now received an allowance of £60 for that purpose. The sooner the Government carried out their intentions of building respectable quarters for the officers at Normanton the better.

Mr. STEWART: The Minister had been so deluged with applications for post offices, court houses, land offices, and lookups that he would be glad to hear that he did not want any buildings. He wanted to know how the sum of £950 under the heading of subdivision, "Treasury buildings cleaning," was expended?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The money was paid to the women who cleaned the offices. The amounts paid to them varied from £50 to £70 a year.

Mr. BELL considered £950 for cleaning the Treasury Buildings was exorbitant. Surely the buildings could be cleaned for a lesser sum? If adequate investigation were made he ventured to say it would be found that there was extravagance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There were about twenty women constantly attending to the cleaning of the building, and the highest amount paid was £70 a year. That was for labour only, in addition to which material had to be supplied. Considering the extent of the building he thought that £950 a year was a moderate sum to spend in cleaning. He could not see how it could be done for much less.

Mr. BELL: The hon. gentleman apparently knew about as much about it as he (Mr. Bell) did, and that was nothing. In his opinion £950 for cleaning that building was exorbitant, and he hoped the hon. gentleman would find time to go into the matter and see if it could not be done more reasonably.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It was not part of his duty to go round the building and see that all the women did their duty. There were twenty women receiving from £50 to £70 a year each. Any other information on the subject which the hon. gentleman wanted he could get if he liked to come round to the office.

Mr. BELL preferred to get the information from the proper quarter—the Minister in his place in the House. He was not blaming the Minister, but hoped he would find time to go into the matter. He did not want him to interview every individual charwoman, which might or might not be an interesting process, but he might find out whether £950 was a reasonable sum to expend on such work.

The TREASURER: When he was Secretary for Works the duty of arranging that matter fell to his lot. Mr. Brady went into the matter very thoroughly, and allotted so much floor space to

each office-cleaner. For cleaning windows alone £100 a year had to be paid. The women had to be there for two or three hours in the morning, and again in the afternoon. He did not think that they were at all overpaid.

Mr. LEAHY had expected the Minister to give the real information about the matter, which was that the item formed a portion of a subdivision. They were voting £61,949 for the purposes specified in various items, but the money could be transferred from any one item to any other in the subdivision.

The TREASURER: All this money for cleaning is spent.

Mr. LEAHY: There was a provision in the Audit Act which gave power to transfer the money from one item to another, and the Auditor-General reported every year upon such transfers. They were really not voting the £950 for the purpose of cleaning the Treasury Buildings at all, but for the general purposes of the subdivision.

Mr. KEOGH was astonished at the hon. member for Dalby raising the question of the amount paid for cleaning the Treasury Buildings. The hon. member, being a bachelor, should show more consideration for the poor people who were paid for the work. The money was well spent, and was fully earned. He was very sorry that the vote was not larger, and he trusted it would be allowed to pass without any more talk.

Mr. MAUGHAN noticed there was an increase in the vote for Public Instruction of £4,000. Could the Minister give them any idea as to where the money was to be expended?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The requirements of the colony were increasing at such a rapid rate that he had no doubt the extra £4,000 would be insufficient to meet the demands. There was another vote in some other department. The expenditure would be distributed over the whole colony.

Mr. BATTERSBY: There was no doubt that £950 was a very large amount for cleaning the Treasury Buildings. If tenders were called for the work the country would probably save £300 or £350 a year, and the work would be done just as efficiently. There had been no additions to the Treasury Buildings for the last two years, and he could not understand how the vote was increased by £50 this year. He moved the reduction of the vote by £50.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. SIM called attention to the fact that in the North—where the thermometer frequently showed a temperature of 100 degrees in the shade—there was no sitting accommodation in the police courts for the public. All British subjects had enjoyed the right for ages of being present at all investigations in courts of justice, and it was not a fair thing in the North of Queensland, where the heat was so great and the discomforts so excessive, that jurymen and citizens should be compelled to stand. In Brisbane every accommodation was provided, and he called attention to the matter as another injustice to the North. There was a vote of £5,000 for repairs and additions to courthouses, and he hoped when it came to be expended that the North would receive consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What courthouse do you refer to?

Mr. SIM: Croydon, for one. That town had a population of 4,000, and the courthouse was a disgrace to civilisation. He could mention a dozen places if he liked.

The TREASURER: There are no seats in the court-house at Townsville.

