

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 13 JUNE 1899

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 13 JUNE, 1899.

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

QUESTIONS.

GRAMMAR SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS.

Mr. McDONNELL asked the Premier—

Before gazetting the regulations for 1899, dealing with grammar school scholarships, will the Government consider the advisableness of so framing the regulations as to provide for—

1. That competition be open to all boys and girls in Queensland of the prescribed age, no matter where educated in the colony.

2. That successful competitors shall be allowed—if they so choose—to take out a scholarship at any high school or college in Queensland, approved of by the Secretary for Public Instruction.

The PREMIER replied—

The advisableness of amending the regulations dealing with grammar school scholarships has for some time past been under the consideration of the Government, and is still receiving their attention.

CURPHY-STREET WHARFAGE SITE.

Mr. HIGGS asked the Treasurer—

1. Have the Government received an offer to purchase the river frontage at the foot of Curphy street, Brisbane?

2. If the Government intend to dispose of the said river frontage, will they put the site up for sale by auction or by sealed tender?

3. Have the Government any objection to dedicate the site to the Brisbane Municipal Council to be used for public purposes?

The TREASURER replied—

1. No.

2. The Government do not intend to dispose of the said river frontage.

3. At the present time the site is under the control of the Brisbane Municipal Council by virtue of clause 237 of the Local Government Act of 1878.

FEDERATION AND THE UNEMPLOYED.

Mr. PLUNKETT asked the Premier—

Is it the intention of the Government to reserve areas of land in the vicinity of the cities and towns of the colony for the purpose of finding work for the unemployed, in the event of Queensland federating with the other colonies under this Commonwealth Bill?

The PREMIER replied—

No. Government believe that work for the employment of labour will be considerably increased by acceptance of the Commonwealth Bill.

REMUNERATION OF MR. BEN TILLET.

Mr. DAWSON asked the Premier, without notice: What remuneration, if any, or what lump sum, if any, is to be paid to the newly-appointed immigration lecturer, Mr. Ben Tillett?

The PREMIER: According to the advice forwarded by the Agent-General, Sir Horace Tozer, the sum to be paid to Mr. Tillett for twenty lectures, delivered in various parts of the old country, is at the rate of £7 per lecture—to cover all expenses connected with his travelling, rent of halls, and other things.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Are the lectures to be on immigration?

The PREMIER: On immigration.

DEATH OF MRS. GLASSEY.

The SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have received the following letter from the hon. member for Bundaberg, Mr. Glassey:—

Brisbane,
12th June, 1899.

Mr. SPEAKER,—

I beg to tender to the members of the Legislative Assembly, through you, the grateful thanks of my family and self, for the very kindly references, touching the death of Mrs. Glassey, that were made in the Assembly on Friday last, by the Honourable the Premier, Mr. Dawson, and Mr. Lealy, and so sympathetically received by members on both sides of the House.

I have the honour to be,

Mr. Speaker,

Yours gratefully,

THOMAS GLASSEY.

AUSTRALASIAN FEDERATION
ENABLING BILL

THIRD READING.

The PREMIER: I move that this Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. STEWART: I beg to move as an amendment that all the words after "that" be omitted with the view of inserting "the Bill be read a third time this day three weeks." I do this for the purpose of drawing attention to what I consider to be a distinct breach of faith on the part of the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill. I think every hon. member will recollect that a promise was given that if hon. members would be brief, and speak only once during the discussion on schedule 2, the reporting would be as on the second reading of a Bill; that is to say, that hon. members would be reported fully. I find that the speeches of several members, my own amongst the number, have been condensed as in committee. I do not think that is at all fair.

MEMBERS of the Opposition side: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEWART: The promise was made by the Premier; we accepted it in good faith, and it has not been carried out. The result is that the speeches of several hon. gentlemen who are anti-billites are reported only in the most meagre form, whilst those of several hon. members who are billites are reported at full length. The hon. gentleman may perhaps make the excuse that it is usual after 11 o'clock to condense the reporting, but I maintain that the hour at which a speech is delivered should not affect the reporting of it. We had a distinct promise that each speech

should be reported; there was no mention of any hour, no agreement that hon. members should not speak after 11 o'clock, or that if they did they would speak at the risk of their speeches being abbreviated. What the hon. gentleman should have done, if he desired the ordinary rules of reporting to be carried out, was to have adjourned the debate. If I had been under the impression that my speech would be condensed, I certainly would have moved the adjournment of the debate, and I would have pressed the motion. The hon. gentleman must recognise that if he desired the debate to close on Friday night or Saturday somebody perform must speak last; and why should the last speaker be penalised in this fashion? It is just as important that the utterances of one member should go before his constituents and the country as that the utterances of another member should go before his constituents and the country, but under the arrangement made by the hon. gentleman the reporting has been of a most partial character. I say again, this is a distinct breach of faith on the part of the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. Of course the thing is past remedy now, but this must show the country how unfairly the hon. gentleman is inclined to treat hon. members who may be opposed to him, but whose views have just as much right to be put before the country as the views of the hon. gentleman.

The SPEAKER: The question was—That the Bill be now read a third time, since when it has been moved by way of amendment—

Mr. COWLEY: I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, if the amendment has been seconded?

The SPEAKER: I intend to inquire whether the amendment is to be seconded.

Mr. HARDACRE: I second the amendment, but I do so not with the desire of charging the Premier with any breach of faith, though, as a matter of fact, the promise was not carried out. I do not know whose fault it is, but in regard to my own speech I find that it has been condensed in such a way that, in parts, my meaning is distorted—it does not carry out the points I made in the speech. I support the amendment for the second reason that I do not think this Parliament should carry on the policy of assisting New South Wales federalists to carry the Bill in New South Wales. I believe the endeavour of this Parliament to pass the Bill if possible before the referendum in New South Wales on the 20th June may lend encouragement to the New South Wales federalists, and I do not think that should be done in Queensland. I think at least we might wait until the 20th is past, and not take sides to help either the federalists or the anti-federalists. I believe every attempt has been made by the federalists here to get it passed, so that the New South Wales federalists may say, "The Bill has been passed in Queensland, and you may as well pass it in New South Wales, because Queensland is coming in, and it will not do for you to stand out."

The HOME SECRETARY: They are always a step ahead of us.

Mr. HARDACRE: I know what is intended, and I strongly object. I think we might let them stand or fall on their own ground, and ourselves take the vote on our own ground. For my part I think it would be much better to leave the matter entirely over here until the referendum has been taken in New South Wales. It is possible that the referendum may not be carried in New South Wales, and then there would be no necessity to pass the third reading of this Bill at all.

The SPEAKER: I would like, before the proceedings go further, to say a few words in regard

to the complaint of the hon. member for Rockhampton North, Mr. Stewart. He charges the Premier with having broken some arrangement he made with the House as to the reporting of debates; but I would remind members that the Premier has no control over the *Hansard* reporting staff.

Mr. KERR: Why did he give the promise?

The SPEAKER: I am not aware what promise the Premier gave. I may inform the House, however, that the Premier addressed a letter to me, as Speaker, expressing the wish that, as the debate on this question was likely to be one of the first importance, instructions might be given to the gallery for a full report of the speeches. Agreeing with the Premier's suggestion, I gave the necessary instructions to the chief of the *Hansard* staff, and I believe they were carried out. But the Friday's sitting was protracted to a very late hour, as hon. members are aware; and about midnight the Principal Shorthand Writer came to me and reported that in view of the small staff the reporters were getting exhausted, and he could not keep up full reporting all night. Now it has been the practice for some time, I understand, to take a full report until about 11 o'clock, after which hour the reports of speeches are very much abridged; but, having regard to the importance of the debate then proceeding, I expressed a wish to the chief of the staff that full reporting should be continued to as late an hour as possible, and that when condensation was found necessary it should be done as gradually as possible. To what extent condensation had eventually to be resorted to I am not aware, but I should like to say, in justice to the chief of the *Hansard* staff, that during the greater part of the session he has been working shorthanded, as one of the regular members of the gallery staff has been laid up with a severe illness. Application was made for an additional reporter, and that application was granted. An additional reporter was employed to take the place of the absent member of the staff, but he only remained in the gallery for a short time, retiring to take up other work. Since that time the vacancy has not been filled, so that the *Hansard* staff has been working somewhat at a disadvantage. Those are the facts of the case, which I think the House should know, and I have stated them at this early stage in order that hon. members on both sides may be acquainted with the exact position of affairs.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Rockhampton North has accused me of a breach of faith with the House, inasmuch as he contends that I represented to the House—

Mr. COWLEY: I rise to a point of order. Is there any question before the House?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Yes, the amendment.

Mr. COWLEY: Has the amendment been put?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. COWLEY: I never heard it.

The SPEAKER: I stated the amendment to the House.

Mr. COWLEY: Then I certainly apologise, but after the hon. member for Leichhardt resumed his seat I did not hear the amendment put.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Rockhampton North has accused me of a breach of faith, but after the explanation which the Speaker has given to the House, he and other hon. members will see that I have endeavoured as far as possible to fully keep faith with the House in the representations I made. The representation I made was that in committee on the 2nd schedule of the Bill the *Hansard* staff would be instructed to report hon. members as fully as on a second reading debate if it was

understood that but one speech was to be made by each hon. member. I must say that hon. members on both sides strictly upheld that rule of procedure, which I gratefully recognise. However, I wish it to be understood that I have no immediate control over the *Hansard* staff, but the statement I made to the House was made in the presence of Mr. Speaker, and I subsequently confirmed it by addressing him by letter. As he himself has told us, he communicated to the *Hansard* staff my desire—what I had expressed to the House. I was certainly under the impression that as far as possible the *Hansard* staff would report fully to the end of the debate; and it has been news to me to-day to find that hon. members who spoke early on Saturday morning were not reported to the full extent that their remarks deserved. At the same time I can point this out to hon. members, and especially to the hon. member for Rockhampton North, that he himself and the hon. member for Leichhardt expressed themselves as sensible, that at that early hour of the morning it was an inconvenient time to address the House, and both of them made their remarks remarkably brief. I certainly expected the hon. member for Rockhampton North to have addressed us at much greater length, and the hon. member for Leichhardt also; but both of them admitted that speaking at that early hour it was inconvenient to do so. They themselves recognised the great strain upon the reporting staff, and did not speak at the length which they would ordinarily have done. But the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, proceeded to address us at very great length indeed, and I point out to that hon. member and to those who sit with him that he addressed for the most part, if not empty benches, somnolent members, and it is possible that the soporific effect of the hon. member's speech may have affected the *Hansard* staff as it did hon. members who were listening to him. I want to relieve myself of the charge of having broken faith in any way with the Chamber. It was not my desire, and if it has occurred that *Hansard* has reduced the report of hon. members' speeches it was done without my cognisance, and without any communication from me to the Speaker or to the staff. I never communicated with them directly or indirectly, and I understood that they would carry out what had been intended. I am myself very sorry that this should have occurred, because I wished that hon. members should have no complaint to make at all in this respect. Hon. members will admit that I gave the fullest opportunity for debate upon the 2nd schedule, but it was certainly desirable that we should conclude the debate last Friday evening to get the Bill up to the other House to-day. I will tell hon. gentlemen why: Hon. members opposite have been particularly desirous to give additional facilities for men to be registered on the rolls, but until this Bill becomes law, instructions to the electoral registrars cannot be issued. We are approaching very closely to the 4th July, the last day upon which registration can take effect, and if the passage of the Bill is delayed in the manner desired by the hon. member for Rockhampton North, and as supported by the hon. member for Leichhardt, it will nullify altogether the benefits to be obtained by the amendment introduced into the Bill by which fresh voters could be obtained on the rolls. If hon. gentlemen want to give effect to that provision—to obtain an enlarged number of voters on the occasion of the referendum—there is no time to be lost in having that measure transmitted to another place and made law. I regret that this occasion for complaint has occurred, but I cannot see that anybody is to blame in the matter, as we could

hardly expect the *Hansard* staff to pursue throughout the long hours of the night and the early hours of the morning that close reporting which commands our praise and which they make with so much accuracy and ability during the early hours of a sitting.

