

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**FRIDAY, 20 OCTOBER 1899**

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FRIDAY, 20 OCTOBER, 1899.

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

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL.

PRODUCTION OF PAPERS.

The SPEAKER informed the House that, acting under the provisions of Standing Order 330, during the late recess he had authorised the production, in answer to a subpoena from the police court at Toowoomba, of the ballot-papers and other documents in connection with the late election for the electoral district of Cambooya.

PAPERS.

PERMITS FOR TOTALISATORS.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*): On the 11th October I informed the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Turley, in reply to a question, that there had been 406 permits granted to run totalisators during the years 1895-6-7-8-9. I have since ascertained that the information given me by

the officials was incorrect, and the number stated covered the whole period during which the Act has been in force. The correct number is 160; and I now beg to lay on the table a list of the names of the clubs to which these permits have been granted. I move that the paper be printed.

Question put and passed.

The following paper, laid on the table, was ordered to be printed:—The annual report of the Department of Public Works for 1898-99.

#### MOUNT MORGAN GAS AND LIGHTING COMPANY'S BILL.

Mr. CALLAN (*Fitzroy*): I move—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill to enable the Mount Morgan Gas and Lighting Company, Limited, incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Acts, 1863 to 1896, to light with gas the town of Mount Morgan and its suburbs, and for other purposes therein mentioned.

Question put and passed.

#### FIRST READING.

On the motion of Mr. CALLAN, the Bill was read a first time.

#### RESERVATION OF A TRAIN COMPARTMENT.

Mr. BELL (*Dalby*), in moving—

That there be laid upon the table of the House copies of all correspondence which has taken place in reference to the reservation of a compartment for Mr. T. Glassey, M.L.A., in the train which left Brisbane for Toowoomba on Monday, 28th August, 1899, at 7.30 a.m.—

said: When I placed upon the business-paper the motion which stands in my name, I did not intend to provoke a discussion upon it. My desire was to move that the papers and correspondence relating to the matter should be laid on the table of the House in order that the facts concerning the matter should be conveyed to hon. members in that way. I did not desire to take up the time of the House upon a point of this kind. The hon. member for Bundaberg, however, who is vitally concerned in this matter, has called "not formal."

Mr. GLASSEY: No, not I.

Mr. DAWSON: I called "not formal."

Mr. BELL: I beg pardon of the hon. member for Bundaberg; I was under the impression that the hon. member had done so. The leader of the Opposition has called "not formal" to the motion, and, consequently, this discussion is now necessary. It is my fate to do a good deal of train travelling, and to anybody who has to do a good deal of train travelling, the accommodation in the trains and the privileges which are enjoyed by passengers are matters of considerable concern. On the morning of the 28th August last I was waiting for the Western train at Roma street, and as the train came in I noticed that all the compartments were filled, except one compartment, the shutters of which were all up as if to exclude the vulgar gaze of the public. What was occurring within that compartment I was quite unaware. Who even was in it, was at that moment a matter which did not at all interest me. That compartment might have contained either a corpse or a criminal—as a matter of fact it contained, as I afterwards discovered at Ipswich, the hon. member for Bundaberg. However, beyond noticing that the compartment was barred in the way it was, differing in that respect from all the other compartments in the train, I was not at all interested in it. As I entered the train, having found a seat, not without some difficulty, I found myself sitting next to a gentleman who, in the last and preceding Parliament, was a dutiful follower in this Chamber of the hon. member for Bundaberg in the days when he led a parliamentary party. I remarked to that gentleman what a very

crowded train it was, and I merely mention that now in order to show that my conception of a crowded train has not been coloured by anything that subsequently occurred. When I got to Ipswich I found on the platform a lady whose name it is not necessary to mention, beyond saying that within the previous forty-eight hours she had buried a sister in Ipswich, a lady who had died at Roma, and she had come from Roma with a gentleman who happened to be her brother-in-law and my cousin. The lady, as well as the man, were in great distress, and the lady asked me if there was a reserved compartment for her. She had travelled down in a reserved compartment in connection with the mortuary carriage, and she was under the impression that a reserved compartment would be at her disposal on her return to Roma. In correspondence with the Commissioner for Railways, he informed me later on that had he known the circumstances he would certainly have given her a reserved compartment. I walked along the platform and said to her, "There is a compartment marked 'reserved' higher up in the train; quite possibly it is yours." We then walked along towards it. When I reached the door of that compartment I found the hon. member for Bundaberg in proud possession. I walked up to him and said, "Is this your reserved compartment?" and he informed me that it was. I then turned round to the lady, relying on the courtesy of the hon. member for Bundaberg, and said, "I find this is Mr. Glassey's carriage; would you like to ride in it to Toowoomba?" She said, "I would." I then, in perfect confidence, went up to the hon. member for Bundaberg, and asked him if he had any objection to allowing the lady to ride in his compartment as far as Toowoomba, and the hon. member for Bundaberg, in a manner not altogether elegant, turned round and said that he had some work to do and so had secured a compartment to himself. Of course, I did not say anything more. I felt indignant enough, and I wired my protest to the Railway Commissioner, and the lady accommodated herself as best she could in a crowded carriage—a lady who, as I say, was in very great grief. Later on, at another station, I met the hon. member for Bundaberg and informed him that I had sent that protest to the Railway Commissioner. For the rest of the journey I travelled up to Toowoomba in a crowded compartment like any sardine, whilst the hon. member for Bundaberg lounged in a compartment that ordinarily carries eight or twelve, and I suspect that on that occasion it was scarcely big enough for one. Well, I started a correspondence with the Railway Commissioner on this subject, and I asked by what authority the hon. member for Bundaberg, a private member of Parliament like myself, was allowed a reserved compartment. I wish to say at this juncture that under ordinary circumstances the hon. member for Bundaberg could go right over the colony in reserved compartments as far as I am concerned. I should never have raised the point had he not, in a way that to me seemed the very embodiment of discourtesy, refused to allow a lady to enter his reserved compartment.

Mr. GLASSEY: I will give you another side of the story directly.

Mr. BELL: Well, I am giving my story.

Mr. GLASSEY: It is not a true one either.