Mr. SIM: There ought to be, and there were seats in Brisbane. He had suffered, and he had seen where he came from as many as 150 jurymen packed in a court, and obliged to stand

awaiting the challenging. He had seen female witnesses in Croydon unable to find sitting accommodation in the courthouse, and obliged to go out into the middle of the street pending the hearing of their evidence. He hoped the matter would receive the consideration of the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS thought that in such a small matter if the hon. member made application to the department necessary alterations would be provided for.

Mr. SIM also wished to know whether the Works Department could make any provision for the painting and repairing of schools of arts—buildings which were going to rack and ruin for want of a brush of paint or a few repairs, the cost of which was more than small communities could afford to pay. He believed he would have the support of members on both sides if he tabled a motion on the subject.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That comes under the Education Department.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE—CHIEF OFFICE.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £5,522 be granted for the Department of Justice, chief office. An increase of £100 was asked for the Under Secretary of the department. His duties and responsibilities had been very largely increased by the transfer to the Department of Justice of the stamp office, the Registrar of Titles' office, the patents office, and the friendly societies office. The officer in question was fourth on the list of the first class of the ordinary division of the public service, and was, he understood, senior to eighteen other officers, including four Under Secretaries, who received from £650 to £800 a year. He had held the office of Under Secretary for eight years, and any hon. member who was familiar with the work of the stamp office, the patents office, and the Registrar of Titles office would easily understand that with those offices added to the Department of Justice that department had really become a very important one. Though the Under Secretary was not a member of the legal profession, he possessed qualifications and attainments usually held by men who were members of that profession. That gentleman had had a very large experience in professional work, and he could say from his own experience while in office that his professional advice was largely relied upon by the other departments of the service. It could not be more thoroughly relied upon if he had all the legal technical qualifications of a professional man. The accountant had been placed in Class III. of the service, on the recommendation of the Public Service Board, in recognition of his excellent services, and the salary had been increased to £300, which was the minimum in that class. The accountant in a department such as that of Justice ought to be a man who was in that class. One clerk had been appointed at £150, in the place of another clerk who had been transferred to the Chief Secretary's office, and who received £170; and there were two other clerks who had been increased by £20 each.

Mr. GLASSEY: He had listened carefully to the remarks of the Home Secretary with regard to the proposal to increase the salary of the Under Secretary by £100; but the hon. gentleman ought to have told the Committee that that officer received an increase of £100 so lately as 1895. He had not a word to say against Mr. Cahill. He believed him to be a thoroughly capable man, who performed his duties admirably; and during the many times he had gone to the office he had always met with the utmost courtesy, and any assistance the officer was capable of giving he had always received from him.

1898—3 q

But he had a duty which he was bound to discharge. He did not think the increase was necessary, nor was it warranted. No doubt Mr. Cahill had been a long time in the Government service, and had performed his duties satisfactorily; but in the case of an officer whose salary had been increased by £100 only three years ago, at least a few more years might have been allowed to elapse before asking for a further increase. In what he intended to do he was not actuated by any personal consideration. There was perhaps not an officer in the service for whom he had a higher regard, but he could not allow that to weigh in the discharge of a public duty. Before proceeding further on that subject, there were two matters which he might mention in passing. There was a bit of a strike in the Supreme Court the other day, which he presumed was now amicably settled. It would not be out of place if he asked the Home Secretary what was the cost incurred by the Government through that unfortunate delay in the public business. The second matter was with regard to the item of £500 for Bill drafting. He wished to know how much money was actually paid for drafting Bills last year, what was the usual expenditure every year for that purpose, and whether the time had not arrived for the appointment of a competent draftsman whose services would be available for the drafting of the measures and amendments of private members? As he did not wish to confine the discussion to one matter only, he would merely indicate at present that it was his intention to move subsequently the omission of the proposed increase of £100 to the salary of the Under Secretary.

The HOME SECRETARY: The total amount spent last year for drafting Bills was £947 15s.

Mr. KEOGH: Who received it?

The HOME SECRETARY: Principally barristers who made a speciality of Bill drafting. In Victoria the Bill drafting cost £1,500 a year, and in New South Wales it cost £1,200 a year; so that, irrespective of the question whether our system was better or not, it was certainly more economical.

Mr. STEWART: Who drafted the Mining Bill?

The HOME SECRETARY: Mr. Shand and Mr. King.

Mr. KEOGH: Have you any objection to giving the names of the gentlemen paid for Bill drafting last year?

The HOME SECRETARY: A great deal of the amount spent last year was for drafting amendments for hon. members:—Mr. Scott received £21; Mr. Connolly, £21; Mr. Rutledge, £100; Mr. Wilson, £90; Chambers, Bruce, and McNab, £21; Mr. Groom, £24; Mr. Woolcock, £513; Mr. Shand, £52; Mr. Power, £35; Mr. Leeper, £36; Mr. Sydes, £5; and Mr. Blair, £26.