Mr. STEWART: Then get a bigger staff.

The PREMIER: If some hon. members who spoke earlier in the debate were more fully reported, it must be said in fairness to the staff that it was not owing to any desire to preclude the opinions of other hon. members being submitted to the country as fully as possible. I think this explanation should suffice. I hope that though hon. members may consider that they have not been reported as fully as they desired, there is a stronger duty before them, and that is to allow the people of the country an opportunity of deciding upon this measure. I cannot see that in dealing with this measure we are necessarily influencing the referendum in New South Wales one way or the other. We are acting here entirely independent of that.

Mr. STEWART: We are not.

The PREMIER: It is far better for us to deal with the measure before the referendum is taken in New South Wales, than to have it appear, by acting subsequently, that we are merely following out the idea of New South Wales.

Mr. STEWART: That is what you are doing.

The PREMIER: Not at all. We are anticipating the referendum in New South Wales. We cannot be accused of following suit when we are anticipating the action of the other colony. Having had such a long and good debate upon the subject as we have had; having brought the Bill to this stage, and the other House being ready to receive it, I do not see why, even if there has been anything to complain of—and I cannot admit that there has been—I do not see why all our efforts should be neutralised by the electors being precluded from the earliest possible opportunity of fully considering this very important measure. I trust, therefore, that the hon. member for North Rockhampton will not press his amendment, but that he will allow the Bill to proceed without further interruption.

Mr. DAWSON: I am pleased that the hon. member for Rockhampton drew attention to this matter in the manner he has done, and I should have been more pleased if the Premier had generously admitted that a mistake had been made somewhere or by someone. But the hon. gentleman continually harped on the statement "if" a mistake had been made. There is no doubt at all that someone is in fault. Whether it is the chief of the *Hansard* staff or the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government does not matter; the fact is that a fault has been committed by someone, and it is too late now to say "if" a mistake has occurred. Any hon. member who chooses to look up *Hansard* will get proof positive about the unfairness of the report of that debate. I should like to remind the hon. gentleman that we have no desire, and never had any desire, to prevent him getting his Bill up to its present stage; but what we did bargain for, and what was distinctly understood between both sides of the House, was that if we permitted the hon. gentleman to get his Bill up to its present stage every facility should be given hon. members for full and free discussion.

The PREMIER: Well, that was given.

Mr. DAWSON: That members on one side and members on the other side should have every facility to fully and freely discuss the Commonwealth Bill from any standpoint, and give their reasons for accepting or rejecting the Bill, and for advising the people of the colony to accept or reject it; and it was distinctly understood the speeches of hon. members would be fully reported

in *Hansard*, and circulated side by side among the people of the colony. That was a distinct understanding; but now we find that while there has been full and free discussion there has not been full and free reporting. The Premier said the hon. member for Rockhampton spoke to empty benches and to a tired gallery, and for that reason the hon. member was not permitted to speak to an anxious country who wish to read what he has got to say on the question. The hon. gentleman should distinctly understand that on an important question like this—and on any great question—an hon. member may be in a minority of one; he may have not the slightest hope in the world of convincing any member sitting in this Chamber, and he has no desire to convince *Hansard*; but he takes advantage of his opportunity to address himself to the electors of the country for them to decide whether he is taking up a right or wrong position. If hon. members choose to go to sleep or to go on the veranda and have a smoke, and hon. members are then not to be reported, then hon. members who choose not to listen to my remarks can go outside, and I should be addressing empty benches, and consequently would not be reported. I would point out that the arrangement made between the hon. gentleman and myself in this matter has not been faithfully carried out. For that I do not blame the hon. gentleman himself; he has stated that he knew nothing of it. But, notwithstanding that, the compact has not been kept so far as the reporting is concerned. Our portion of the compact has been kept; some members on this side, notwithstanding the fact that they are strong anti-billites, and had a very great desire to block the Bill and prevent it reaching its present stage, only spoke once, and did not move one solitary amendment, as they might have done. Had it not been for the compact which was made, I believe that the Bill would not have reached its present stage; we should to-day have been discussing the 2nd schedule of the Bill with the Chairman of Committees in the chair. I am quite satisfied that if the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, and the hon. member for North Rockhampton, Mr. Stewart, had known when they rose at an early hour on Saturday morning that they would not be as fully reported as the hon. member for Bulloo—who made the strongest speech in favour of the Bill—they would have declined to rise at that hour of the morning, and members on this side of the House would certainly have supported them in pressing for an adjournment of the debate. And we should have been perfectly justified in doing so. If, after the arrangement which had been made, it was found that the *Hansard* staff were too tired; that the strain upon them was too great, so that it was physically impossible for them to do the work, it was the duty of the hon. gentleman to come here and let the House know that, and ask for an adjournment of the debate, and let the remaining speakers address the Committee to-day, when the *Hansard* staff was fresh.

The PREMIER: But he did not know that.

Mr. DAWSON: He ought to have known that the strain on the *Hansard* staff was too great, and that it was utterly impossible for them to do the work. Had I been aware of the fact I should have pressed very strongly for an adjournment, instead of advising my friends to go on and finish the debate, and giving them the assurance that they would be fully reported. In order that hon. members may see how unfair the report is, I would point out that the hon. member for Bulloo is reported to the extent of fifteen columns of *Hansard*, and a great portion of that speech is an attack on the position held by the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, and the hon. member for

North Rockhampton, Mr. Stewart. The hon. member for Rockhampton spoke for one and a-half hours, and he is given less than four columns, while the hon. member for North Rockhampton, who spoke for over an hour, is given less than three columns for their defence to the attack made by the hon. member for Bulloo. What will their constituents say if attention is not called to the matter? I say their position is not fairly represented in *Hansard*, and the sooner that kind of thing is put a stop to the better.

Mr. McDONALD: Let us have their speeches now.

Mr. DAWSON: I do not know that even that would be fair; those hon. members would certainly have a delicacy in doing it, and even if they had not, as they did not know till the eleventh hour that they were not reported, they would not be prepared to make as full a reply to the criticisms against them as they would have done had they known that the debate was going on in the ordinary course to-day. The unpleasantness which has risen to-day will affect me in this way: that I shall be very chary about making arrangements in future.

Mr. KIDSTON: When I saw how very much my speech was abbreviated in *Hansard*, although I naturally did not like it, yet, when I heard your explanation, Sir, of what was understood to be the cause of the shortening of the report, I was inclined to accept that explanation. But having heard the flippant manner in which the Premier dealt with the matter I am not inclined to accept it. I do not care who is at fault, but a fault has been committed somehow. When I got up to speak on Friday night, I would very much rather have been in my bed, as I had been unwell for a week previously, and was very unwilling to speak that evening. The House was very unwilling to listen to me, or to anyone else for the matter of that, no matter who he was. The House was dead tired, and sick of the whole thing, and would very much rather have been at home and in bed. I should very much have preferred to have seen the debate adjourned and spoken to-day, and I know the House would have preferred it also; but the Premier insisted upon the debate closing that evening. Now, what was an hon. member to do? Was he to hold his tongue altogether on this important question, or was he to get up and speak? It was not the men who spoke at the end of the debate who made the debate so long. I sat here from half-past 3 o'clock till 1 o'clock listening to other hon. members before I said a word. I would much have preferred not having to speak till to-day; and now I am not reported. My speech is cut down to one-third of what it should be. The Premier distinctly approves of the reporters in the gallery cutting down my speech—he thinks it was quite natural on their part to cut it down. Whoever is in fault in this matter, this is unquestionably the broad result of it—that the promise made by the Premier to this House has been falsified, and the hon. gentleman has so small a sense of honour that he only considers it a laughing matter. He says it is not his fault—it is somebody else's fault—that an officer of this House—a paid servant of this House—has falsified the promise the hon. gentleman made, and the hon. gentleman considers it a matter to joke about. The natural consequence of action of this sort to a man like myself is to make him get up now and deliver his speech over again; and I point this out because it shows the small-sighted policy either of the reporting staff or of the Premier, or of anyone else in adopting this course. As to the excuse which you, Mr. Speaker, made to the House, it seemed at first sight to be a very valid excuse for the action of the reporting staff. Still, let me say that the Legislative Council had

not been sitting all last week, and this House had not been sitting late any previous night, and that consequently the complaint made by the reporting staff that they were one man short was not a very valid excuse after the distinct promise made by the Premier that the debate would be reported in full. They had had no Legislative Council debates to report—they had only this House to report. And now let me say something further—I am distinctly given to understand that the chief of the reporting staff had assistance offered to him to fill the place of the absent man, and that there was really no excuse of that sort.

Mr. FISHER: You should be sure of that.

Mr. KIDSTON: I would not say a thing of the sort if I were not sure of the facts. Whatever the cause of the abbreviation of the report after 12 o'clock, the result of it is that at least four speakers—I think almost all the speakers who came after that hour—were strong opponents of the Bill, and that consequently the speeches of four strong opponents of the Bill are abbreviated to such an extent as to very much diminish the effect that their opinions might have had in the country. It is just as well that the country—or at least that small part of it which may be interested in what those four members had to say against the Bill—should understand that, in spite of the distinct promise of the Premier, the reporting staff practically took it into their own hands to abbreviate the report of the speeches of opponents of the Bill, and that the Premier considers that kind of thing is only a matter to joke about. It makes more striking than ever the very unfair means that are being resorted to, and that are likely to be resorted to during the next two months, to attempt to hustle this measure down the throats of the people of Queensland.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HON. G. THORN: There is a way out of the difficulty. There is no doubt that the report stage should only have been reached to-day. I had a little amendment to move, but at that hour of the morning I knew that what I had to say would not be reported, although what I had to say was very important. However, there is a way out of the difficulty. I ask your ruling, Mr. Speaker, as to whether, according to the Constitution Act, a message from His Excellency the Governor should not have been mentioned by you before the Bill was introduced in committee? I am certain that that is the proper course to follow, and, as that was not done, this debate should begin *de novo*. I do not know whether you noticed it or not, but I noticed that the Bill was irregularly introduced, but I did not like to say anything. I knew that if you did not rule in accordance with my views I should have no other opportunity of speaking on the matter. I would like to ask for your ruling as to whether the Bill was properly initiated in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution Act or not?

The SPEAKER: If the hon. member desires to have my ruling on the point, I rule that the Bill is properly before the House.

Amendment (*Mr. Stewart's*) put and negatived.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

The Bill was then passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form.

HEALTH OFFICER AT THURSDAY ISLAND.

Mr. J. HAMILTON, in moving—

That there be laid on the table of the House copies of all correspondence which passed between the Home

Secretary and Mr. William Campbell respecting the possible appointment of Dr. Salter as Health Officer during the absence on leave of Dr. Tilston—

said: I move this in compliance with a request of a previous Premier of this colony, the Hon. John Douglas, now Government Resident at Thursday Island, and I will give one or two quotations from a letter I have received from him, which will, I think, justify the House in granting the request for these papers. Mr. Douglas says—

I am anxious to obtain a copy of the correspondence which passed between Mr. William Campbell and the Home Secretary respecting the possible appointment of Dr. Salter as Health Officer during the late absence on leave of Dr. Tilston. The copy of a letter from Mr. Campbell to the Home Secretary has been privately circulated here. It contains a statement with regard to myself which is not true, and which is injurious to my reputation as an adviser of the Government in my position as Resident. I desire to have an opportunity of contradicting it, and of correcting any impression which may have been conveyed by it to the Home Secretary.

He further says—

I apply to you as member for this district in a matter which concerns me privately, and I desire to have an opportunity of publicly contradicting statements which have been made privately to my disadvantage. I do not see how I can do this without adopting the course of securing the printing of the correspondence referred to.