Mr. BELL: When I saw an exhibition of discourtesy such as that, I at once began to ask by what right the hon. member enjoyed this privilege? There are a good many privileges that men enjoy in this world that are not questioned on account of the discrimination with which they use them, but when men begin to take to themselves an arrogance over the

privileges which they enjoy, then they need not be surprised if someone questions their right to those privileges. I started, as I have said, a correspondence with the Railway Department on this subject, and I discovered that the hon. gentleman was in that compartment, not as the result of any order from headquarters, but as the result of certain representations which he made to the stationmaster at the Central Station, and made, I am quite prepared to admit, in good faith. I ascertained that the hon. gentleman, when the train was prepared to start from the Central Station, informed the stationmaster that he was about to deliver an important speech in the country—in Toowoomba, I believe—on the subject of federation; that several of his friends were about to join him at Ipswich, and that he would be very glad if he could get a reserved compartment. The stationmaster, as I understand, represented to him that it was scarcely within his province to give a reserved compartment in that way without an order from the head of the department. I do not know what persuasion the hon. gentleman used, but at all events when the train started the hon. gentleman was installed in a reserved compartment all by himself.

Mr. GLASSEY : Hear, hear ! Perfectly true.

Mr. BELL : And as far as I know, for the whole of the journey he rode in that compartment by himself. I am not speaking with any conviction on that point, but the hon. gentleman will no doubt give us the facts. I did not take the trouble to stroll up to his compartment again to look at him, but to the best of my belief he rode all the way in that compartment by himself to Toowoomba. The Railway Commissioner informs me that he is always desirous of consulting the convenience of members of Parliament who are travelling, and I believe he does so.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear !

Mr. BELL : But I say the Railway Commissioner will have to be very careful in future how he consults the convenience of members of Parliament. He will have to take care lest, in his desire to be obliging to members of Parliament, he is not really inconveniencing the general public, who have as much right to use the railways, and with as much convenience, as any member of the Parliament in this Chamber.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear !

Mr. BELL : As I have said, the hon. gentleman represented to a railway official that he desired to obtain a reserved compartment, because he was about to deliver an important speech, and that he had some work to do. Now, it so happened that I was bound on a similar mission. (Laughter.) I was proceeding, not to Toowoomba, but to a place which is of vastly more importance to me—the town of Dalby. I was also to deliver a speech—I cannot characterise it as an important speech—and, strangely enough, on the same subject upon which the hon. gentleman was about to speak—the subject of federation; and I confess, so differently do men look at things, that it never occurred to me for one moment to represent to the stationmaster, either at the Central Station or at Roma street, that I should like to have a reserved compartment, and I am perfectly certain that if I had emphasised in the most marked manner the importance of my speech I should not at either of those stations been given a reserved compartment. Now, it is still more remarkable that on the very same day another member of Parliament was travelling to the same town, Toowoomba, to speak at the same meeting which the hon. member for Bundaberg was about to address. That was the hon. member for Bulloo. The hon. member for Bulloo proceeded to the same meeting to deliver an address upon

federation, which I venture was in no degree of less importance than the utterance of the hon. member for Bundaberg. I venture to say that the meeting which listened to him and the people who read his address did not consider that his utterances paled into insignificance before the remarks of the hon. member for Bundaberg, and yet the hon. member for Bulloo deigned to travel in the ordinary train, in the ordinary way, and enjoyed the usual conveniences offered to the general public. Now I shall be very glad to hear the hon. gentleman's account of this affair. He tells me by interjection that there is another side to the story, but I say that no account he can give of the matter, no matter how great the necessity may have been which required him to ask for a reserved compartment, nothing can excuse him refusing to admit a lady into his compartment on that occasion. I say his action in doing that was the cause that has urged me really into taking the action I am doing this afternoon. For any ordinary man to refuse a lady admission in that way is bad enough. For a member of Parliament to refuse a lady admission into his carriage is certainly a marked thing, but for a man who is not merely a member of Parliament, but an Irishman to boot, is doubly bad. (Laughter.)

Mr. GLASSEY : It is a most serious crime.

Mr. BELL : On that occasion it was a most serious crime. If the only comment the hon. member can make on the matter is to make an interjection of that kind, it is pretty clear to me that the hon. gentleman's ideas of good taste and mine are radically different. There have been a great many complaints, both in the Press and amongst those who travel on railway trains, that the privilege of riding in reserved compartments is distributed with a great deal too free a hand.

Mr. LESINA : Have you only just discovered that?

Mr. BELL : I do not think I need go into the history of the development of that idea in my mind to the hon. member for Clermont.

Mr. LESINA : It has been the case for a long time.

Mr. BELL : But I may tell the hon. member for Clermont I have not been a sinner in that respect. Certainly, if I find myself travelling in a reserved compartment, and I observe the train full, I feel myself most uncomfortable if I find myself travelling alone in that compartment, and make a point of getting as many men as I know—men or women—into that compartment as soon as possible.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear !

Mr. BELL : Therefore, I say that the spectacle which presented itself on the 28th of August last of the hon. member, who poses as the great apostle of equality, riding in a railway compartment with an atmosphere of exclusiveness around him, while a number of passengers, every one of them as good, too, as the hon. member—as good citizens—were sweltering and packed together in a railway train, was a spectacle not very edifying, or reflecting any credit on the late leader of the Labour party. I say there should be no distinction amongst members of Parliament with regard to railway travelling, save those which are officially secured. It is a proper pertinence of Cabinet or Ministerial rank that they should be permitted to travel in special trains or reserved compartments, and I should be the last one to cavil at any such proceeding; but if it is to be a rule that members of Parliament are to be allowed to travel in reserved compartments, it must be a rule that applies all round, and not merely to the few favoured ones. I do not know whether the hon. member for Bundaberg was anticipating the future. I do not know whether he was