Mr. KERR: Is Mr. Wilson the Land Court barrister?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. STEWART thought it would be better if the Government were to appoint a skilled man with special knowledge of that department of law as a public draftsman. There was a great deal of difficulty and trouble in connection with the interpretation of Acts of Parliament, and a great deal of this trouble arose from the fact that the drafting of Bills was in the hands of incompetent persons. He did not say they were incompetent as lawyers, but certain members of the legal profession were specialists in particular branches, and that held good in the drafting of Bills as well as in any other branch of the legal profession. He found that Sir Samuel Griffith advocated the appointment of a professional draftsman for the reasons he had just given.

Coming to another matter, he found that £1,200 was voted last year for the travelling expenses of their honours the judges, and that £1,565 was expended. He wished to have details with regard to the judges in the Southern division, the judge in the Central division, and the judge in the Northern division. He also wished to know how many days they were travelling, and what was the average cost per day.

The HOME SECRETARY: With regard to Bill drafting, there were differences of opinion. He thought it was the hon. member for Enoggera who championed the case in favour of having a Government draftsman in previous years.

Mr. DRAKE: Yes; and Sir Samuel Griffith opposed it.

The HOME SECRETARY: He thought that in 1889 the sum of £1,000 was placed on the Estimates by the Morehead Government for the appointment of a parliamentary draftsman, and Sir Samuel Griffith, who was then in opposition, succeeded in having it thrown out. The hon. member had himself used the strongest argument against the appointment of a parliamentary draftsman when he spoke of barristers being specialists in particular branches. He could name one who was a specialist in drafting Land Bills, another who was a specialist in regard to local government; and they had been employed in the branches of Bill drafting in which they were most competent. That was one strong argument for not appointing a parliamentary draftsman. Another was that if they had a parliamentary draftsman the probability was that during the session—he believed this was the experience in some of the other colonies—there would be so much work to do that one man could not perform it, and they would have to call in others to assist him, so that notwithstanding that they had a parliamentary draftsman at a high salary they would have to fall back to a certain extent upon the system now adopted, which he thought had great advantages over the system of a permanent draftsman. He did not hesitate to say that the Bill drafting in this colony was superior to that of most of the other colonies, and though he used to be inclined to favour the appointment of a parliamentary draftsman, he had since changed his views. With regard to the travelling expenses of the judges, he would remind hon. members that some judges travelled more than others, and that what they should look at was the average daily expenditure. The total amount paid for the expenses of the Chief Justice and his staff—that was three persons, the judge, his associate, and his tipstaff—was £102 18s., in addition to which there was £18 15s. for steamer fares, the expenditure per diem, after deducting steamer fares, being £4 19s. The expenses of Mr. Justice Cooper and his staff were £233 11s. 1d., with £58 10s., and £6 16s. 10d. for steamer fares, the average per diem being £5 1s. 7d. Mr. Justice Chubb received £402 2s. 4d. for travelling expenses, and £57 for steamer fares, the average per diem being £4 18s. 7d. Mr. Justice Real received £123 15s. for travelling expenses and no steamer fares, the average being £4 11s. 8d. per diem. Mr. Justice Power received £493 for travelling expenses, and £143 for steamer fares, the average being £4 13s. 2d. per diem. Mr. Justice Mansfield received £125 for travelling expenses, and £25 for steamer fares, the average being £3 14s. 2d. per diem.

Mr. CRIBB was not going to say that the proposed increase to the Under Secretary was not deserved, but he did not think the reason given by the Minister for the increase was a good one. The mere fact that other Under Secretaries were receiving higher salaries was no reason for the increase; it ought to be shown

that increased work warranted the increase. The department was a comparatively small one; the number of clerks under the Under Secretary were comparatively few, and the increases given to the Under Secretary in the past had been very liberal. He should certainly like to have some more satisfactory reason shown for the increase than had been given by the Minister.