If there is any reason why the return should not be given I should be glad to hear it.

Mr. DAWSON: I called "not formal" to this motion, because I desired to have some reason given for calling for these papers. I have received certain information myself concerning a personal quarrel between two individuals at Thursday Island who are mentioned in this motion, and I wanted to know if there was any good reason why such documents should be given either to one side or the other. The hon. gentleman has read an extract which shows that it is the desire of the Government Resident to have these papers, and of course I shall offer no objection to the papers being laid on the table of the House for the protection of a Government officer holding the most important position on Thursday Island. Had the papers being asked for by either one or the other of the persons mentioned in the motion, I should have objected, because I do not think it is the duty of the Government to interfere in private quarrels. It has been stated that the document was circulated by the Home Secretary, and I had intended asking a question about it—whether it is usual to send out of the department documents which have been sent there in confidence. Those are the only reasons why I objected to the motion going as "formal."

The HOME SECRETARY: I personally have not the slightest objection to these documents being laid on the table of the House. It appears to me to be "a storm in a teacup." There appears to have been some bad feeling between Mr. Campbell and Dr. Salter. I may tell the leader of the Labour Opposition that he is entirely mistaken in supposing that I had circulated anything; I do not hesitate in giving the statement a flat denial. The hon. member has been misinformed. I do not at all hold with the view that it is no part of the duty of the Government to lay papers on the table if they are likely to foster private quarrels. If one man writes to a public department about another man, unless there is some State reason against it, the man attacked is entitled to see the correspondence and to answer it. That is the reason why I should have no hesitation in laying the whole of the correspondence on the table, and it was that feeling which prompted me to authorise a copy of one of the letters being furnished to the solicitors of Dr. Salter upon their applying for it.

Mr. DAWSON: He is suing for libel.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not know anything about that. They have been asked to advise him whether the statements made are libellous, and they ask for a copy of the letter which it was assumed was libellous. It was not for me to decide whether it was or not. Mr. Campbell had stepped in and written a letter to the Home Secretary reflecting on Dr. Salter, and it appeared to me to be only just and fair that Dr. Salter should be given an opportunity of replying in any way which the law permitted him to do—whether by action for libel or by letter to the Home Secretary. At all events it is only reasonable and just and fair that if an attack is made on a man, whether by letter to a private individual or to a public department, he should have an opportunity of replying. Therefore I had no hesitation in furnishing Dr. Salter's solicitors with a copy of the letter written by Mr. Campbell, and which will form one of the letters in the correspondence moved for.

Mr. DAWSON: Then what I said about the rumour was correct?

The HOME SECRETARY: Certainly not. I have circulated nothing. I have supplied Dr. Salter's solicitors with a copy of the letter written by Mr. Campbell reflecting on Dr. Salter, and I am surprised to hear that any hon. member considers that that is an improper thing to do. If a letter was written to me as Home Secretary, or as a private individual, seriously reflecting on the conduct of the senior member for Charters Towers, I should feel perfectly justified in handing him a copy of that letter.

Mr. DAWSON: Would you do it?

The HOME SECRETARY: Certainly, unless there was some State reason why it should not be done. In this case I am not aware of any such reason. It is a private quarrel, and Dr. Salter has a right to answer any charge brought against him. I do not believe in star chamber work of any kind.

Mr. DAWSON: This is not a public document at all.

Mr. LESINA: Is not "a State reason" rather an elastic qualification at times?

The HOME SECRETARY: It will be quite time enough to deal with that when it arises. It does not arise here as far as I am aware.

Question put and passed.

REPORT RE AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE ACTS.

Mr. FISHER: Will the Hon. the Secretary for Lands move that the papers be laid on the table this afternoon, referring to operations under the Lands Purchase Acts—which are very important—be printed?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: With the leave of the House, I move that the papers be printed. It was an oversight that I did not do so before.

Motion, by leave, put and passed.

ASSISTANCE TO PROVISIONAL SCHOOLS.

Mr. BROWNE, in moving—

1. That, in the opinion of the House, clause 8, subsection (c), of regulations, State Education Act, gazetted 14 February, 1899, limiting the amount of pecuniary assistance to be given by Government towards building provisional schools, is not in accordance with resolution passed by this House on 25th August, 1898, which affirmed that "the same pecuniary assistance be given to provisional schools as is now given to the State schools of this colony."

2. That the Government be requested to at once take steps to amend regulation 8, subsection (c), in the direction indicated by the before-mentioned resolution of this House—

said: In moving the motion standing in my name, I would like to say that I do not intend it in any way as a party question, or as a censure

upon the Government. Any motion that has for its object the forwarding of education I have always found is voted for cheerfully by hon. members on both sides. The idea I had in bringing the motion on is that last year a motion was carried unanimously, and a regulation has since been passed which, in my opinion, and in the opinion of a good few other hon. members, practically overrides that resolution—it certainly does not carry it out. In order to make the provision as plain as possible, I will read, in connection with the motion I am now moving, the motion I moved last year, which was as follows:—

1. That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that clause 17 of the State Education Act, and all other provisions and regulations regarding contributions to cost of buildings, repairs, etc., shall apply to provisional schools; and that the same pecuniary assistance be given to provisional schools as is now given to the State schools of this colony.

2. That the Government be requested to take all necessary steps to give effect to foregoing resolution. "

To make the matter thoroughly plain I will quote clause 17 of the State Education Act referred to in that resolution—

Primary schools shall be established in such places as may from time to time be deemed expedient by the Governor in Council, provided that before the establishment of a primary school in a new locality one-fifth of the estimated cost of erecting or purchasing the necessary school building shall be raised by subscription or donation and paid to the Minister, to be applied by him towards such erection or purchase.

That provides that only one-fifth of the amount shall be found by the parents and friends of the children in the locality where the school is required. In addition to that clause, in 1895 a motion was passed, on the initiative of the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, that all repairs to State schools should be borne by the State, and that no contribution should be paid by the parents towards repairs. That of course was included in the motion passed by this House last year; the clause which dealt with provisional schools prior to the carrying of the motion of last year reading "with regard to the contribution to provisional schools the amount so contributed by the department shall be not more than half of the total cost, and not more than £50." Feeling the injustice the people in the outlying districts were labouring under in having to contribute half, and the department in no case paying more than £30, was the reason I brought the motion before the House last year. I may mention that this has been brought on three or four years in succession by different members. Once or twice it has been brought on by members on the other side; and in 1897 it was brought forward by myself as an amendment to an Education Bill then under consideration, but though the then Minister for Education, Mr. Dalrymple, expressed every sympathy with the object in view, the amendment was ruled out of order as it was not within the scope of the Bill. Last year the motion was carried unanimously. To show hon. members, more particularly new members, that that motion was not only carried on the voices, but that Ministers practically led the House to understand that they were going to carry it out, I shall quote an extract or two from the speeches made on that occasion. They will be found on page 342 of *Hansard* for 25th August, 1898. After I had spoken in favour of the motion, the then Minister for Education, Mr. Dalrymple, rose to reply. After giving an interesting historical *résumé* of the progress of education in this colony, the hon. gentleman said that he himself and the heads of the department—the Under Secretary, the Chief Inspector, and others—had been a long time considering the question; also that he had discussed it with the Treasurer, Mr. Philp, who

had himself held the position of Minister for Education for a considerable time, and the hon. gentleman concluded his speech in these words—

I am certainly in favour of the spirit of the motion, and the only objection I offer to it is that it is superfluous, for not only are the Government in sympathy with a change of this description, but the item on the Estimates to which the hon. member for Croydon called attention admits of only one explanation, and that explanation, I am very happy to inform the House, is that the inconvenience or injustice which the hon. member for Croydon desires to see rectified has been already rectified so far as the Ministry and myself are concerned. That sum of £1,500 was specially added to the Estimates for previous years for the purpose of placing provisional schools which are of a permanent character on the same footing as other public schools in the State school system, and, provided the House will pass the item, as I have no doubt it will when it is submitted for its consideration, there will be no further difficulty in the matter. The Ministry are thoroughly in sympathy in regard to the matter, and having ascertained from the Treasurer—who has always been sympathetic, but whose means have not been superabundant—that he is now prepared to find the necessary money; and, as there will be no difficulty to surmount after obtaining the approval of the House to the expenditure—and, judging from the expressions of opinion given to-day, I imagine I can anticipate that approval—I shall be extremely pleased to give effect to what is desired.

That statement of the Minister seemed to be straight and explicit enough—that he was thoroughly in accord with the resolution, and intended to carry it out. However, as hon. gentlemen will see on consulting *Hansard*, there were one or two members who thought that the Minister had not been explicit enough. The hon. member for Bundaberg interjected during the Minister's speech to ask if the hon. gentleman intended to support the resolution, and, after the Minister had finished, the hon. member did not think that the hon. gentleman had been explicit enough; and at page 342 of *Hansard* it will be found that the Minister interjected—

I have already said that we are prepared to put provisional schools on the same footing as State schools as soon as the House votes the money now on the Estimates.

That, at any rate, was a very explicit statement. After the hon. member for Bundaberg had spoken, the Treasurer, the Hon. R. Philp, carried on the discussion, and seemed to resent any doubts being cast upon the direct statement of the Secretary for Public Instruction. This is what he is reported to have said, on page 343 of *Hansard*—

THE TREASURER: I think the Secretary for Public Instruction was most definite in his statement. In fact, he has already placed the money on the Estimates, and, as soon as the House passes that amount, he will cause regulations to be prepared to put the provisional schools on the same footing as State schools. He could not say more than that.

MR. HARDACRE: That was not made quite clear.

THE TREASURER: No other interpretation could be put on what he said.

Further on the Treasurer used these words—

The coalition Government—which the hon. member for Bundaberg does not like—in 1890 or 1891 first granted the sum of £50 towards building provisional schools, and now that the present Government find themselves in a position to find the necessary money, they propose to place provisional schools on exactly the same footing as State schools.

I am quoting these remarks because it may be said that those who expected the resolution to be carried out were labouring under some misapprehension, and that Ministers had used equivocal or ambiguous words that they could get out of. I think these statements are plain enough. After the passing of the resolution and before the passing of the Estimates I had a good few letters sent me from people in different parts of the country inquiring when the new regulation was to come into force. I know that several members of the House had letters to the same effect. On 16th December, the Estimates of the

Department of Public Instruction were before the House, and so as to get a definite answer as to the time we were likely to get the new regulation you will find, on turning to page 1581 of *Hansard*, that I asked the Minister in charge of the Estimate for some information on the matter, and this is the reply from the Secretary for Public Instruction—

Although he was anxious to carry into effect the will of the House in the matter, it could not be done until the vote for the purpose was carried. Hon. members would see that the vote which last year stood at £1,500 was now increased to £3,000, and that had been placed on the Estimates to meet the additional demands which the department expected would arise by their having in future to bear four-fifths instead of half the expense of putting up provisional schools. As soon as the vote was passed regulations would be framed to give it effect, and would be gazetted as soon as possible.

I have made these quotations to show the opinions expressed by the hon. gentleman as well as by members of the House, but I may add that the newspapers commenting upon the subject at the time took exactly the same view; and one or two took the view that my motion was superfluous, because the Government had already placed the money on the Estimates and were going to carry out the wishes of the House. Now I will direct hon. members' attention to the result of all this. I went up North with the idea that this was going to be carried out exactly in accordance with the resolution passed by the House, and with the expressions of opinion given vent to by Ministers, and I did not know anything different was the case, until I got some correspondence about a school in my electorate to show that a different regulation had been passed. This regulation I shall read as some hon. members may never have seen it, and it is probably only known to hon. members who have had communications upon the matter the same as myself. The regulation to carry out the wishes of this House was published in the *Gazette* of 11th and 18th February, and is signed "D. H. Dalrymple, February 9th." It reads as follows:—

Paragraphs 2 and 3 of clause 8 (c) and clauses 39, 40, and 41 of the regulations under the State Education Act of 1875, published in the *Gazette* dated 13th March, 1897, are hereby repealed, and the following paragraphs and clauses are substituted therefor respectively:—

8 (c) 2. That the amount so contributed by the department shall be not more than four-fifths of the total cost and not more than £80.