building castles in the air by looking forward to that period when he hopes he may himself—and probably will—enjoy Cabinet rank. All I can tell him is that fate does not give a promissory-note with her favours. She does not allow her favourites to partake of her enjoyments by anticipation. They will have to wait until they are actually due. I desire to suggest to the hon. member that the next time he goes upon a railway journey, whether the train is crowded or not crowded, he may travel in a sufficiently humble frame of mind to permit him to partake of the ordinary conveniences offered to the general public and the general ruck of members of Parliament.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. GLASSEY (*Bundaberg*): I am not sure whether I will be able to survive the fearful shock I have received to my nervous system this afternoon; but it seems to me a rather peculiar proposition. When the hon. member for Dalby was addressing the House on this important national question I took the liberty of interjecting that there was another side to this story. I may say it is rather a lengthy story, and, I am bound to add, not a very correct story, which, of course, I think I will be able to show. It is perfectly true, as the hon. member for Dalby said, that, on the day in question, I committed the unpardonable sin, for the first time in my life, of having a single compartment in a railway carriage. What are the circumstances? The circumstances are these: During the month of August, I must say, I took some little share, a considerable share, perhaps, in the federal campaign, and exerted myself, at any rate, to a considerable extent as far as my abilities and the means at my disposal permitted, to urge on the electors of some parts of the colony that I was able to reach the necessity of supporting federation. During the week prior to the 28th of August, I had to attend a meeting every day, sometimes two. On the 26th, which was the Saturday preceding Monday, the 28th, I had to attend a meeting in Brisbane, and the same evening I addressed a very large, and, if the hon. member will pardon me for saying so, a very important meeting at Beaudesert. I was also to attend a meeting at Toowoomba on the Monday night, and I did not know that the hon. member for Bulloo was also going to address it. Probably if I had known that the hon. member for Bulloo—who I admit at once is a man of considerable ability, and certainly able to deliver a very excellent address on almost any question—was to be there, I might have gone to some other place and left it to the hon. member for Bulloo, believing, as I do, that he was capable of taking a meeting of that kind by himself. I pay that compliment to the hon. member, and I share to the full the sentiments expressed by the hon. member for Dalby, that certainly the hon. member for Bulloo is well capable of delivering a speech on almost any subject of public interest, and delivered a very interesting address on the evening in question. That is by the way. What are the circumstances? Having addressed that meeting on Saturday, I was obliged to travel on Sunday from Beenleigh by conveyance in order to get the train for Toowoomba the next morning, fully expecting to be able, during the course of Sunday, to send a telephone message to the Commissioner or the Deputy Commissioner asking if he would be good enough to reserve for my accommodation a private compartment to enable me to get my papers together and put some matters that I intended to present to the people of Toowoomba on the night in question ship-shape. A number of friends having called at my place on Sunday, my time

was fully occupied, and it was not possible for me to reach the Railway Department on the Sunday. On the following morning, when I arrived at the Central Station, where the whole circumstances in connection with this matter took place, not at Roma street or at Ipswich, as has been alleged by the hon. member for Dalby. When I arrived at the Central Station

I mentioned to Mr. Cochrane that [4 p.m.] I had been very hard worked the previous week, and that I felt very tired, and had not been able to put matters together which I wished to present to the people of Toowoomba on that night, and said that if he would be good enough to find a private compartment I would feel obliged. I told him that it was my intention to ask the Commissioner or the Deputy Commissioner—relating the circumstances I had done, and showing that it was not possible—and I asked him if he would be good enough to communicate the matter to the Commissioner as soon as he had an opportunity. Mr. Cochrane at once said, "Is there a place vacant?" I said "Yes." I was not aware that the train was crowded, neither do I admit it, and I had just as good an opportunity of examining it as the hon. member for Dalby, so it seems to me that this is put forward by the hon. member as a mere pretext to bolster up the hon. member's case.

Mr. BELL: Oh!

Mr. GLASSEY: The stationmaster saw there was a vacancy and asked me if I was ready. I said "Yes," and then a railway porter put up a reserved ticket and raised the shutter, or whatever it is called, and I took my seat. A short time after this, before the train started, the door was opened and the hon. member for Dalby said to me, "Is this your compartment, Mr. Glassey?" I said "Yes," and he went away. By-and-by he came back.

Mr. BELL: Where was this?

Mr. GLASSEY: At the Central Station.

Mr. BELL: I got in at Roma street.

Mr. GLASSEY: I beg the hon. member's pardon. The stationmaster will be able to vouch for it.

Mr. BELL: I was not at the Central Station at all.

Mr. GLASSEY: The hon. member came to me at the Central Station and asked me if that was my compartment, and I said "Yes." He then asked me if I had made arrangements—

Mr. BELL: The hon. member is entirely mistaken.

Mr. GLASSEY: I said "Yes," and the hon. member went away. He afterwards came back again, and said to me, "Well, Mr. Glassey, Mr. Bell and Mrs. or Miss De Lacy Moffatt desire to travel in this train; have you any objection to them coming into this compartment?"

Mr. BELL: That occurred at Ipswich.

Mr. GLASSEY: Nothing of the sort. This occurred at the Central Station before the train started. I said, "To tell you the truth, Mr. Bell, I should prefer not, because I have a parcel of papers here. I am going to address a meeting to-night at Toowoomba, and I wish to do some work before reaching there"—knowing that when one does reach one of those places which he may not be in the habit of visiting, he is perhaps surrounded by personal friends, and the opportunities are few of putting together what one desires to say at a public meeting. These are the circumstances, and when the door was opened I went on to the platform myself. No word was mentioned to me by any person until I reached Helidon, and there the hon. member seemed very indignant, and said, "I have just wired a protest to the Commissioner for finding you a private carriage"—not a small compartment on the train but a private carriage.

I said, "Alright, Mr. Bell, I am glad to hear it." Nothing more happened, and I thought the whole thing was over. The first time I heard of it again was on one occasion when I was at the office of the Railway Commissioner, when I discovered that the hon. member had gone to such a length that he had written letters and wired to the Commissioner and the Minister showing his indignation as already mentioned; and then, Mr. Speaker, for the first time, with a view of attempting to strengthen the hon. member's case, he alleged that Mrs. De Lacy Moffatt had suffered some family trouble or bereavement. No trouble or family bereavement was ever mentioned to me at the time; if so I am the first man who would have surrendered at once the compartment and found accommodation elsewhere. No, grief—nothing was shown to me.

MR. BELL: Perhaps you are right in that.

MR. GLASSEY: In fact, to tell you the truth, I thought it was a brother of Mr. Bell and a lady for whom they were very anxious to have a little more accommodation for themselves, with more comfort than is usually given to ordinary travellers; and, believing there was a little bit of snobbery in this matter, I declined—particularly when the hon. member mentioned the name, "Bell." I declined, of course, to give up my little comfort and the privacy. I desired to put some matters together for the address I wished to deliver, and hence the refusal. These are the circumstances. Therefore, I say, as I interjected, there are two sides to this story. Now, let me tell the hon. member for Dalby, that this man who stands here has never desired any special privileges at the hands of the State at all, nor has he obtained many privileges at the hands of the State. I am not so clear whether the hon. member for Dalby can say the same thing. I am by no means very sure that the hon. member can shake himself clear from responsibilities of a variety of kinds in the same manner as the person now addressing this Chamber, and therefore his sneers and gibes about the little special privileges and the apostle of equality and so forth go for very little as far as I am concerned. At any rate there is one thing I can say, and that is, that I have never, at any rate, drawn on the State to the same extent as this hon. member and his relations, who have to a large extent for a series of years incurred liabilities which never will be wiped off in their day or generation. I have taken the trouble of communicating with the Railway Department as to what is the extra cost—if it be a question of cost of the privilege, or the jealousy of some person receiving a little privilege—I have taken the trouble of communicating with the Railway Commissioner as to what one of these small compartments would really cost, and I may mention that the sum is an exceedingly small one, something like £3 15s. or £3 10s. I have here a few matters of detail, which I think may be very useful to the House and to the country. The Railway Commissioner shows that a private compartment of the kind occupied by me costs for four persons the large sum of £3 10s. 8d. I, of course, in the capacity of member of Parliament was entitled to one, leaving a balance to be paid—if necessary it can be paid—but at any rate I have far more than this standing to my credit in the Treasury—the handsome sum of £2 13s. That is not a great sum. I happen to have standing to my credit in the Treasury the sum of £60 odd since the year 1891, and interest amounting at present to £80 odd, and therefore I say that if I got some special privilege valued at £2 13s. the Treasury is indebted to me to a considerable extent over and above that amount. I was appointed a member of a Royal Commission, for which I was entitled to £62 2s., and I never