Mr. HAMILTON: The hon. member for Bundaberg gave as one reason why the salary of the Under Secretary should not be increased, that in 1895 it was increased by £100. He (Mr. Hamilton) recollected making that remark to the late Premier, and his reply was that seeing that Mr. Cahill had been Under Secretary for Justice for eight years he was surprised that the £100 increase had not been given many years previously. Mr. Cahill had been in the service for nineteen years, and there was only one Under Secretary senior to him in the seniority list—namely, the Under Secretary for the Post and Telegraph Department; and all the Under Secretaries, with the exception of the Under Secretary for Works, received over £700 a year. Seeing that the general expression of opinion in the House this evening was that the Under Secretary for Works should also receive £700 per annum, it would be unfair if the Under Secretary for Justice was paid a less salary. With regard to the remark of the hon. member for Ipswich that the department was a small one, he would point out that whereas in 1888 the letters received numbered only 1,210, last year they numbered 8,000, every one of which passed through the hands of the Under Secretary. Since Mr. Cahill had taken the position of Under Secretary the sub-departments of Friendly Societies, Stamps, Patents, Titles, and Curator in Insanity had been added to the department, and the whole of the expenditure for those sub-departments was disbursed under the personal supervision of the Under Secretary. In other departments where there were sub-departments each sub-department supervised its own expenditure. It was pretty well known that the late chief of the Public Service Board, Mr. Drew, stated that the organisation of the Department of Justice would compare favourably with that of any other department in the public service.

Mr. GLASSEY moved that the salary of the Under Secretary be reduced from £700 to £600.

Mr. KEOGH was very sorry that he could not support his leader on this occasion, but he could not see why this officer should not be placed on the same footing as other Under Secretaries. He knew the officer in question deserved this increase, and he was sure that if the late Premier had been present not one word would have been said against it. He believed that the increase was richly deserved, and there was no more reason to cavil at it than there was to cavil at other increases that had been given. He should vote against the amendment.

Mr. FITZGERALD: If this Under Secretary was worth £700 a year then the Under Secretary in the Home Secretary's Department was worth £1,200. The latter had a great deal of work to do, but only questions affecting justice were referred to the former, and he had only a very small branch to look after. In this department they had also a Crown Solicitor, Crown Prosecutors, an Official Trustee in Insolvency, a Curator in Insanity, a Registrar of Friendly Societies, a Commissioner of Stamps with a legal adviser, a Registrar of Patents, and a Registrar of Titles. The Crown Solicitor was a professional man, and was supposed to be the leading solicitor in the colony—as he believed he was—and yet he received only £700 a year! He did not suppose that the Under Secretary ever went into that department. Then

what did the Under Secretary know about the insolvency branch? He was not a professional man, although he believed that the office had always been filled by a professional man previously. All that branch was left to the Official Trustee, who was a professional man, and consequently the Under Secretary did not have much to do with it. The same was the case in regard to the Stamp Office. Even if the Under Secretary knew more than all those under him, he knew his subordinates were capable of doing the work, and he left the different branches to them. What did he know about insanity, intestacy, or patents? He did not see why this officer should be privileged above all others, and thought £600 a year was enough for him. He did no more work than the Under Secretary in the Works Department, and he did not see why he should be receiving these continual increases. The Crown Solicitor was the man who really had a grievance, because he had been reduced from £1,000 a year to £550, and had only recently had his salary increased to £700. They all knew that he had been working till 2 o'clock and 3 o'clock in the morning over certain very important cases that were being now heard, and if there were any increases to be given he was more entitled to one than the Under Secretary.

The PREMIER: As laymen they must all pay great attention to the utterances of the hon. and learned member for Mitchell; but at the same time they must not lose sight of the fact that testimony to the ability of the Under Secretary was tendered to the Cabinet by the late Premier, whose ability to give an opinion in this matter might fairly counterbalance anything said by the hon. member. The late Premier had the highest esteem for Mr. Cahill, who was not only entitled to this increase by reason of his clerical services, but also on account of his legal knowledge. In fact, many persons were under the impression that he was a member of the profession. His services to all Government departments were well recognised, and he wished to add his testimony to the fact that at all times when a knotty question involving a legal explanation required elucidation, Mr. Cahill took it in hand and did not require any prompting to give a clear and intelligible exposition, just as if he were an eminent member of the legal profession. Indeed he believed that in some respects he was as sound a lawyer as if he were a member of the legal profession, and the Government—who frequently had his advice before them—could confidently rely upon it. The confidence reposed in him had been well merited by the ability he had shown, and every member of the Government was indebted to him for the legal assistance he rendered from time to time. For a gentleman occupying such a position he did not think £700 a year was at all too large a salary. If his duties were purely clerical it might be considered enough, but recognising his great professional ability, which was testified to by the late Premier, he considered he was fully entitled to the proposed increase. He hoped the Committee would seriously consider the position, and not discourage a gentleman who was doing such good service to the State by reducing a salary which he maintained was not yet commensurate with his merits as a quasi-legal officer of the Government.