8 (c) 3. That the building shall be placed on Crown lands or on lands vested in the Secretary for Public Instruction.

I may say that under the old regulations the total amount was restricted to £50, and it is now increased to £80. Instead of carrying out the resolution which said that provisional schools should be placed in the matter of Government contributions exactly on the same footing as State schools, they have actually been generous enough to say, "You can build your own schools, and we will give you another £30 in addition to what we gave in the past." I contend that is not carrying out the wishes of the House. To show how this has affected some schools, I have correspondence here, but for which I would not have discovered until, perhaps, some far later period how perfunctorily the resolution of the House has been carried out or how long it has been overridden by the new regulation. Before referring to the correspondence, I may mention that last year the Minister referred to many of the provisional schools, and said they might easily be made State schools, and he distinctly said that wherever there were over thirty children—if there were only thirty-one—the people had only to ask for a State school and the department would at once try to give it to them. The correspondence I have here refers to the school at Tabletop, which the hon. member for Barcoo, the hon.

member for Burke, and other hon. members know was one of the first schools started on Croydon. It has existed now for eleven years, and there has never been one sixpence of Government money given towards that school. The people built the school themselves, have fought the white ants, and have kept the building in repair for eleven years. This is the first time they have made any application to the Government for assistance. When they referred the matter to me I told them that, as the number of children was increasing and they had now something like forty pupils, they should apply for a State school. This is the reply they received to the application—

Department of Public Instruction,
Brisbane, 14th February, 1899.

Memorandum to Mr. David Hamill,

Secretary to the School Committee, Tabletop.

With reference to previous correspondence on this subject, the committee are informed that it is not considered desirable at present to proceed with the erection of State school buildings at Tabletop, but the Minister approves of the payment of a subsidy towards the erection and completion of new provisional school buildings at the rate of £4 to every £1 locally contributed, to a limit of £80 of subsidy, provided the conditions set forth in subsection (c) of clause 8 of the regulations are fulfilled.

Plan and specification of a provisional school building, together with the necessary furniture required therein, are forwarded to you under separate cover, as a guide to the committee in erecting and furnishing a school.

The committee should invite tenders, and accept the most eligible. They should also supervise the work while it is being carried out, in order to ensure a satisfactory contract.

When the building is finished and completely equipped with furniture and the necessary closet accommodation, the fact should be reported to this office, whereupon arrangements will be made to have the premises inspected with a view to the payment of the subsidy. Subsection 5 of section (c) of clause 8 of the regulations clearly defines the procedure regarding this matter.

J. D. STOREY,
For the Under Secretary.

I may say, as I said when speaking last year, that with those plans and specifications it is impossible to build a school in the far Northern and Western districts for less than £250. In reply to that memorandum, the secretary of the school committee at Tabletop wrote as follows:—

Provisional School, Tabletop,
4th March, 1899.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your communication of 14th February, together with plan and specification of provisional school building.

I am instructed by the school committee to bring under your notice the following facts, viz.:—That the daily attendance of pupils is forty-six; that the present school building measures 20 feet by 24 feet, equal to 420 feet of space, with veranda space of 82 feet by 10 feet, equal to 820; that the buildings and furniture have been provided solely at the expense of the residents, and maintained for over eleven years; that up to the present time no demand or request has been made on the Education Department for monetary assistance; that it is necessary to build a new school with at least 800 feet of floor space over and above veranda space; that owing to the high price of material in this district the above building will cost about £450.

Under these circumstances I am instructed to ask for further information *re* amount of subsidy the department will grant for the erection of the abovenamed buildings.

I am, etc.,
C. J. STEPHENS,

Hon. Secretary, Provisional School, Tabletop.

The reply to that came some time afterwards, but in the meantime the department seem to have suddenly changed their minds about the necessity for erecting a State school. The reply, which was dated the 5th of April, 1899, was as follows:—

With reference to your letter of the 5th instant, I am directed to inform the committee that the regulations do not admit of a greater subsidy than £80 being paid towards a provisional school.

As an alternative, it is suggested that a State school be established to supersede the existing provisional school, the average attendance warranting such a change, and the committee are invited to give the matter their consideration, and report to this office which course they would prefer the department to pursue.

I am, etc.,

J. G. ANDERSON,

Under Secretary.

That correspondence will show hon. members the absurdity of restricting the subsidy to provisional schools to £80, and giving £1 for £1 for State schools. The people at Tabletop reckon that a provisional school, built and equipped according to the plan and specifications furnished by the department, would cost about £450, and of that sum they would have to find £370, while the Government gave only £80. I have interviewed the Government Architect, and he told me that his lowest estimate for a State school, building and furniture, is £700, and if a State school were built at Tabletop at that cost those same people would have to find only £140, while the Government would have to contribute £560. If a provisional school could be built there for £280, the people would have to subscribe £200, and the Government pay only £80, or only one-seventh of what they would have to give in the case of a State school. There is no equality about that. There are places where, although there are the necessary number of children, it might not be advisable to go to the expense of putting up a first-class State school. There are a great many mining places where it would be throwing away money to do that, because they might be subsequently deserted, and if they are willing to put up with a really good provisional school the Government should not study economy in the matter. If the people at Tabletop were granted £300, that, with the amount of £100 they have collected, would enable them to build a fairly comfortable provisional school, and that would do for a considerable time until the permanency of the field has been established, whereas, if the Government build a State school, that will mean an expenditure of £700 or £800. The Treasurer in speaking on this subject last year—and when he was in charge of the Department of Public Instruction I always found him most sympathetic and willing to do as much as he could without going outside the Act—pointed out that he had always found the country and outside places a great deal more ready to assist in anything of this sort than the towns. He said distinctly that in the large centres of population the greatest difficulty was experienced in raising money, and I am sure that that must be the experience of every hon. member who has had experience in the matter at all. Then why should the people in the outside districts be penalised and made to contribute at such a much higher rate than the people in the big towns?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWNE: We know that in the far out districts the price of labour is higher; that the price of material is higher, owing to the difficulty of carriage, and on account of the difficulty in some places of getting timber. Another thing to be taken into account is that in sparsely populated communities there are few moneyed men who are willing to give liberally to the erection of schools, so that all round the people in these districts are in a much worse position than those in the big centres. Another thing that presses heavily upon the people in these outlying districts is the plans and specifications which have been drawn up. I have a copy here, and I am sure that any hon. member who has any practical experience must admit at once that schools could not possibly be erected in accordance with these plans

and specifications for £100—because that is the amount they are restricted to. The man who drew up these plans and specifications may know a lot about Queen street and about Brisbane, but he knows very little about Queensland at large. Here are three or four specifications which, in a place like Croydon, could not be carried out for less than £200.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: It can be done in the South quite easily under that specification.

Mr. BROWNE: Well, practical builders in Brisbane have told me that it would be impossible to build a school in Brisbane up to these specifications for £100. Copies of these plans and specifications are sent to all school committees, and if the Government inspector should come along and condemn the building, the committee are held responsible. If the Government want buildings erected according to these specifications, the least they can do is to give the people the necessary pecuniary assistance. I have tried to put the matter clearly before hon. members, so that they may understand the exact position. I feel very earnestly about it, and so do other hon. members. Ever since I have been in this House I have noticed that, however much cavilling there may be with regard to other Estimates, not a single hon. member has ever said a word of disapproval with regard to the increase of the education vote. Members on both sides seem to think that if we spend money on anything, the one justifiable thing to spend it on is the education of the youngsters of Queensland. The big question we have been considering lately has been a non-party question, because hon. members on all sides have been divided; and this education question is essentially a non-party question, because hon. members are practically unanimous about it. This is a very important matter, and those who may not have been very highly educated themselves would like to see future Queenslanders more highly educated than they themselves have been. For that reason I have brought this resolution forward, as I really think that the opinion expressed by this Chamber last session should have been carried into effect, whereas it has been overridden. I now beg to move the motion standing in my name.

Mr. MAXWELL: I beg to second the motion, because my field has felt the want of this subsidy that the hon. member for Croydon speaks about as much as any other part of the colony.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have to congratulate the hon. member for Croydon on the clear manner in which he has placed what he believes to be a grievance before the House. Although I cannot agree altogether with the resolutions as framed, yet I may say, as on previous occasions, that the hon. member has my sympathy. The wording of the 1st resolution is that—

The amount of pecuniary assistance to be given by Government towards building provisional schools is not in accordance with resolution passed by this House on 25th August, 1898, which affirmed that "the same pecuniary assistance be given to provisional schools as is now given to the State schools of this colony."

At any rate the assistance to provisional schools was in accordance with what was proposed by the Minister some three or four months before when the Estimates were framed, and it certainly was also in accordance with what was generally supposed to be the opinion expressed by this House last session. That was the view which I took as head of the department—that the four-fifths which were granted in the case of State schools should also be given in the case of provisional schools. That is scarcely a matter on which we expect to act on the strict letter of the resolution which was agreed to last session—"that the same

pecuniary assistance be given to provisional schools as is now given to State schools." As a matter of fact the same pecuniary assistance is not given to the different classes of State schools. It is proportionately the same; but one school may be for the accommodation of 100 pupils, while another may be required to accommodate 500 pupils. In that case it would not actually be the same.

Mr. BROWNE: Yes it would.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It would be the same proportionate assistance, but it would be a different amount. I was under the impression that the chief thing that was required by the House was what the Minister himself proposed, and which was provided for in the Estimates. That is to say, that in granting four-fifths and leaving the maximum the same as it was, the Minister was not only carrying out what the Government proposed, but also what the House approved of. That was the impression I was under at the time. Now assuming—and I am willing to agree with the hon. member who has addressed the House in a good deal of what he says—that there are cases in which £100 is insufficient, I do not think it is advisable to alter the regulation. The regulation is a stimulant to economy. The size of these provisional schools is 21 feet by 14 feet, and, generally speaking, throughout the colony, £100 will erect a school of that size, and it is distinctly opposed to the desire of the Education Department, and apparently of the House, that what are called "overgrown" provisional schools should exist. I have listened to the hon. member, who brought an indictment against the department that certain schools existed with a large number of scholars, and it was pointed out that that was not the fault of the department, but it is enough to show that in the opinion of the House it is not desirable that large provisional schools should exist. Therefore, it is desirable generally not to encourage the people to continue under the provisional school arrangement a very large school. The limit of £100 helps in that respect, and I say that with the exception of a few places very far to the North, such as have been mentioned by the hon. members for Croydon and Burke, I believe that limitation is on the whole desirable.