drew any of that money. I wonder if the hon. member ever left anything in the Treasury in connection with various matters to pay for any little special privileges he wishes to enjoy in years to come. Let me mention that I have taken the trouble to go down to the Supreme Court and getting some papers there of a very valuable character relating to some accounts in connection with the Queensland National Bank. I believe there is a family called Bell very heavily indebted to the bank.

MR. BELL: What has that to do with this question?

MR. GLASSEY: And very heavily indebted to a number of persons.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in bringing a subject of that kind before the House, and I trust the hon. member will not pursue it further.

MR. GLASSEY: At any rate I think the matter brought forward by the hon. member for Dalby is a very frivolous one. The hon. member seems to be under the impression that I wished to block this motion, but I can assure the hon. member that I have no such desire. As a matter of fact, I hope these papers will be placed on the table of this House, and that they will be published in the public journals of this colony. I have some facts here with regard to the Bell family which I do not intend to use now, but I can assure the House that I will take the earliest opportunity of using them, to show that the indebtedness of this family in connection with that institution would purchase many railway trains and a vast number of private compartments at the cost I have mentioned. However, these are only details, but I will take the first opportunity of placing these details before the country from my place in this House. The hon. member for Dalby has given his version of the story, and I have given mine. During the twelve years that I have been a member of Parliament, the privileges I have exercised have been extremely few. I don't think I have asked for a single privilege but this one under discussion, and I would never ask for any such privilege except under the circumstances which I have related. I believe that there is no excuse for the hon. member bringing forward such a trivial motion as the one we are now discussing.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

HON. G. THORN (*Passifera*): I would like to say a few words on this matter before the motion is put. I would like to correct the hon. member for Bundaberg as to what he said with regard to the lady in question. The hon. member said she got in at the Brisbane Central Station.

MR. GLASSEY: No, I said that representations were made to me with regard to a gentleman named Mr. Bell, at the Central Station. I never saw either the lady or gentleman in question.

HON. G. THORN: I may say that the lady referred to was not in Brisbane at that time.

MR. GLASSEY: I don't know where she was, I never saw her.

HON. G. THORN: The hon. member said the lady was at the Central Station.

MR. GLASSEY: No.

MR. McDONALD: Well, he contradicts that now.

HON. G. THORN: He did say that, as *Hansard* will show. Now, Sir, I am not in the habit of obtaining privileges from the Government, and always understood that the hon. member for Bundaberg travelled in second-class carriages, and not in first-class or reserved compartments. He surely must have committed a mistake on this occasion in getting into a reserved compartment. (Laughter.) I have no doubt he will make up the difference in the expense. But these points have really nothing

to do with the matter. I have served on similar commissions to the hon. member for Bundaberg, and was entitled to fees, which I did not get. The hon. member for Dalby said the hon. member for Bundaberg is an Irishman, but he is not a true Irishman; he is a North of Ireland Scotchman. (Laughter.) They are the most ungallant class of people in the world, and perhaps that accounts for the hon. member's conduct. I think any true Irishman would vacate any carriage for a lady, but the hon. member did not do so. I may say that in all my thirty years' experience as a member of Parliament, neither as a Minister nor as a private member, have I ever had a special compartment. I have corrected the hon. member for Bundaberg with regard to the locality referred to where this hon. member is said to have shown a great want of gallantry to a lady, and I hope the matter will be now dropped. I can see no harm in these papers being produced, but I regard the matter as a mare's nest.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** (Hon. D. H. Dalrymple, *Mackay*): I would also like to say a few words on this matter. I do not see any reason why the papers should not be produced.

**MR. GLASSEY:** I don't object to the papers being produced; not at all.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** If the hon. member requires such a large amount of room to provide himself with the necessary materials for making a speech, he ought to be the best judge in the matter, but I think that he is capable of making a speech at short notice on any subject at any time.

**MR. GLASSEY:** I only wanted to look through and arrange my papers.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** The hon. member for Dalby made a certain request to the hon. member for Bundaberg on the occasion referred to, but I do not think that affects the question very much. But what struck me as very remarkable is that, however justifiable the action of the hon. member for Bundaberg might be, it seems to me very inconsistent with the views frequently put forward by the hon. member in relation to the necessary and essential equality of all men. That seems to be the trouble, and not so much that the hon. member accepted this private carriage.

**MR. HARDAIRE:** Does the hon. member remember having a special carriage from Bundaberg to Gladstone?

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** But the hon. member occupied a carriage with no one else in it, and he did not feel disposed, when he found the public were incommoded, to put himself out of his way.

**MR. GLASSEY:** There is no truth in that statement whatever.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** He must have forgotten that other members of the public have their rights as well as himself. I would like to remind hon. members of two anecdotes, to show how difficult it is for hon. members to carry out any, in their own persons, theories which they are exceedingly apt to recommend to other persons.

**MR. LESINA:** That's why we ask you to volunteer to South Africa.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** The story occurs in "Midshipman Easy," and will go a long way to show the real feelings of the members of the Opposition, who are so fond of prating about the equality of men. The story goes that the old man, that is the captain, was a great stickler for equality, and that his negro servant had somewhat similar opinions to his master on the subject. When the negro servant was promoted to be his major-domo he was asked about his old views, and his reply was, "Damn equality now that I am

major-domo." The position, it seems to me, is entirely one of relativity. There is another anecdote which will do to illustrate the view I take, and which appears to be taken by socialistic gentlemen also. It occurred in Germany. The editor of a German socialistic paper put the following notice in his paper:—

We regret to state that we can print no more articles in this paper from our talented contributor who has done so much to promote the cause of equality in these columns; he having now a fixed income of 30s. a week, and finding his new position incompatible with his old theories, must therefore sever his connection with this journal.