Mr. FITZGERALD: What about the full-blown legal officer—the Crown Solicitor?

The PREMIER: They were not discussing his case at present. He could only say that, in connection with the legal administration of the Government, a more efficient and painstaking officer than Mr. Cahill was not in the Government service. The promptitude and ability with which he furnished reports on legal matters

which came up for consideration was worthy of all praise, and both as Chief Secretary and Home Secretary he had felt personally indebted to Mr. Cahill for the manner in which he devoted himself to the business laid before him. Even in cases which he had requested Mr. Cahill to reconsider, he had found that the opinions which that gentleman had tendered originally were borne out by the opinion of counsel. He thought a gentleman like Mr. Cahill, who discharged his duties so ably, should be encouraged, and that the proposed additional emolument—which the late Mr. Byrnes did not consider commensurate with his worth—should be freely granted.

Mr. KERR: After listening to the Premier he had come to the conclusion that the whole of the Law Officers of the Crown should be discharged and the Under Secretary put in their positions. He appeared to be a gentleman who carried the whole of the legal knowledge of the earth in his head. He would like to know whether the Under Secretary for Justice prepared the important cases in connection with the Queensland National Bank, and if not, why had he not done so considering his great legal ability? He should be also glad to know whether he was the Crown Law Officer who gave advice to the electoral registrars and police magistrates.

The HOME SECRETARY: Now that an amendment had been moved he would like to add something more to what he had said in reference to Mr. Cahill. The hon. member for Mitchell had asked what Mr. Cahill knew about intestacy and insanity. That was an unfortunate question, because Mr. Cahill had been deputy curator of intestacy and insanity for years, and had a thorough knowledge of that sub-department. The hon. member also said that Mr. Cahill's predecessor in office was a lawyer.

Mr. FITZGERALD: I referred to Mr. Jamieson and others.

The HOME SECRETARY: It so happened that Mr. Cahill was the first layman who had occupied the position, but he had no hesitation in saying that although the gentlemen referred to occupied positions analogous to that of Mr. Cahill they had nothing like the number of administrative duties to perform. Mr. Cahill had to deal not only with the Supreme and District Courts in Brisbane, but he had also to perform administrative duties with respect to the courts at Townsville and Rockhampton. The hon. member for Mitchell had told them that Mr. Cahill had no such onerous duties as had to be discharged by the heads of the sub-departments which had been focussed in the Department of Justice, but that was a great mistake. The whole of those sub-departments were directly under the control of the Under-Secretary, and although Mr. Cahill was not a professional man, he did not hesitate to say that he gave very excellent advice on legal questions to the various other departments of the State. As a lawyer, he might be supposed to have a prejudice against a layman performing duties which many lawyers thought could only be performed by lawyers; but when a man had the experience that Mr. Cahill had had, the mere certificate that he was a legally qualified lawyer went for very little. As an instance of the value of Mr. Cahill's work, he might mention that during the absence of the late Premier in England he had occasion to submit a most intricate legal question connected with the administration of the Lands Department to the Department of Justice, as he did not feel called upon to settle such questions himself. He had got back an elaborate opinion in Mr. Cahill's handwriting, on which he had acted. On the return of Mr. Byrnes from England he submitted the same question to him,

and received exactly the same opinion from him that he had received from Mr. Cahill—who quoted all his authorities—and anyone reading the opinion could come to no other conclusion than that it was a very able opinion. The regulations which were passed by the Executive under every Act of Parliament, and all by-laws of local authorities, were also revised by Mr. Cahill. The work was so heavy and was so essentially of a professional character that if a professional man were employed of equal ability to Mr. Cahill, a very much higher salary would have to be paid.

Mr. FITZGERALD: That was all very well, but he could give an instance where, in a case which he had been engaged, the police wired down to the Department of Justice asking for advice as to whether they should prosecute, and the reply had come back that they were to take action. Attention was then drawn to the fact that under the Justices Act no action could be taken, as the offence was more than six months old. That fact was communicated to the department, and they then instructed the police not to summon. He did not know who had given the advice, but the general idea was that any advice by the department was given by the Attorney-General. He would like to ask if it was the Under Secretary who gave the advice?

The HOME SECRETARY: It did not necessarily follow that the advice given was given by the Under Secretary. It might be given by the Attorney-General or by the Minister for Justice for the time being. If they were not available, probably Mr. Cahill would give the advice himself, and no doubt it would be very good advice. A great deal depended upon the way in which a case was submitted for advice. It happened that the hon. member was wrong in a most essential fact in the instance he had given. He did not know whether the case had been submitted by the hon. member himself—

Mr. FITZGERALD: It was not.