Mr. BROWNE: The limitation is penalising those few.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is quite possible to meet the hon. member's wishes in another way—not perhaps by carrying this resolution—but it is possible that attention can be given to his complaint. This resolution is not only a direction to the Government to amend the regulation, but it condemns them in a terrible way because they are supposed not to have carried out a previous resolution of the House. I have pointed out that the hon. member's resolution was something which I took to affirm what the Government had previously agreed to, but I did not interpret it literally. I asked myself what was the spirit of the resolution. It was not that the expenditure on provisional schools should be unlimited, but that they should be given the same assistance as was given to State schools. That was carried out as soon as it was possible to frame a regulation to meet the case; and the Government supposed that they were not only carrying out what they wished to effect by the vote placed on last year's Estimates, but were acting in conformity with the spirit of the hon. member's resolution. If you say that the same pecuniary assistance should be given to provisional as to State schools, I am sure it would not be approved of by the House that they should be put on all fours with State schools. One of the conditions before the erection

of a State school is proceeded with is that there should be a residence. That is necessary, because in State schools the master is a married man, and provision has to be made for the accommodation of his wife and family. Will you say, therefore, that in all provisional schools, in which there may be only twelve children, there should be a married teacher with a salary adequate for the support of himself and family, and a residence? All that would cost three times as much as the school itself, because a provisional school 14 feet by 21 feet can accommodate forty children, and costs £100 and under. I know what the hon. member intended, and I do not believe that he actually wished me to interpret his resolution literally. I take it, however, that we are endeavouring to carry out the hon. member's wishes by giving to provisional schools four-fifths instead of half their cost. For the benefit of the hon. member, I will just mention a few provisional schools which have been erected recently, and for which the sum of £100 has proved insufficient. At Urandangie, which is 200 miles west from Cloncurry, and is the furthest extent of the "Never Never" country, the provisional school cost £171. At Cuttaburra, four miles from Cunnamulla, the cost of the provisional school was £117. At Dareel, which is fifteen miles from Muungindi, on the New South Wales border, the cost was £102 4s. 3d.; and another provisional school at Nankin Junction cost £101 10s., but in that case the committee erected a larger building than is specified in the department's specification.

Mr. McDONALD: What did Mackenzie's school cost?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That has not come up this year. I am willing to admit that there is something in the contention of the hon. member for Croydon, though I do not agree with the resolution altogether. It is advisable to have a limit, not to lay down that the expenditure should be unlimited, and the present regulation has a useful influence in the direction of economy.

Mr. BROWNE: Why not apply it to State schools?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Because the attendance is not limited.

Mr. BROWNE: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not in practice. You will see that there is no limit to the number of scholars attending a State school. The attendance at the Brisbane State school is 1,600, and the attendance might be 5,000. The reason a limit is put upon a provisional school is not with the view of restricting education, but with a view to have that provisional school superseded by a State school as soon as the attendance attains a certain amount. I wish to say that, in the first instance, I endeavoured to carry out the wishes of the House, expressed after the publication of the Government proposals, and endeavoured to effect what I considered a useful reform by increasing the proportion contributed by the State up to a limit which existed before, and was continued. And I point out that in several cases where provisional schools have applied to the Education Department for additional assistance—assistance having been given them under the old law by which they were only permitted to have £50—when they have applied since they have been permitted to draw the additional £30; and that applies to all the schools in the colony, because I thought it reasonable and fair to put schools that had already come into existence, for which the department had only contributed £50, in the same position as others. The case of the hon. member may be met, I think, by an addition to the regulation, and I do not think it requires very considerable alteration. I think, in cases where there are particular disabilities—in such a place as

Urangangie, where timber is very dear, for instance—the Minister should have discretionary power. I think that would meet the case.

Mr. JACKSON: The Minister would get any amount of worrying.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think the regulation should stand, for the reason that it meets the vast majority of cases, and has on the whole a beneficial effect; and in such cases as those quoted by the hon. member in support of his motion the Minister might be allowed to use his discretion. I do not know whether that would meet the wishes of the hon. members; at any rate, it strikes me that it would be reasonable, and that it would be better on the whole to treat such cases as those he has mentioned as exceptions, because they are exceptions. The £100 is ample for a provisional school in nineteen cases out of twenty, because it is not desirable that we should encourage people to carry on provisional schools when it would be more to the advantage of the children that State schools should be erected in their places. I think the regulation has been administered with fair liberality; and while I think, on the whole, that the limitation to £100 is advisable, still I would recommend the Minister for Instruction to take unto himself—while preserving the regulation generally—power to make concessions in such cases as those quoted by the hon. member for Croydon and the hon. member for Burke.

Mr. DAWSON: I intend to support the motion. At the outset, I must express my disappointment at the Minister who replied on behalf of the Education Department not having told us during his somewhat lengthy and tortuous speech whether he intends to support the motion or not. I think if there is one thing hon. members should demand from responsible Ministers of the Crown—though the hon. gentleman is not now Minister for Education, he is representing the Minister for Education on this occasion—it is that they should inform the House whether or not they intend to support a resolution brought forward by a private member. From what the hon. gentleman has said, we are not sure whether the motion will be allowed to go on the voices, whether it is a matter of indifference to Ministers, whether they will support it or vote against it if a division is called. I think we are entitled to know from the representative of the Government what is intended. I do not think it was suggested during the speech of the hon. member for Croydon that the last Secretary for Public Instruction had taken an ungenerous view of the resolution passed by the House, or that he had deliberately—because he was not fond of the Education Act, and did not care about seeing the children of the country educated—refused to carry out the terms of that motion, affirmed by the whole House, in the spirit in which the motion was moved. But what was alleged was that the hon. gentleman had misunderstood the tenor of that motion, and the action he had taken on that motion was not such as the majority of hon. members who supported the motion intended. Whatever the hon. gentleman may have endeavoured to do, the hon. member for Croydon does not object to the hon. gentleman endeavouring to do things, but that he has not succeeded in that endeavour. To my mind the hon. gentleman has entirely misunderstood the position. The complaint was that those who have to provide for provisional schools were placed at an unfair disadvantage in comparison with those who had to find the funds for a State school. It was urged that it was not a fair thing to ask that people in the scattered, outlying, and poorer districts should have to provide half the cost of a provisional school for the education of their children while people in the more settled,

populous, and certainly the more wealthy districts should only have to provide one-fifth. That was the point that was urged when the resolution moved by the hon. member for Croydon was carried in this House in 1898.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is so, and that has been given effect to.

Mr. DAWSON: The contention was that provisional schools, so far as the distribution of State funds is concerned, should be placed on exactly the same footing as State schools. The hon. gentleman's interpretation of that has been that instead of calling upon those who have a desire to have a provisional school to contribute one-half, they should only be called upon to contribute one-fifth, and the department would contribute the other four-fifths, but the hon. gentleman did not consider that the maximum amount to be paid should be increased in any way. I say that is distinctly a misinterpretation of the wish of this House as expressed in 1898. This is really a proposal to reduce the cost of provisional schools. In the outlying districts, where material is very dear, it is impossible to build anything like a decent school under £150 or £200, and under this regulation the maximum is fixed at £80. It was previously fixed at £50, and the hon. gentleman in fixing it at £80 considers he is truly carrying out the wishes of the House as expressed in 1898. He increases the maximum to £80, and only calls upon the people of the district to contribute one-fifth of the £80.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, we contribute the £80.

Mr. BROWNE: That fixes the maximum cost of the school at £100.

Mr. DAWSON: It does not put them any further ahead, because the obligation is going to be put after all upon the residents. Why is there such a maximum? In any outlying place, say away out at Camooweal, where it is very difficult to get material—where a sheet of iron costs about ten times as much as in Mackay—why place such a maximum on a place like that?

The PREMIER: Do you want to do away with all limit? Is that your desire?

Mr. DAWSON: Certainly. What I desire is that the hon. gentleman in charge of the Education Department shall pay some obedience to the expressed wish of the members of this Chamber.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You must make ample provision on the Estimates.

Mr. DAWSON: The expressed wish of hon. members upon this motion carried on the voices and emphatically agreed to by the hon. gentleman and his colleagues, was that provisional schools should be placed on exactly the same footing as State schools, and I have yet to learn that we have any maximum fixed for State schools.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you go by the letter of the law, there are not ten provisional schools in the whole colony.

Mr. DAWSON: It is a very strange thing that there should not now be ten provisional schools in the whole colony when last year there were 399 of them, and four special schools.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not so. There are vested schools and temporary schools.

Mr. DAWSON: Does the hon. gentleman believe in his own Under Secretary's report?

Mr. LEAHY: It looks as if he did not.

Mr. DAWSON: It does look as if he did not. There were last year 399 provisional schools and four special schools, and now the hon. gentleman sits there and interjects that there are not ten provisional schools in the colony. What then is the value of a public document?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Because you insist upon one meaning only.

Mr. DAWSON: There can be only one meaning of "a provisional school." Has the hon. gentleman got half-a-dozen meanings for it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There are two. Under the Act these are not provisional schools, which are temporary and non-vested, and these schools are vested and not temporary.

Mr. DAWSON: Will the hon. gentleman bring in a Bill to define what is a provisional school?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, I certainly will not. I will leave that to the hon. member.

Mr. DAWSON: This is what we claim: That provisional schools as understood by the inspectors of the department, and as referred to by the Under Secretary in his report, shall be placed on exactly the same footing as State schools with regard to the distribution of public funds. That is the motion which the hon. member for Croydon carried, and it is because that has not been done that the hon. member is moving his motion this afternoon.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No alteration could take place until the Estimates were passed at any rate, and it could not be done under the last Estimates, because they did not provide for the necessary additional expenditure.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. DAWSON: I thank the hon. gentleman for his interjection. He says the Estimates were framed at the time this resolution was carried last year, and that it was then too late to provide the extra money which would be required to give effect to it. Does he forget that there is such a thing as the Supplementary Estimates, and that he could have asked the House to vote the money on the Supplementary Estimates?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Supplementary Estimates are for money that has been spent.

Mr. DAWSON: Is there anything to prevent the hon. gentleman making the necessary provision this time? I hope the Estimates for the ensuing year are not already framed, because we have several other things we wish to bring forward. There is ample opportunity now for the Government, if they desire to carry out the resolution, to put the extra money on the Estimates which will by-and-by be submitted to the House. The hon. gentleman endeavoured to establish the point that £100 would be about the average cost of provisional schools in the colony.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That was the cost at Cunnamulla, at any rate.

Mr. DAWSON: I did not say anything about the school at Cunnamulla.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: But if it would do for a school at Cunnamulla it would probably do for most provisional schools in the colony.

Mr. DAWSON: Cunnamulla has railway communication with Brisbane, but there are lots of places in Queensland which are many miles away from railway communication, and certainly hundreds and hundreds of miles from the great distributing centre of Brisbane. Cunnamulla is in a very fortunate position in an industrial and railway sense, though I do not say it is in a political sense, compared with a large number of places in the colony, and to strike an average cost in that way is hardly a fair thing. Possibly £60 might build a decent school at Cunnamulla, considering that it has railway communication with, and is in close proximity to, Brisbane, and that the member for the district, who is an ardent and enthusiastic supporter of the Government, may get special preferential rates for the timber and iron required for the building.

Mr. STORY: He did not get preferential rates.

Mr. DAWSON: I say he might get special railway rates to Cunnamulla, and that it might be possible to build a provisional school there for £60; but in a place like Georgetown, or Esmeralda, in the constituency of the hon. member for Croydon, a building that would cost £60 at Cunnamulla could not possibly be built for anything like £60, or twice £60. Therefore, to take that case and use it as showing the average cost of a provisional school is not a fair argument. If, because £100 is sufficient for a provisional school at Cunnamulla, you take that as an average, and say that it should be sufficient in the Burke and other places, you will penalise those places where that amount is not sufficient. That is the evil of fixing this maximum subsidy with regard to provisional schools. It is most absurd for the Department of Public Instruction to take up the attitude that they will make it harder for those who have nothing to give than for those who have something to give to get a school—that those who have something may get a State school and not be called upon to give much, while those who have very little and want a provisional school, shall be called upon to pay more. If there is going to be any difference at all between State and provisional schools, in all fairness, taking the whole of the circumstances into consideration, it should be in favour of those who want to establish provisional schools, because the people in those cases are less able to raise funds. Generally they are a class of people to whom we owe a great deal; they do not hang about town and borrow 3d. from a Labour man when he has got his monthly salary to get their daily bread. I know a school in the Northern portion of Queensland that cost only 4s. 6d., and that was for nails. The place I refer to is in the electorate of the hon. member for Kennedy, and is called Cape River. The diggers when they want a school are very different from the ordinary run of men who go to work in a coat, a collar, and a tie. They are in the habit of stripping off their coats, and putting an axe on their shoulder.

Mr. STORY: And going out mining?

Mr. DAWSON: No; going out into the bush and working, and not like the men the hon. member for Balonne represents.