There is another also which occurs to me, and it is told by no less a person than Dr. Johnson.

**MR. STEWART:** Who was he?

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** The hon. member for North Rockhampton asks who was he? That ignorance is assumed. He knows full well that Dr. Johnson looked with the greatest scorn and hatred and contempt upon the members of that race of which the hon. member is so distinguished an ornament. Dr. Johnson said to Boswell on one occasion—

Mrs. Macanlay is a furious republican. One day I said to her, "Madame, I am converted to your way of thinking, and I am convinced that all mankind are equal. And now there is your footman, let him thus come to table with us." Since then she has never spoken to me. I thus showed to her the absurdity of her levelling doctrine, and that if people will have some one below them they must put up with having others above them.

I really think this is a most interesting debate. It is an exceedingly striking comment upon hon. members opposite, and upon their doctrines, and upon the way in which the hon. member for Bundaberg practically carries out the doctrine of equality. It seems to me that whenever the doctrine of equality comes into conflict with any little superiority which they are prepared to assume, the doctrine of equality goes to the wall. It is put on one side, and one of those matters which they say ought to be recognised by others they are not willing to put into practice themselves.

**MR. GLASSEY:** There is no mistake; that is a deliverance.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. J. R. Dickson, *Bullimba*):** I think it is a pity that this debate has occurred, for no good purpose can be served by it. I boldly avow my opinion that any member of Parliament travelling by railway should have the convenience of a reserved compartment if he requires it. Members of Parliament, when travelling by railway, are very frequently surrounded by people who want to get into conversation with them; and although such conversation may be very interesting, it interferes very much with the opportunity for reflection or study that they may desire to enjoy while proceeding to another place where they have to deliver an important speech. Under those circumstances it is only my duty to express my opinion that the hon. member for Bundaberg was perfectly entitled to the opportunity of having a reserved compartment to himself. The same opportunity is given to every member of Parliament travelling on our railways, if he is going on any public business, or has reason to travel with the view of making speeches, or anything of that sort. I regret that the hon. member for Dalby has introduced this motion at the present time, because I think the circumstances do not justify the time of Parliament being taken up with such a trivial matter. It is a pity that the opportunity for private business, about which hon. members opposite are always complaining of scant treatment, should be employed by a comparatively trifling debate, when perhaps matters of much greater moment might be brought under discussion. I do not

think the papers asked for will throw very much light on the matter, or that they will be of much interest to the general public. The wiser course for the hon. member for Dalby, now that he has made his complaint, and has been replied to by the hon. member for Bundaberg, I suggest, would be to withdraw the motion.

Mr. DAWSON (*Charters Towers*): I hope the hon. member for Dalby will not accept the advice tendered by the Premier, and withdraw his motion, because the hon. member for Bundaberg wants those papers produced, and we intend to support the motion that they shall be produced. While on my feet, I may say that when I first heard the complaint of the hon. member for Dalby I thought the hon. member for Bundaberg had been guilty of an act of discourtesy. I understood that was the chief complaint of the hon. member for Dalby—that he occupied a private compartment in a crowded train, and refused to make room for a distressed female. I think the hon. member for Bundaberg has clearly demonstrated that he did not do anything of the sort. He states distinctly—and the hon. member for Dalby admitted it in an interjection—that when the application was made to him for admission into his private compartment, no mention was made that it was for a lady who was in distress. Therefore, as far as the hon. member for Bundaberg is concerned, he was not aware that the room was wanted in his private compartment for a distressed female. How, then, could he have been guilty of any act of discourtesy? He also tells us that he was told the application was from some member of the Bell family, and not having any particular affection for that family he declined. That was a perfectly reasonable explanation, and it certainly removes any charge of discourtesy from the shoulders of the hon. member for Bundaberg. I certainly think it is the duty of a man even to inconvenience himself to assist a distressed female.

Mr. BELL: Must she be distressed?

Mr. DAWSON: It all depends. I do not think an eight-stone man should allow a fourteen-stone woman to sit upon him in a bus. There are degrees.

Mr. BELL: Is that your idea of obliging a lady?

Mr. DAWSON: I do not know. I say there are degrees in this matter. I do not [4:30 p.m.] think it would be a wise thing for an eight-stone man, at any rate, to oblige a lady in that particular way. I quite share in the opinions expressed by the Secretary for Lands and by the Premier that the introduction of this motion is not creditable to the hon. member who has introduced it.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): I think this motion very ill-advised on the part of the hon. member for Dalby. It appears to be largely the outcome of pique, and is altogether discreditable to the hon. member. So far, the discussion has been merely a washing of dirty linen and an indulgence in personalities—creditable neither to the members engaged in them nor to the House. It is a waste of public time, and, as I interjected when the hon. member was speaking, it seems rather extraordinary that a member on the other side should suddenly discover that these privileges are being abused. They have never been abused by members on this side at all. Some time ago the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, tried to throw mud at members on this side for coming down, in their position as delegates, to a Trades and Labour Conference, held in Brisbane, on free passes. On that occasion it was distinctly proved that certain hon. members were not only in the habit of using free passes themselves, but were also in the habit of getting them for their wives.

Mr. J. HAMILTON (*Cook*): That is not correct.

Mr. LESINA: It appears that the abuse of these privileges is confined to hon. members on the other side. In answer to a question that I put to one of the Ministers recently I discovered that fourteen special trains were run for the use of Ministers when advocating federation—ten for the Premier, two for the Attorney-General, one for the Home Secretary, and one for the Secretary for Railways—totalling fourteen special trains, which cost £568.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: What nonsense!