The HOME SECRETARY: Apparently the hon. member knew all about the case; but, whoever submitted it, had omitted entirely to mention when the offence had reached the knowledge of the prosecution. The rule with regard to six months was well known—not only to the hon. member, who should give the Department of Justice credit for knowing some little law also. When people submitted a case for opinion, it was assumed that they were reasonably intelligent—that they themselves knew that rule—and it was on that assumption that the advice was given. Of course the moment it came to the knowledge of the Under Secretary that the offence had not come to the knowledge of the prosecutor within the six months, advice was given that the prosecution would not lie. That was a simple statement of the case to which the hon. gentleman had referred.

Mr. FITZGERALD: It was all very fine for the hon. gentleman to give a supposititious case when he did not know the case to which he (Mr. Fitzgerald) had referred.

The HOME SECRETARY: Then you tell it.

Mr. FITZGERALD: He had already told the hon. member that the case was one in which the police wanted to prosecute, and they referred it to the head office here. It was then referred by the head office of the Police Department to the Department of Justice; and if the hon. gentleman said that case was not properly put, then that meant that there were four or five police officers who did not know their duty.

The HOME SECRETARY: That may be.

Mr. FITZGERALD: They knew how the police went to work; that they supplied written statements, giving facts and dates. The case he referred to had been submitted by a public official, and he came to know of it because he

had been retained in the case himself. He had gone to see the police in the matter, and no one could blame them for giving him the information they had given.

The HOME SECRETARY had never heard of the case until the hon. member mentioned it, but the particulars given by the hon. member—meagre as they were—had enabled the Under Secretary to identify the case and he had given him the facts.

Mr. ARMSTRONG hoped the question was not going to resolve itself into a legal duel between the Home Secretary and the hon. member for Mitchell. He had always held that the Under Secretaries were very well paid, and if the leader of the Labour Opposition could assure him that the services the officer in question had to perform were—if properly carried out—not worth £700 a year, he would support the amendment. The hon. member had given no reason for the proposed reduction, and he preferred to be guided by the testimony which had been given by Ministers, who were in a better position to judge of that officer's capabilities than the hon. member. A man who had rendered good service to the country had little to hope for, if an increase of salary proposed to be given to him was to be withheld by a mere whim, and without any reason being given for the reduction proposed.

Mr. GLASSEY: The hon. member was prepared to vote for the amendment if he could give details of the inner working of that department, and could show how this officer performed his duties. The hon. member knew he had no opportunity to do anything of the kind.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: He had said that if the hon. member could show to the Committee that the services required of this officer were not worth £700 a year—if properly performed—he would vote with him.

Mr. GLASSEY: How was it possible for him, as a private member, to give the hon. member any such information? He often proposed reductions, but it was impossible for him to go into the various offices and get the detailed information asked for by the hon. member. He could only summarise and generalise. He admitted that the gentlemen holding Ministerial positions, and presiding over those departments, were in a better position to judge those things than he could hope to be. But the fact remained that many officers were paid considerably higher salaries than the gentlemen holding similar positions in the other colonies. He could not, for instance, give detailed information as to the way in which Mr. McDonnell, of the Post Office, earned his salary, but he did not think he was worth £800 a year. He could only express his opinion from his own standpoint, and he thought Mr. Cahill was remarkably well paid at £600, and was not entitled to £700. The hon. member for Rosewood said that if the late Premier had lived they would probably not have heard of the reduction; but the hon. member ought to know him better than to think that the presence of the late Premier would have made any difference in that respect. Long before that gentleman's lamented death he had gone carefully through the Estimates, and came to the conclusion to vote against this increase. He had ascertained, as far as he possibly could, the nature and circumstances of the office, and he was borne out by the hon. member for Mitchell, who had some knowledge of work of that kind.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: If the hon. member had made any investigation as to the nature and circumstances of the office, surely he could give him the information he had asked for. But it appeared that after all he was only acting on an impression with no grounds whatever to justify it.