Mr. STORY: I have lived among miners longer than you, and know them quite as well as you.

Mr. DAWSON: Probably that is the reason why the hon. member left them so suddenly.

Mr. STORY: I did not leave them suddenly. I have as good a reputation as you have.

Mr. DAWSON: Well, the miners I refer to set to work and built the school themselves. The Secretary for Lands, following the line of argument he adopted just now, might take that case, and say that because a provisional school at Cape River cost only 4s. 6d., the department ought to contribute only four-fifths of 4s. 6d. There is another very grave objection, which has been referred to by the Secretary for Public Lands—the building of all schools according to departmental plans and specifications. That is one of the greatest grievances they have in the outlying districts, and it is also a great grievance with regard to State schools, although not to such an extent as in the case of provisional schools.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the State pays four-fifths, it is certainly entitled to some say.

Mr. DAWSON: Four-fifths on what?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The general amount.

Mr. DAWSON: That is exactly it. The people in a district—who have some idea of their requirements—apply to the department for the

four-fifths. The Government architect—who does not know anything at all about the conditions, about the district, or about the requirements of the people, and does not care to inquire—supplies plans and specifications of his own—to cost about five times as much as the people in the locality require.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is only as a guide. They are allowed to substitute their own plans and specifications. They can put up a slab place with a bark roof if they like.

Mr. DAWSON: I would remind the hon. gentleman that while he was occupying the arm-chair in the Education Department I brought under his notice some cases. I remember one case in particular—where the school at Millchester was condemned by the architect, and it had to be pulled down because there was danger to children who were in the school. An addition had to be put up. The committee met. They got a local architect to prepare plans and specifications of a building to meet all requirements. The whole thing was to cost £500. They then applied to the Education Department, and the reply they received was that the department forwarded plans and specifications amounting to £1,700. The people in the district could easily raise one-fifth of £500, and £500 would have given them a building suitable for their requirements, but, in order to get the Government subsidy, they were asked to accept plans of a building to cost £1,700.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They could not possibly build a school at Charters Towers, a teacher's residence, and fencing for £500. There was no teacher's residence.

Mr. DAWSON: I was living two years in that district.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There were 400 children.

Mr. DAWSON: There were more than 400 children.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was absurd to suppose that they could do without a teacher's residence, and that would cost over £500.

Mr. DAWSON: I would like to get the hon. gentleman to really understand this matter. The old school, built in the early days of the field, was added to. The old portion was condemned and pulled down. There was a teacher's residence there. That was not condemned, and was not pulled down. Consequently it did not need rebuilding. It was an addition in place of the old school that had to be put up, and £500 was the price, and the department charged £1,700 for it. That is not the only case. There are complaints from all over the colony in regard to State schools, and more particularly in regard to provisional schools. The requirements of the local residents are not taken into consideration by the department, and where they might be able to raise their quota of the money on something like a decent estimate, they are compelled to go in for a lot of elaborations that are not actually required either for the comfort or the accommodation of the scholars, and the residents are not able to fulfil the conditions laid down by the department. I would like to know from the hon. member who so worthily represents Cunnamulla, whether he knows of any school in his district that has had within late years to apply to the department that has not had the experience that the plans and specifications submitted by the department are far and away beyond the requirements of the local residents?

Mr. STORY: I can answer the hon. member. The last school I am interested in—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Order!

Mr. STORY: I beg pardon, Mr. Speaker. I thought the hon. member asked me a direct question. The hon. member has insulted me three or four times, and when he asked me a question he would not sit down while I answered him.

Mr. McDONALD: He could not; he would lose his right to continue.

Mr. DAWSON: If the hon. member had risen to explain—

Mr. STORY: Why did not the hon. member sit down when he asked me a question?

Mr. DAWSON: As long as I have been in this House, if any hon. member has risen to make an explanation, I have always had courtesy enough to give way to him. But the hon. member did not rise to make an explanation, and he ought to recognise that if I had resumed my seat I would have forfeited my right to continue my speech, and to that I point-blank object.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Millchester school did not cost £600 altogether.

Mr. DAWSON: I know that, because the residents refused to accept the department's plans and specifications. The negotiations were going on for about twelve months, and I had a very warm and busy time of it trying to get the department to listen to reason. This is one of the things which take up the time of a member of Parliament. I notice that the last time the hon. gentleman addressed himself to this question, in response to an invitation by the hon. member for Croydon, he said that the State had made it a rule that there must be a certain minimum of scholars. I am very pleased to know that at that time the hon. gentleman did believe in the principle of a minimum.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: An average attendance of thirty for three months.

Mr. DAWSON: Several complaints have been made to the department from the Northern part of Queensland where the average attendance has been considerably over thirty for three months, in some cases under thirty for six months. But for three months during the rainy season of the year it is impossible for the children to attend school, and those three months are included in estimating the average attendance as a reason why a provisional school shall not be converted into a State school, so depriving the people in the district of the advantages that accrue from such a conversion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are always anxious to get them converted into State schools.

Mr. DAWSON: That is entirely at variance with my experience of the department. Since the adjournment for tea, and after due reflection, I have come to the conclusion that, having regard to the lateness of the hour, the tired feeling of hon. members, and the exhaustion of the *Hansard* staff, it is not desirable to pursue the subject any further. I do not wish to take up any further time, as I find that the Government supporters are in such a state of collapse that they cannot attend to their parliamentary duties. Before sitting down I would like to emphasise two points. I have given an illustration of a provisional school having been built by the people of the district. People in the far North and West who desired their children to receive the benefits of education have gone out, cut and dressed the timber, obtained the necessary bark for roofing, and erected a school which, for all practical purposes, was admirably suited to the climate, the cost of the whole structure being a trifle. According to the regulations, those people would only get four-fifths of the actual cost of the school, and

in the case I have in mind they would receive four-fifths of 4s. 6d. If people are so anxious to have their children educated that they will themselves cut the timber and erect the school, I think they should receive much more consideration than they have been receiving in the past. Up to within two years ago, I am in a position to say that people who do what I have mentioned get no assistance because the building is not according to specification, and they have even had to find their own teacher and keep him. That happened in the case of a school situated at Southern Cross, on the boundary of the Charters Towers and Kennedy districts. I think the enterprise and energy shown by settlers in that way should receive some recognition at the hands of the department. The other strong objection I have taken is to a maximum being fixed for provisional schools. The motion of the hon. member for Croydon objects to a maximum being fixed for provisional schools when it is not fixed for State schools, and he holds that if a maximum is good in one case it ought to be in another. For my part I support him, and strongly urge that the maximum should be removed altogether.

The PREMIER: I do not regret that this matter has been brought forward for discussion. I have the fullest sympathy with those who desire to give their children the benefits of education, and I regret if the remarks of my hon. colleague, the Secretary for Lands, who only recently held the portfolio of Public Instruction, should not have been deemed to be as satisfactory as I am sure he intended them to be. He was perfectly correct in saying that at the present time there are very few provisional schools in the colony established under the conditions of the Education Act. Originally the conditions were that provisional schools were to be built to make temporary provision for the free primary instruction of children in a building not vested in the department. The conditions have, however, changed very much, and provisional schools are now to all intents and purposes State schools, although they do not provide all the advantages that State schools provide. Nor do I think it desirable that all the conditions of a State school should apply to a provisional school. I do not think the hon. member contemplated in his original motion that the same pecuniary assistance should be given to provisional schools.

Mr. BROWNE: Yes, for buildings.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman will understand that to give the full pecuniary assistance would imply the erection of a teacher's residence, and the full equipment of the school on the same basis as a State school; but I understand that his chief contention is that the maximum should be removed, so that in future provisional schools shall receive the same pecuniary assistance for building purposes as State schools receive—that is, four-fifths irrespective of any maximum.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I go with him to that extent, because I consider it very injudicious that a hard-and-fast line should be drawn in giving assistance to schools in different parts of the colony. A building that would cost £200 in the Gulf country might cost only £100 in the Logan district or Bulimba; therefore, to draw a hard-and-fast line is, to my mind, unwise, and does not meet the legitimate requirements of the colony in connection with the erection of provisional schools. I think this must be left to the discretion of the Minister, and I am sure that my colleague in charge of the Department of Public Instruction, the Hon. Mr. Wilson, will view with sympathy any application in connection with provisional schools. I am quite at one with the hon. member in desiring that districts which require pro-

visional schools should have that assistance to which, I think, they are justly entitled. If, after hon. members have expressed themselves, the hon. member chooses to withdraw his motion, I give a distinct promise that a regulation shall be framed under which the maximum shall be done away with. I think that will meet the present condition of matters.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GIVENS: There is one matter I do not think has been touched on in connection with this motion, and that is the question of residences in connection with provisional schools. The motion passed last year stated that provisional schools should be placed on exactly the same footing with regard to State assistance as State schools. State schools get the same subsidy for a teacher's residence as for the school building itself, and it seems to me that there are many cases in which it is desirable to have a married teacher in charge of a provisional school as well as of a State school. Sometimes married teachers have been in charge of provisional schools, but have been provided with no residence. I hold in my hand a letter dated the 13th June from the Department of Public Instruction, in reply to an application I made for some assistance in building a teacher's residence in connection with the provisional school at Freshwater. We did not ask for four-fifths, and if they had got half, or one-third, I believe they would have been prepared to build the residence, but the letter is tantamount to a refusal to give any assistance at all towards building a residence for a provisional school teacher.

With reference to the letter dated the 17th April last addressed to you by the secretary to the committee for the Freshwater provisional school, I have the honour, by direction of the Secretary for Public Instruction, to inform you that the practice of the department is opposed to the erection of teachers' residences in connection with provisional schools, it being considered that the circumstances of a provisional school are wholly unsuited to the providing of a residence, and the regulations do not provide for a subsidy towards the cost of erecting a residence.

That is the reply I received, and that plainly shows that the Department of Public Instruction are not in sympathy with the terms of the resolution carried last year on the motion of the hon. member for Croydon, because that motion distinctly stated that provisional schools should be placed in the same position as State schools with regard to subsidy. When the late Secretary for Public Instruction—the present Secretary for Lands—was speaking he said it was not desirable to erect teachers' residences in connection with provisional schools, because that might be supposed to indicate that they ought to give a salary to a provisional school teacher which would enable him to get married and keep a family. I fail to see why a provisional school teacher should not get married and keep a family if he felt so inclined; I do not see why any difficulties should be placed in his way. There are some provisional schools with nearly 200 children.

The PREMIER: State schools, surely!