Mr. LESINA: Will they pay that out of their own pockets? And yet they cavil about the hon. member for Bundaberg using a special compartment at a cost of something like £2 10s. The whole thing is the outcome of pique. Hon. members, to my knowledge, during the recent federal campaign, travelled many weary miles huddled together in second-class carriages, which were not fit for the conveyance of an ordinary criminal. We were obliged to travel hundreds of miles under those circumstances, because the rest of the train was packed. This outburst of indignation about the privileges of the country being abused is amusing, seeing that there is not a dead-head strikes Brisbane who is not given a special train or a special carriage, who is not fêted, and feasted, and fed, and travelled free at the public expense all over this country. Do hon. members on the other side protest about this? You never hear a word about it. But because the hon. member for Bundaberg used a special compartment in this particular case when doing work in which hon. members on the other side were co-operating with him—and who were not content with special compartments, but who had special trains running at a cost of at least £40 each for the purpose of advocating their particular political views—he is found fault with. There is a good deal of hypocrisy about this motion, and, altogether, it is not creditable to the hon. member who has introduced it or to the House, and I trust nothing of the kind will ever be brought before the House again. We have a perfect right to avail ourselves of any privileges we possess as well as hon. members on the other side, and we can say that we have never abused those privileges. Let any hon. member call for a return showing the number of special trains and compartments supplied for the use of Labour members, and it will be seen that we have never taken advantage of our privileges. It will be found that we have not even used our passes on ordinary occasions. On the other hand, it has been proved that the country has been put to an enormous expense by individual members on the other side. It is just as well that this motion of the hon. member for Dalby should be seen by the public in its true light. It is the outcome of mere pique, and I certainly protest—as one member sitting on this side—against this kind of mud being slung at members sitting over here.

Mr. BELL (*Dalby*), in reply, said: I think the hon. member for Clermont must be entirely devoid of humour, or he would see the comicality of himself, of all persons in this House, getting up and lecturing any hon. member for mudslinging.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. BELL: This is the second session only that the hon. member has been in this House, but I am bound to say that in the matter of mudslinging and bringing into Parliament the manners and methods of the purloins of a city, we have nobody in this Chamber to beat the hon. member.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!



Mr. BELL: The hon. member for Bundaberg attempted to justify his action on the particular occasion which is the subject-matter of this motion by recounting his virtues on other occasions. The hon. member endeavoured to extenuate his performance on the 25th of August by telling us that there was a sum of £60, or £80 lying in the Treasury which he might claim if he chose. If that is the case, I am bound to say we must give the hon. member some credit, but while I do not doubt any statement the hon. member makes, I for one would like a little more definite information upon the point. I believe it was in connection with a Royal Commission?

Mr. GLASSEY: Yes.

Mr. BELL: I would like to see whether the hon. member, of all the members of that Royal Commission, stands alone upon a pinnacle of virtue, or whether his co-members acting on the commission did not to some extent share in the glory.

Mr. TURLEY: You were not on that commission.

Mr. BELL: I do not suggest that I was. The hon. member for South Brisbane seems to have an extraordinary faculty for making irrelevant interjections. The hon. member for Bundaberg made, consciously or unconsciously, a misstatement of fact when he said that I entered that railway carriage at the Central Station.

Mr. GLASSEY: I said it was open there.

Mr. BELL: I can only say that the hon. member is under a misapprehension. Unless it was to go North, I have never entered a train at the Central Station for many months. I invariably go to Roma street, and I drove to Roma street on that particular morning, and entered the train at that station. I saw a closed compartment with the shutters up. I had not the remotest idea who was in it, and I should not have bothered my head who was in it had it not been for the fact that at Ipswich a lady came up to me and asked me if there was a reserved compartment for her in the train. I said, "Probably that is the compartment which is reserved for you." I then walked up with her to the compartment.

Mr. GLASSEY: There is not a word of truth in the statement.

Mr. BELL: I can only assure this House that what I am saying is absolutely true—that I joined the train at Roma street, and that lady appeared on the platform at Ipswich. With the lady beside me, I made for the hon. member's compartment. I had so much confidence in the hon. member's courtesy that when I discovered it was his compartment I did not go up and ask his permission to allow the lady to go in, but I turned round to her and said, "This is Mr. Glassey's compartment, would you like to go in it up to Toowoomba?" She said, "I would." The train was crowded. I then walked up to the hon. member—I think I mentioned the lady's name—

Mr. GLASSEY: And Mr. Bell's.

Mr. BELL: And I asked the hon. member if he had any objection to allowing this lady to travel in his compartment up to Toowoomba. The hon. member turned round to me and said, "I have got some work to do, and I have taken this compartment." He said this to me in a way that would have caused any hon. member who shared my feelings to put an end to the discussion, and let it be perfectly clear that he did not desire his dignity to be infringed. Whether this is a trivial matter or not, when I travel as one of the public and as a member of Parliament in a public conveyance of this colony I am not going to be shouldered aside by any man who is not my superior, and who is not entitled to one whit more of privileges than myself. I come to this Chamber where we

redress grievances of the colony, be they big or little, and bring forward my complaint. Whether it is a small matter or a big matter I do not care, but whether this particular question is of trivial importance or not, the whole course of conduct that I complain of is not of trifling importance. If you read the public Press you will see letters from men protesting against the system of giving reserved apartments. I know the Railway Department intended to do a courteous act in this particular matter, and I am sorry to think that in criticising the hon. member I have to criticise and condemn the Railway Department, for they intended to show courtesy to a member of Parliament. I have done good in bringing forward this motion if I have called public attention to the practice of granting the right to persons to ride in reserved apartments. Whether the papers are produced or not, and I hope they will be produced, I think the Railway Department will be a great deal more cautious in future than they have been in the past with regard to inconveniencing the public by giving private apartments in railway carriages, and I venture to say that the hon. member for Bundaberg will not get a private apartment again.

Mr. GLASSEY: The hon. member for Bundaberg will take all sorts of care that he does.

Mr. BELL: If he does I think he will have learnt a lesson in good manners this afternoon, and if he is asked to allow a lady to ride in his reserved apartment he will probably not be as churlish as he was on the 28th of August. The hon. member endeavoured to discuss this matter of private apartments in railway carriages by making some allusion to my travelling and my financial matters, and the hon. member and his party, if I may use the expression, did their damndest at the last general election—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BELL: I bow to your correction, Sir. The hon. member and his party did their worst against me at the last general election by playing that card for all it was worth, but it failed, as all the other cards failed against me in that connection. I may have done many things that I regret, but I have done nothing that I am ashamed of.

Mr. GLASSEY: You should be ashamed.

Mr. BELL: The hon. member can bring up any matter regarding my family or my public conduct, and proclaim it to the public of Queensland, and I shall not be ashamed of anything he can produce, however much I may regret it. It is said that if you scratch a Russian you will find a Tartar. I say that if you scratch a member of Parliament who clothes himself with the importance of the hon. member you will find something beneath which does not correspond to his outer coating. If I have demonstrated that this afternoon, and have done nothing else, I have at all events done a public good.

Mr. GLASSEY: I will teach you good manners before I have done with you.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must respect and obey the rule that when the Speaker rises the House should be silent. I shall now put the question.

Question—That the papers referred to be laid on the table of the House—put and passed.