Mr. CRIBB: When an unprofessional man had qualified himself by making a diligent use of his opportunities that he could be relied upon in the manner spoken of by the Premier, it was very creditable to him, and he was well worth the money paid him. He wished, however, to refer to a very important matter which ought to be settled—namely, Who was supposed to be the legal adviser to the Crown? He and many others had always understood that departmental matters were generally referred to the Crown Solicitor. If that was not so, and if Ministers passed over the Crown Solicitor and sought the advice of Mr. Cahill, it could only be because the Crown Solicitor was unfit for the position he occupied, and that the advice of the Under Secretary was of more value than that of a trained professional man. It did not seem right to seek legal advice from a layman when they had a professional man paid for the purpose.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was the usual practice amongst the departments to submit departmental cases to the Crown Law Officers, who were distinct from the Crown Solicitor—namely, the Minister for Justice and his Under Secretary. Matters connected with the criminal branch were dealt with by the Crown Solicitor, and also matters which more especially related to real property.

Mr. STEWART: He intended to support the amendment. The hon. member for Rosewood was in error in saying that the leader of the Opposition had done something on the present occasion that he did not do on other occasions. The leader of that party had been perfectly consistent in dealing with those salaries, and his motive was that they were too high all through. It was upon that ground that he supported the amendment. He had always said that the Civil Service of the colony was costing the people too much, and that their salaries were very much higher than they ought to be. They had only to compare the large incomes of the Civil servants with those of the poor suffering taxpayers who provided those incomes. There were hundreds of men in Brisbane working for 25s. a week and supporting families. There were thousands away in the bush who were getting anything from 5s. to £1 a week and their food. On the one hand there were a large number of people getting very little pay, and on the other there was a comparatively small number getting a great deal more than they were entitled to. The legal union was the closest in existence, and he was astonished at the magnanimity of the Home Secretary in confessing that a layman who never obtained his articles was equal to any lawyer in Brisbane.

The HOME SECRETARY: I never said that.

Mr. STEWART: Though there were any number of lawyers, the hon. gentleman confessed that he was compelled to fall back on a layman. He was glad to hear that there was a gentleman in the public service who had demonstrated that lawyers did not possess a monopoly of legal knowledge; at the same time he thought that gentleman was sufficiently paid without any increase. All over the colony wages were less than they were ten years ago. They had come down to £3 a week on Charters Towers, £2 10s. at Gympie, and £2 5s. at Mount Morgan.

Mr. CALLAN: No.

Mr. STEWART: The depression in the wages of the working classes was continually going on, but the salaries of the higher paid Civil servants in Brisbane were being continually raised. He did not think that in the present circumstances of the colony any Civil servant, whatever his capacity, ought to get an advance of £100 per annum. The hon. member for Mitchell had shown that the duties of the Under Secretary consisted almost entirely of routine

work. If it was not routine work it ought to be—he ought not to be doing work for which the Minister for Justice was paid. It had been stated that he had to examine by-laws and to frame regulations under the different Acts of Parliament, but he took it that those were duties usually performed by the Attorney-General or the Minister for Justice, and if the Under Secretary took any part in that work it was merely as the chief clerk in a lawyer's office would take work; and he did not know that Mr. Cahill would get £700 a year in any lawyer's office in Brisbane. When barristers who had received the highest training were willing to accept appointments as judges at £1,000 a year, surely an Under Secretary for Justice could be got for £600 a year.

Mr. HAMILTON: The hon. member for Bundaberg said he had consistently opposed high salaries, but he did not object to the £700 a year for the Under Secretary in the Home Secretary's Department a few weeks ago, nor did one member of the Labour party.

Mr. BROWNE: No increase was proposed in that case.

Mr. HAMILTON: The hon. member raised no objection in that case; but when it was proposed to give another Under Secretary £700 a year he moved a reduction, though he admitted that he had no information upon which he could make a comparison of the duties performed.

Mr. JENKINSON believed that the evidence before the Committee was against the proposed increase in the salary of the Under Secretary. He had also got other information which led him to believe that Mr. Cahill was not only well paid for his services, but that he had had remarkably sudden rises in the service of the Queensland Government. Mr. Cahill was appointed second clerk in the Supreme Court on the 1st of August, 1879, at a salary of £100 per annum; first clerk in 1880 at a salary of £125, which in 1882 was increased to £175. In 1883 he received the same salary; in 1884, £200 per annum; and from the 1st July £250 per annum. On the 1st of January, 1885, he was appointed Clerk and Deputy Curator in Intestacy at £300 a year. He was appointed Registrar of the District Court on the 1st June, 1887, at £250 per annum; Secretary to the Crown Law Officers on the 19th March, 1889, at £500 per annum; Under Secretary for Justice on the 14th May, 1890, at £500, which was increased on the 1st of July, 1895, to £600; and now it was proposed to increase his salary by another £100. He (Mr. Jenkinson) would further enlighten the Committee as to the justice that had been meted out to that gentleman by showing how other officers in the service had been treated. Mr. Robert Robertson, Under Secretary for Works, entered the service on the 25th of October, 1866, and was now getting £600 per annum—his last increase being in July, 1895, when he got an increase of £100. Mr. Murray—who he understood was now police magistrate of Brisbane—entered the service on the 10th of December, 1859, twenty years before Mr. Cahill, and his present salary was £650, and it was some years since he had had an increase. Mr. J. O. Bourne, Registrar of Titles, entered the service on the 1st of October, 1862; his present salary was £600, and it was some years since he had had an increase. Mr. W. R. Goodall, police magistrate at Toowoomba, entered the service on the 26th of September, 1864; his present salary was £500 per annum, and he had had no increase for some time. Mr. R. H. Mills, accountant in the Audit Department, entered the service on the 1st of October, 1863; his present salary was £550, and his last increase—£100—was in January, 1890. Mr. T. W. Wells, manager of