Mr. GIVENS: I can point to a place where the department set their face against converting a provisional school into a State school though there are nearly 200 children, and that is the provisional school at Mareeba. The reason given is that if the railway should go beyond Mareeba, that township would be practically wiped out, and then there would be no need for a State school; yet for the last five or six years there have been nearly 200 children there and two or three teachers. The accommodation is very poor; there is no teacher's residence; and will anybody contend that is not a place where it is desirable that there should be a married teacher, as well as at a State school

with fifty or sixty children? Further than that, if any schools are deserving of special consideration it is the provisional schools in the outside districts. Those schools are established chiefly by pioneers, who go out into the wilderness and take the lead in productive settlement. They established those schools to give their children an education, and they have to find the whole cost of the school, whereas the comparatively wealthy people living in the towns get four-fifths of the cost of the school and of the teacher's residence. If there is any department of the State entitled to sympathetic and generous administration it is the Education Department, and if there is any particular portion of that department that deserves generous and sympathetic treatment it is the provisional schools, which provide an education for children where the population is scattered, and the people have enough difficulties to contend against without having to provide the whole cost of their schools, as they are practically compelled to do under the present regulations. I remember being secretary to a committee who were trying to get a provisional school at St. John's Creek, Eidsvold, though I was a single man. We had great difficulty in getting any assistance for that school, and great difficulty in getting a teacher appointed. After a time we put up a bark place and the department were going to compel us to put up an iron place, but ultimately the place went down, and though we had collected £90 there was no necessity to build a school there at all. I mention that to illustrate the difficulty experienced by the pioneers in the back country in getting their children any sort of education and the unsympathetic treatment they receive from the department. The Minister for Lands said he understood that the motion moved last year was to be taken in accordance with the provisions on the Estimates, but he put on it a different interpretation from that which it properly bears. I contend that it is the duty of the Minister administering any department to carry out the wishes of the House when they are properly and plainly expressed. I give the present Secretary for Lands credit for having a little more knowledge than to suppose that such a plainly-worded motion could be abrogated in the way he chose to abrogate it, and to say the way he chose to interpret it was in accordance with the spirit of the motion. That motion placed provisional schools in exactly the same position as State schools. There is absolutely no limit to the amount that may be subsidised for State schools, provided the public subscribe one-fifth. That is exactly what the motion means, and I contend, therefore, that the hon. gentleman should have given that liberal interpretation to it—namely, that one-fifth the total amount only should be subscribed by the people who want a school in any particular locality. Before sitting down I should like to emphasise the fact that there are some scattered settled districts—districts in which, though fairly settled, the population is scattered—where not more than twenty or twenty-five children go to school, which is placed in as central a position as possible, the teachers of which have to walk miles out and home because there is no teacher's residence provided. There are several places in my own electorate where that is the case. There is one place, between Mareeba and Atherton, where the teacher has to walk four or five miles because there is no residence attached to the provisional school. That is a place where it is eminently desirable that there should be a teacher's residence. I would further like to point out that where single gentlemen are sent as teachers of provisional schools, which are mixed schools, the female children have no chance of being taught needlework and other things of that kind. If the

teacher was a married man, his wife would be employed to teach that sort of work, and it would be an advantage to the school, to the department, and to the country generally. That is a good argument why married teachers should be appointed to provisional schools. The particular school for which I wanted to get a teacher's residence is seven miles from Cairns. It is a district which is never likely to have less settlement than now. In fact, it is likely to spread to a considerable extent; and it was not a graceful act on the part of the department, after the motion passed last year, not to accede to the wishes of the parents by giving a portion of the amount required to erect a teacher's residence. I contend that it is not for any Minister to over-ride a resolution of the House. They are the servants of the country and of the House, and it is their bounden duty to accept the wishes of the House, give them a liberal and generous interpretation, and carry them out in their entirety.

Mr. O'CONNELL: I am very glad to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Cairns. There is no doubt he is right in not looking to the Education Department for anything in the shape of sympathy with provisional schools. I have had a similar experience to his lately in applying to the department for some assistance towards building a residence for a provisional school where in the first instance the school had not even received the very small allowance which in the old days was given to them, that is, an amount of £50. I pointed out to the Minister that this school had been built absolutely without assistance, and I was met with the cast-iron regulation which the department sets up. They do not care whether you have a good case, or a bad case, or any case, if it does not come within the four corners of the regulations they will not deal with it. They will not build a teacher's residence for provisional schools, and yet they are more absolutely required than for State schools. State schools are often in or near towns where teachers can get decent accommodation. Out in the bush it is often the greatest difficulty in the world to get any accommodation at all. Young girls sent out into the bush by the department have to get what accommodation they can in the neighbourhood, and the settlers as a rule have hardly enough accommodation for their own families. Yet the department refuses to listen to reason of any description, because they say, having made those regulations, they will stick to them. In many cases it would be infinitely preferable to make provision for teachers' residences at provisional schools, and no one knows better than the Minister and the heads of the department the difficulties that are constantly cropping up about providing some accommodation for those teachers. But it is not only in this particular matter that difficulties are met with. If you ask for an additional teacher for a school you get a moral lesson read to you on the necessity of the head teacher training assistant teachers. The department knows as well as anybody that the hundreds qualified to take those positions would be only too glad to get them, yet the department starves the schools because they say they must bring them all through their own staff. The administration of the department is anything but satisfactory. I was glad to hear what the hon. member said about providing residences for provisional schools; it is necessary to enable them to be properly worked.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The point raised is the only point that has given me any reason for rising to say anything during this debate. The difficulty is one that is not generally known to hon. members who represent constituencies that are closely peopled, but it is one which we in the country come into contact with every day of our

lives. The difficulty with regard to residence for teachers of provisional schools is a very great one, and I cannot help noticing that my experience with regard to them has been very much the same as that of other hon. members. When we have approached the department on the subject, we are met with the cast-iron regulation which must not be broken. I hope the debate which has taken place to-night will have that weight with the department which individual efforts have been unable to obtain, and that the Act will be administered in the terms of the resolution of the House passed last year. It is very easy to blame the administration with regard to the illiberal interpretation of this resolution, but I wish to say distinctly that in my own district the late Minister, Mr. Dalrymple, interpreted it very liberally.

Mr. KERR: In yours, but not in others.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: My district is one which is somewhat near to the metropolis, and is a fairly populous one. Under the present proposal £80 is to be subsidised by the Government, and I must say that £80, whether raised by the Government or by private individuals, will almost build a provisional school in any portion of the electorate I represent, and one quite capable of fulfilling the functions for which a provisional school is supposed to be created. I recognise that in other portions of the colony it is impossible that £80 will go sufficiently far. That raises in my mind the question whether you can frame any regulation which will be of general application in regard to the Education Department or any other department of administration. I do not think you can. The kernel of the position was stated by the Minister when he said that there should be no regulation at all—that it should be removed entirely. The Premier has proposed to remove the maximum, and if that is done that is what you want.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Hon. members should bear in mind that we all represent here a certain amount of public opinion, and if we prefer a request by a certain number of people for a provisional school, say, in a mining centre, which may not exist for six months, the department may by pressure be forced into an expenditure which may not be warranted.

Mr. BROWNE: What sort of a Minister would he be?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: To some extent the Minister should be allowed discretion; but if there is no maximum he might by pressure be induced to spend more in the establishment of a school in a particular place than would be warranted.

Mr. McDONALD: The same thing would apply to State schools.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: No, because the provisional school is a tentative place; but a State school is an established school in a settled population where there is a probability of a certain number of children attending school for years to come.

Mr. McDONALD: The same thing applies in a mining district.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: No; because a mining district may rise to-day and fall to-morrow. I could give instances in my own electorate, where the attendance at a provisional school established ten years ago was greater when the school was established than it is to-day, and I have no doubt every hon. member could give an instance of the same sort. On the other hand, scores of provisional schools established only months ago have now a sufficient number of children

in attendance to warrant them being created State schools. With regard to the promise made by the Premier, I am certain that without any maximum it will require a very firm man at the head of the Education Department to prevent a large amount of money being spent in a direction in which our people do not desire that it should be spent.

Mr. GIVENS: Do you mean to say that the people of the colony do not wish to see money spent on education?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: No. I say there are no more liberal-minded people than Queenslanders in the matter of education. They would spend any amount of money upon education; but they do not wish to see money spent without some degree of benefit to the country, and where a maximum was established there was some degree of permanency secured. Without a maximum, the Minister, subservient as he is to public opinion, will be forced to spend any amount of money which public pressure for the time being forces him to spend. There are a certain number of provisional schools which the Ministers said should not remain provisional schools, and it is the policy of the department to discourage large provisional schools. We would all rather see them turned into State schools, because there would be a fixed staff and some degree of permanency in the education. But the result would be that the people who taxed themselves very heavily in the first instance to have the provisional school established will be asked to put their hands into their pockets again to raise it to the status of a State school. That is a very difficult position for them, and I would rather see the Minister vested with discretion to allow a certain amount of money to be expended on the school as a provisional school where he could see that it would mean a heavy responsibility upon the residents to raise the school to the status of a State school.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The leader of the Labour party twitted the Secretary for Lands with not having given any decided opinion on this point, but it is a very difficult thing for the Minister in charge of any department to say straight out that he will accept the terms of such a motion as this.

Mr. McDONALD: His chief did.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Yes, but his chief is Premier and administrator of the colony, and he can say anything he chooses; but the Secretary for Lands, as the administrator of a department, took up a fair and straightforward position. He admitted, as I do, that there is a great deal of good sound common sense in the contention of the hon. member for Croydon, but while the carrying out of the hon. member's proposal in his own electorate in its entirety might be necessary, it would not be necessary in an electorate such as I represent. Though I agree to some extent with the contention of the hon. member, I think it is hardly necessary that the Minister should, as the leader of the Labour party required him to do, give a straight "Yea" or "Nay" to the question.

Mr. McDONALD: Are you the apologist for the Ministry?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I never apologise for anyone, but I take the question as it presents itself to me. This is a somewhat double-barrelled resolution, but I should be glad to support the hon. member for Croydon in the terms in which he introduced it as applied to the hon. member's own electorate, and to support any action the Minister might take in trying to overcome the difficulties the hon. member laid before the Chamber this afternoon.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member appears to think there is some difficulty in the Minister removing the maximum, but I think it is the most fair way to remove the maximum, because if it does not cost as much to build a provisional school in the hon. member's electorate as in some other electorate, the persons there will only have to raise their share—one-fifth of the cost. The hon. member stated that in his electorate you could erect a provisional school for £80. I know that in the township of Jundah, which is something like 140 miles from Longreach, they have been trying to get a provisional school for some time. They were supplied with plans and specifications by the department, and they sent them to a firm in Longreach, who estimated that the cost of building a school with hardwood on those plans and specifications would be £305. How could a small community like that at Jundah raise the amount of money required for such a building? The estimate of the same firm for a school of the same description but of cypress pine was £264 14s. 6d. The department, under the regulation that was framed after the passing of the motion of the hon. member for Croydon, would only contribute £80 towards the cost of erecting the building, so that the people themselves would have had to raise about £135, which they could not do. On behalf of the people living at Jundah and Stonehenge, who desire to get a provisional school, I must say that I think the Premier has taken a wise and proper course in the offer he has made to the House, because, as has been pointed out by members on this side, there are many places, which, like Jundah and Stonehenge, have no timber for building purposes. I do not think they could get even the blocks for building at Jundah or Stonehenge; all the timber required there has to be taken from Longreach, a distance of 140 miles, and the cost of carriage of course increases the cost of building. Therefore I think the Premier is to be commended for the offer he has made, and on behalf of the people I represent I shall certainly accept it.

Mr. STORY: I think this matter resolves itself into a matter of local conditions, because, as the hon. member for Barcoo has said, there are some localities where the carriage and cost are much greater than in others, and no hard-and-fast rule can possibly be applicable to all cases. And as the hon. member for Lockyer said, there are places where a teacher's residence is absolutely necessary, and others where a teacher has a choice of residence. In one place in my electorate where we have a school the only choice of residence the teacher has is between a public-house and a boundary rider's hut. If neither is suitable, then we cannot have a teacher there, because the first question asked by the department is what arrangements we can make for lodging the teacher. If a residence were provided in a case of that kind, then the teacher would be independent of either the public-house or the boundary rider's hut. I support and echo what the hon. member for Barcoo has said, that there should be no hard-and-fast rule in this matter, and so far as my electorate is concerned, I accept with very much thankfulness the offer made by the Premier. The leader of the Labour party asked me a question, to which I had not the opportunity of replying—namely, whether I had ever known a specification issued by the department to be departed from by the school committee with the sanction of the department. I have known one case where we had a specification for a school in my electorate—

Mr. MAXWELL: Where was that? At Bonna Vonna?

Mr. STORY: I have not the honour of the acquaintance of the hon. member who interjects,

so that I cannot refer to him. If the hon. member knew anything at all about the district he would not make such interjections. Bonna Vonna is a cattle station; possibly the hon. member could not find it on the map. But it is a sort of cry the hon. member has, and also the Labour party generally. I may be able to give them some more information at a later stage. I may say now, however, that as far as Bonna Vonna is concerned exactly the same thing that anyone might expect from the Labour party in the West you will find duplicated in the Labour party in this House. They make assertions, or interjections, or insinuations without knowing anything at all about what they are speaking. If the Labour party have anything to say—I am speaking now to the leader of the Labour party—

Mr. KIDSTON: I rise to a point of order. Is it in order to make an attack on an hon. member in the discussion of this motion?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is, I am afraid, departing somewhat from the question before the House.