## BALONNE ELECTION.

VOTE OF HENRY JOHN CARTER.

Mr. DAWSON (*Charters Towers*), in moving—

1. That there be laid on the table of the House copies of all correspondence between Mr. Arthur Towns, the secretary of the Cunnamulla Voters' Association, and the Home Secretary's Department, together with all papers and other documents, including the electoral

claim form of Henry John Carter, who appears on the Balonne electoral roll, Cunnamulla Division, as a qualified voter, No. 1042.

2. Also copy of declaration made by the said Henry John Carter before the returning officer, Mr. Morgan, at Bonna Vonna, on the 25th of April last—

said: I have made a mistake in a name, and I ask the leave of the House to amend the 2nd subsection of the resolution by substituting the name of Mr. Baker for that of Mr. Morgan. I ask that these papers be laid on the table of the House because I consider the matter is one of very great importance, and of very great interest to a large number of people in the colony, particularly in the electorate of Balonne. I must express my surprise, in starting, that when I first put this motion on the business-paper it was called "Not formal." I am at a loss even now to understand what possible objection any member of this Chamber can have to the production of these papers.

The PREMIER: Reasons should be given by the mover for the production of any correspondence. That is the sole objection. I called "Not formal."

Mr. DAWSON: I know the hon. gentleman called "Not formal," and he did so at a time which prevented me from getting the first place on the business-paper. If the hon. gentleman had afforded me the opportunity of explaining the reasons why I wanted the correspondence produced, I should have given him my reasons.

The PREMIER: You would not have had the opportunity if the motion had been allowed to go as formal. It is merely to get your reasons for the production of the papers that the motion has been called "Not formal."

The HOME SECRETARY: You could not have amended it if it had been made formal, and one reason for calling "Not formal" was that the motion might be amended and put in proper form.

Mr. DAWSON: The reason why I want the papers produced is that the correspondence particularly refers to a discussion that has taken place between the Home Secretary's Department and the Cunnamulla Voters' Association, and because there was, in our opinion, a certain transaction in connection with the Balonne election that is not strictly according to law; something was illegally done. The Elections Act, it is alleged, was abused. It is said that a public officer did not perform his duty as we should expect a public officer to perform his duty, and we want to know whether those who make that accusation or those who deny it are correct, and the nearest and best way to get at that is to have the papers produced and laid on the table of the House, so that every member can peruse them. The principal matter of course is in connection with the man mentioned in the motion—that is, the vote of one Henry John Carter. I believe that Mr. Carter was the returning officer for the Warrego electorate at the last general election. Hon. members will remember that when the election for Balonne took place, owing to some error—whether it was design or not it is hard to say—at one particular polling place the presiding officer did not turn up at the proper time, and there was no opportunity for anyone to record his vote at that place.

Mr. STORY: At two places.

Mr. DAWSON: At one place in particular.

Mr. STORY: Ah, but there is another place.

Mr. DAWSON: I am referring to the place in connection with which Henry John Carter is concerned, and that is a place called Bonna Vonna. Subsequently there was a polling held there, and I think I am within the mark when I say that the number of votes then recorded at this place made a record for that district, and the presiding officer, when he counted the votes,

counted more votes than there were residents anywhere in and around that neighbourhood. Voters came from various places to record their votes on that occasion at Bonna Vonna.

Mr. STEPHENSON: And they voted on the wrong side. That's the trouble.

Mr. DAWSON: I am not quarrelling with the way in which they voted at all, but if I am, asked for my own opinion I say that I think they voted on the wrong side, and if they had a little more sense and judgment they would have voted on the other side. It appears that all those persons who did not vote on the day of the election went on this occasion to Bonna Vonna to record their votes.

Mr. STORY: And to Brenda, excuse me.

Mr. DAWSON: I am talking of this particular case, and the hon. member who represents that particular district, and represents it well, can reply in his own way. I am asking for all the particulars in connection with the voting of this person at Bonna Vonna, and what may have been done at other places is not concerned in this motion at all. No other place is included in the motion. I understand that a number of persons went to Bonna Vonna and recorded their votes there, and among the rest was one Henry John Carter, who claimed to vote in respect of certain property he held at Cunnamulla. He went to Bonna Vonna and voted, and I do not care whether he voted for the hon. member for Balonne, Mr. Story, or for his opponent. The fact remains that he voted and that he was challenged, and we believe that by the production of these papers we can show the country that this gentleman had no right to this vote he claimed at all. He made a declaration before the presiding officer, and we want to get a copy of that declaration, together with a copy of the form claim upon which Henry John Carter claimed his right to vote at Bonna Vonna on the 25th April last. We want to know whether this man made a false declaration or not, and we want to know whether if, after being challenged, the one challenged can vote at the particular place at which he has been challenged, because we know of another place where a man was challenged and demanded to have his vote recorded, and he could not get it, even though he was prepared to make a declaration. And we want the correspondence on this particular matter concerning Carter's vote, which has passed between the Cunnamulla Voters' Association and the Home Secretary's Department. We want the representations made to the department in connection with this matter, and the reply of the department to those representations. I think the case is of sufficient gravity and of so much public interest that every hon. member—even the hon. member for Balonne himself—should be perfectly willing to accept a motion of this kind, and see that the papers asked for are laid on the table.

Mr. STORY: I have no objection to it.

Mr. DAWSON: I am very pleased to hear the hon. member say so. I understood, from his interjections, that he was against it.

Mr. STORY: You know I did not interject anything of the kind.

Mr. DAWSON: I did not say the hon. member did. The Premier says he called "Not formal" because he wanted to know why the documents should be produced. I have mentioned the principal reasons why I think the documents should be produced, and I think it is in the best interests of the public that we should have these documents laid on the table. If the hon. gentleman wants any further reasons I have no objection at all to giving them to him. I should like to say before I sit down that I think there is nothing which hon. members of this House should be more sensitive about or

more jealous of than the conduct of elections. We should absolutely insist that no matter who may be in power or what parties may be contesting a particular seat, the conduct of these elections should be above reproach, so that no statement can be made afterwards that anything unfair has been done.

Mr. STORY: A statement may be made, but it may not be a fact.

Mr. DAWSON: A statement may be made without being a fact, and I suppose such statements very often are made. A statement with regard to this particular individual has been made. We know that certain correspondence has passed between the Cunnamulla Voters' Association and the department referring to this particular matter, and, if what is alleged has got any truth in it, in the best interests of the people anything of that kind should not go on. We want to know the truth about the matter and that is why we are moving. I believe, as a matter of simple fact, that the Home Secretary's Department has actually admitted that there was something not altogether in proper order in connection with this vote at Bonna Vonna.