the Government Savings Bank, entered the service on the 1st of September, 1865; his present salary was £550, and his last increase—£50—was in July, 1884. Mr. Robert T. Scott, Superintendent Mails Branch, General Post Office, entered the service on the 1st of January, 1864; he was now getting £550 per annum, and his last increase—£50—was in July, 1884. Mr. T. McIntyre, Registrar, Department of Public Instruction, entered the service on the 11th of March, 1863; his present salary was £400 a year, and his last increase—£50—was in February, 1879, about seven months before Mr. Cahill entered the service. Mr. John F. Sloan, Chief Clerk, Home Secretary's Department, entered the service on the 1st November, 1868; his present salary was £500 per annum, and his last increase—£100—was in July, 1883. Mr. William Finucane, Commercial Agent, Southern Europe, entered the service on the 11th of June, 1867; his present salary was £500 a year, and his last increase—£100—was in July, 1882. Mr. Charles Miles, Receiver, Treasury, entered the service on the 1st June, 1866; his present salary was £450, and his last increase—£50—was in July, 1883. Mr. Henry St. J. Somerset, Paymaster, Treasury, entered the service on the 1st January, 1863; his present salary was £450, and his last increase—£50—was in July, 1883. Mr. John C. Kent, Chief Clerk, Treasury, entered the service on the 1st February, 1868; his present salary was £430, and his last increase—£30—was in December, 1893. Mr. G. H. Buzacott, Correspondence Clerk, General Post Office, entered the service on the 1st of May, 1869; his present salary was £400, and his last increase—£50—was in July, 1882. Mr. Murray, the senior officer on the list, was some twenty years Mr. Cahill's senior in point of service, and the junior officer on the list was some ten years his senior. Mr. Cahill became Under Secretary as far back as 1890, and reached that grade after he had been but eleven years in the service. At that time the Registrar of the Supreme Court, Mr. William Bell, a solicitor, had been Mr. Cahill's senior for twenty-seven years. The Curator of Intestate Estates, the Crown Solicitor, the Sheriff, and the Official Trustee in Insolvency were also his seniors, all serving in the same department. Mr. Cahill was not a professional man, although at the head of a professional department, and he had admitted on oath in a certain case that he had no clerical or legal experience before entering the Queensland service. He was with members of the Committee who gave Mr. Cahill credit for doing his utmost to get to the head of the department, but the same sort of justice should be meted out to other people, and this particular officer should not be selected for so many favours as had been cast upon his shoulders in the past. Taking these particulars into consideration, he would vote for the amendment.

Amendment put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 20.

Mr. Messrs. Glassey, Dunsford, Stewart, Cribb, Jackson, Stumm, Daniels, Fitzgerald, Curtis, Dibley, Jenkinson, King, Turley, McDonnell, Kerr, Cross, Hardacre, Browne, Maughan, and McDonald.

NOES, 36.

Messrs. Dickson, Foxton, Philp, Murray, Dalrymple, Boles, Keogh, Story, Hood, Fraser, O'Connell, Chataway, Lord, Corfield, Smyth, Petrie, Stodart, Bridges, Moore, Armstrong, Newell, Stephenson, W. Thorn, Collins, Sim, Bell, Morgan, Finney, Stephens, McMaster, Tooth, Callan, Macdonald-Paterson, Hamilton, McGahan, and Leahy.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. STEWART asked how many inquiries had been made into cases of death and fire; also how the £150 for defending aboriginals had been expended?

The HOME SECRETARY: He would supply the information when the Estimates were next under discussion.

Question put and passed.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 3.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council returning this Bill without amendment.

The House adjourned at three minutes past 11 o'clock.