Mr. STORY: I quite admit that I am departing somewhat from the business on which I was speaking, but hon. members on the other side departed so far from common sense as to interject about things they knew nothing about that I think I am justified, with your permission, in replying to them. If the information of the hon. member who interjected is as limited about other things as it is about Bonna Vonna, the less he says about them the better, and I may repeat that for the benefit of the leader of the Labour party. I was saying that I knew of a case in my electorate where the school committee were allowed by the department to depart from the specification. We had a specification for a building, which, as nearly as I can recollect, gave the size as 2½ feet or 20 feet by 18 feet, and I was told by the Under Secretary that we might alter those measurements in any way we liked so long as we kept the same proportions in length and breadth. That is what I was going to tell the leader of the Labour party when he was afraid that I was going to interrupt him in carrying on his insults towards me. The hon. member is new to his business, but there is a certain amount of courtesy that belongs to that position, which I hope will be more apparent as he gets more accustomed to his position.

Mr. McDONALD: It is not my intention to detain the House long.

Mr. STORY: You won't improve it much, I know.

Mr. McDONALD: I was very pleased to hear the Secretary for Lands say that it was not the desire of the Department of Public Instruction to allow provisional schools to remain such any longer than was absolutely necessary. I know that school committees have experienced a great deal of difficulty in getting provisional schools converted in State schools.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not where there is a prospect of permanency.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes; in almost every case there is a good deal of redtape to be gone through, and a great deal of difficulty to get that brought about. However, I am pleased that the hon. gentleman has made that statement, and that the Premier has practically said that the object of this motion will be carried out. I can assure hon. members on the other side if they go out into the far outlying districts they will find that it is an impossibility to carry out the plans of the department without very great expense to the people in the district. I

know a case in which a school was to cost £220, the people having to find £170 and the department £50. Now, under the regulations as they are at present, the department would have had to find £80. It is only fair that provisional schools should be placed on the same footing as State schools. There are many places in the colony which have risen into great prominence of late years. For instance, there is Bonna Vonna, where there are now a large number of residents, to judge from the number of votes recorded there at the late election. I understand they will probably want a State school.

Mr. STORY: This gentleman ought to know—he was organising a strike at Cunnamulla.

Mr. McDONALD: I understand that the hon. member has made an application for a State school there, and as he has had a great deal of difficulty, in order to prove his case he referred the Minister to the large number of votes that were recorded at Bonna Vonna.

Mr. STORY: I did not talk about a school at Bonna Vonna. You don't know what you are talking about. There is no school within 100 miles of there.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. McDONALD: That, I understand, is the very reason why the hon. member wants a school there—because there is not one within 100 miles. I sympathise with the hon. member, because I know the difficulties in other parts of the colony, and I think that Bonna Vonna has as much right to a State school as any other part of the colony; and I am sure, now that the hon. member has impressed upon the department the necessity for this school, that he will get it at the earliest possible opportunity.

Mr. LEAHY: As the representative of a Western district—a very large and sparsely-populated district—I rise to express the pleasure I feel at the speech of the Premier. We are all indebted to the hon. member for Croydon for introducing this motion. Seeing that this House passed a resolution, and that resolution has not been given effect to, this House wants to know the reason why?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LEAHY: Notwithstanding the pleasure I felt in listening to the Premier's statement, I have very grave doubts as to whether this is going to come to anything. I have read in the papers all over the country, and I have heard statements in this House with regard to the Education Department which are a revelation. It seems quite clear, with all due respect to the hon. gentleman, that the Education Department bosses any Minister that comes over it.

Mr. McDONNELL: Of course it does.

Mr. LEAHY: When the Premier is considering this matter, I hope he will go pretty largely into this question. It seems to me that this department wants recasting very badly. As the hon. member for Musgrave has said, if a member of Parliament goes there about anything in his district—which he ought to know all about—it is a very good reason for the department refusing it. Speaking for myself, I seldom go there—not above once or twice in the year—but I can bear out the statement of the hon. member for Musgrave. We have a right to expect the Premier to see that this thing is looked into and altered. I know for a fact that for eight or nine years some of the officials in that department have bossed it exactly as they liked. I see the Attorney-General nod his head. I believe he is a strong man, and if he was over it for six months he would change things, or I would be very much surprised. If he did not change them, they would change him,

because there has been a change in every Minister who has had charge of the department, and of late years it has always been the Minister who has changed. I take this opportunity of saying to the Premier that I hope he will look into this thing and have it properly raked up. If the hon. gentleman does not do it, it is sufficient reason, from the expression of opinion here this evening, for hon. members to take it upon themselves to look into it, and I will make one to do it. It wants looking into very badly. I shall say nothing more at the present time, but when the subject comes up again I shall have something more to say.

Mr. J. HAMILTON (*Cook*): It has been pointed out that residences should be supplied for provisional school teachers.

Mr. JENKINSON: In some cases, not as a general rule.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: I do not think it would be desirable to do that as the general practice.

Mr. KIDSTON: That is not contended, but in some cases it is desirable.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: I know of cases in which it would place an obstacle in the way of country schools getting teachers. It would quadruple the cost. People can get provisional schools provided there is an attendance of twelve children. In such cases the scholars are of mixed sexes, and I believe it is the rule of the department to appoint either a married man or a single woman as teacher. A married man with a family would require a house with several rooms, and as the pay is only £72 per annum the result would be to quadruple the cost of that teacher to the State, and it would thus place an obstacle in the way of such districts getting a school. On the other hand, if a single woman is appointed, it would be highly improper to put up a residence and ask her to live there alone. The general practice is far better—that she shall board with some respectable family in the district, because where there are children there is always some respectable place where a female teacher can obtain board.

Mr. JACKSON: After hearing the speech of the Premier, it might seem as if it were a waste of time to discuss the question any further; but, although the question is not of such an imposing character as the question which we were discussing last week, it comes home to the people's lives in a way that even the very important question of federation does not—at any rate as yet. Although we were all pleased at the Premier's remarks, I do not think a little time occupied in discussing this question will be at all lost, seeing how important the question of education—and particularly the question of provisional schools—is to members representing outside districts. I represent an outside district, although it is not so far out as the districts represented by some hon. members who have spoken; and it has been felt as a very great grievance that the Education Department did not carry out the resolution introduced last session by the hon. member for Croydon. Speaking in a general way, I cannot say that I have had very much fault to find with the department so far as not giving attention to the requirements of my district is concerned. If it is the department and not the Minister who is responsible, probably the reason why the department has set its face against carrying out the resolution of the hon. member for Croydon was not so much because of economy as because the department has a strong desire to see State schools rather than provisional schools, in order that they may find room for State school teachers. I do not think there is much in the argument of the hon. member for Lockyer that the money is likely to be wasted if four-fifths of the cost is

found for provisional schools. It is not at all likely that the parents will go in for expensive buildings. They will put up buildings to suit their requirements, but the extra assistance will save their pockets. Then, again, we have this one fact, which is worth a ton of precept or theory, and that is that there are very few closures of provisional schools. The Minister admitted that last year. With regard to teachers' residences, the experience in my district is that in many cases a sort of skillion is attached to the provisional school, and the teacher uses the school as residence as well as school.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Those rooms are generally used to change and not to live in.

Mr. JACKSON: Yes; they are used to live in—at all events in my district, where there are many provisional schools. The skillion is used as a residence, either by the male or female teacher. I am aware of cases like that quoted by the hon. member for Cairns, where the teacher has to travel some distance to find a residence. We know that in many country districts schools are set down in the most central position for all concerned, the result being that there may not be another house within a mile or three-quarters of a mile. In isolated spots like that female teachers would not care to live, and I do not suppose many male teachers would care to live alone either. In such cases it is not desirable that a residence should be attached to the school; there may be other cases in which it is desirable, but those cases are distinctly in a minority. The difficulty, of course, disappears so long as the department has no objection to adding a room or two to the school in cases where a residence is desirable. So long as the department subsidises the whole building, the difficulty is removed. I have nothing more to say upon the question, except that I was very glad to hear the speech of the Premier, and I am sure the removal of the maximum will be considered a great boon to people in the outside districts—I know it will be to many people in my district.

Mr. BROWNE, in reply: I shall not detain the House long in replying. With regard to any opposition there might be to the withdrawal of the maximum, I think the hon. member for Kennedy has dealt effectively with that point. If there is any risk of country people running into extravagance, there is a far greater danger of the townspeople doing so. My experience of collecting is that it is difficult enough to get the exact amount required, and people are not prepared to give an extra £20 simply because they are told the Government will subsidise the amount to the extent of another £100. I have some sympathy with the hon. member for Cairns in his reference to teachers' residences, although I would point out that according to the strict wording of my motion of last year I did not consider it would cover teachers' residences. Under the Act the residents are compelled to contribute one-fifth of the cost of the teacher's residence, but there is no such provision with regard to provisional schools. I shall be glad to see the maximum abolished, and the Minister allowed discretionary power, because under such a provision a strong Minister—seeing that it was not desirable to go to the expense of a State school, but that it was desirable to have a residence attached to a provisional school—could grant the money under the terms of the regulation. I will not detain the House longer. After the assurance of the head of the Government that the regulation will be altered to do away with the maximum in regard to provisional schools, I will ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that this House, at its rising, adjourn until Thursday next.

Mr. DAWSON: May I ask the Premier if he will have printed the papers laid upon the table by the Secretary for Lands this afternoon in regard to the repurchase of Telemon.

Mr. JENKINSON: I would like to know why we cannot sit to-morrow.

The PREMIER: Because there is no business.

Mr. JENKINSON: I am very sorry to hear that. It is all very well for those residing in town, but it is different with those brought from the country to kick our heels about Brisbane because there is no business to do.

The PREMIER: Parliament was only called together for federation this session.

Mr. JENKINSON: Let us go home now.

The PREMIER: We must wait for the other House.

Mr. DAWSON: You should put something on the paper.

Mr. McDONALD: I understand that as the referendum is not to be taken before September next the Government are going to ask for Supply. Do they think they are going to get Supply through in one day—Thursday—or are they going to extend the session for another week or a fortnight? I suppose it is too late now, but the Government should have made the necessary arrangements for asking for Supply to-morrow, because it is just as well for us to get at it. I believe it is going to be fairly lively when it does come. I object to this adjournment, and I think the Government should be able to manage their business better.

Mr. KIDSTON: I do not think it fair for hon. members like the hon. member for Flinders to get up and make long speeches at this late hour of the night. I think he should consider the exhausted condition of the *Hansard* staff and be merciful.

Mr. DUNSFORD: I have been almost a silent member this session in order that business might be carried through, but it appears to me extraordinary that on one occasion we should sit here till 3 o'clock in the morning, and on another we should get away at 8 o'clock at night, and then have to adjourn over a day. I think it is very unwise to so conduct the business that we should have to keep these very long hours. I and other hon. members were prevented from speaking on a very important question because the hours were too late to be anything like fully reported. However that is gone; but as there is other business of very great importance to be brought forward, the Government should have taken the first steps towards bringing that business along. It could have been introduced to-day, and gone on with to-morrow. The Premier knows that on Supply you can discuss almost any subject under the sun; all the grievances that might have been introduced on the Address in Reply may be introduced on Supply, and the Premier, knowing that, should have been prepared to go on with business to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

REPURCHASE OF TELEMON.

The PREMIER: I move that the papers previously laid on the table in connection with the proposed repurchase by the Government of Telemon, Logan River, be printed.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at fifteen minutes past 8 o'clock.