The HOME SECRETARY: What? I think you should say something more, if you say so much.

Mr. DAWSON: Very well. This is one letter which we understand is in the correspondence, and I think it is in the public interest that it should be laid on the table of the House. It is from Mr. Ryder, the Under Secretary to the Home Secretary, and is addressed to the Secretary of the Cunnamulla Voters' Association, Mr. Towns—

Brisbane, 30th June, 1899.

SIR,—With further reference to your letter of the 10th instant, calling attention, at the instance of your Association, to the circumstances under which H. J. Carter recorded a vote at the recent election of a member for the Balonne electorate, I have the honour, by direction, to inform you that from inquiries which have been made, it would appear that Mr. Carter did not possess the qualification set out in his claim at the time it was made, although it is possible that he could have made a claim as a "householder," in respect to the premises in question, the tenancy of which was either a weekly or a monthly one—probably the former. Mr. Carter also seems to have possessed a qualification as a leaseholder in respect of property at Wyandra, although it was not mentioned in the claim as put in. I am to state that the facts of the case have been communicated to the Electoral Registrar, upon whose subsequent action steps will no doubt be taken by Mr. Carter to get his proper qualification (or one of them, "freeholder" or "leaseholder") substituted for that in respect of which his name now appears on the roll.

I say that is a frank admission on behalf of the department that Mr. Carter did not possess the qualification upon which he voted at Bonna Vonna on the 25th April last. Of course, the department states—very truly, perhaps—that in all probability he did possess other qualifications. But the fact remains that he did not take advantage of the other qualifications he possessed. I understand that he made a declaration in which he claims to have just the particular qualification upon which he voted; and here is a letter from the department saying that he has not got it at all. I say that letter itself lends very strong colour indeed to the opinion entertained by the Cunnamulla Voters' Association that something has been done in regard to this election which is not likely to do good or to add to the purity of carrying on our elections.

If it was for nothing else but that I [5 p.m.] think I have made out a good claim that the whole of the correspondence dealing with this matter should be laid on the table of the House. I do not desire, and I do not suppose I should be in order in any case, in discussing that matter, or my opinion of the suggestion of the department, because that will come up at some more fitting time. I beg to move the amended motion.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member be permitted to amend the motion as indicated?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*): The hon. member who has just spoken, I regret to say, has gone away.

Mr. GLASSEY: He has just got a message; he will be here directly.

The HOME SECRETARY: He complained that "not formal" was called to this motion. It was apparent on the face of it to myself, and a good many other members probably, that the motion asked for a document which absolutely had no existence whatever; that is to say, a document which was alleged to be in the nature of a declaration made by one Henry John Carter before the returning officer, Mr. Morgan, at Bonna Vonna, on the 25th April last. I knew perfectly well that Mr. Morgan was at St. George on that day, and could not be the person before whom that declaration was made. Clearly, therefore, as it was irregular to amend a formal motion, the only way by which the matter could be put right was by calling "not formal," even if there had been no other reason for it. Now, the hon. member has complained that there have been irregularities with regard to this poll at Bonna Vonna, and there is apparently a tendency on the part of hon. members to imply that there is something in connection with the holding of that poll which in some way is not creditable to the Government.

Mr. STORY: He said so.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member implied, in the way in which he knows so well how to do, that the Government had been guilty of some wrong-doing in regard to the holding of that poll, or that we connived at some wrong-doing. Now, I tell the hon. member that that is absolutely a mistake. I hope that the hon. member who represents the district will give us something of the history of what took place in regard to that election in order that this opportunity may be availed of for the purpose of showing exactly what takes place sometimes at elections of this sort.

Mr. McDONALD: He will be out of order if he does that.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member who has moved the motion has indulged in a great deal of criticism in regard to the conduct of that election, and I sincerely trust that the same latitude will be afforded to the hon. member for Balonne when he replies to the insinuations which have been thrown out by the hon. member who moved the motion.

Mr. DAWSON: You are entirely mistaken.

The HOME SECRETARY: Well, I listened very carefully to what the hon. member said.

Mr. DAWSON: You misunderstood.

The HOME SECRETARY: Although he was very careful not to implicate the Government by a direct charge in any irregularity which occurred, still the implication was there all the same. It was intended, so far as I could see, to impress people outside with the fact that the Government had connived at something which was irregular and improper.

Mr. DAWSON: I say they have not taken action on an illegal act.

The HOME SECRETARY: Now, what happened really was that no poll could be regularly taken at Bonna Vonna on the date that was appointed. If I had been the presiding officer there I would have taken the poll all the same, but the presiding officer, who is a gentleman I know well, a man with great experience in the conduct of elections, and who will do the straight thing though it may be opposed to his

own political interests and views, thought otherwise. I have had personal experience of that gentleman when he was presiding officer in the Carnarvon electorate.

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*): I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. gentleman in order in going in for this discussion? The question is whether certain papers should be produced.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am giving the reasons.

Mr. McDONALD: The motion distinctly refers to certain papers which are called for in connection with a certain matter. It has nothing to do with the actions of a returning officer.

The SPEAKER: The Home Secretary, it appears to me, is quite within his rights in replying to the hon. gentleman who has moved this motion. The hon. gentleman made a charge—not direct, but by implication—that irregularities had taken place in connection with the election for Balonne, and more particularly in connection with the poll at Bonna Vonna. That was the statement, and the Home Secretary is quite within his rights in answering what has been said.

Mr. McDONALD: As long as we understand that, it is all right.

The HOME SECRETARY: I can quite understand the objection of the hon. member for Flinders and his desire to silence me. He desires evidently that the garbled notions which prevail in regard to this matter, the result of innuendoes which have been flung across the Chamber, should still remain uncontradicted. I propose that the public, at all events, should be put right in regard to the proceedings at Bonna Vonna, and I quite understand the hon. gentleman's desire to silence me when I wish to give the true facts of the case.

Mr. DAWSON: That is imputing motives.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not think so. I quite understand the hon. gentleman's position.

Mr. McDONALD: You said I attempted to silence you.

The HOME SECRETARY: Well, is it worth while attempting to contradict the hon. member? What did he rise to a point of order for if it was not to silence me?

Mr. McDONALD: No.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He desired to see the Standing Orders adhered to.

Mr. HARDACRE: Go on. We are not discussing the point of order now.

The HOME SECRETARY: I shall take my ruling from the Chair, and not from the hon. member for Leichhardt.

Mr. HARDACRE: Then I will rise to a point of order.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member had better do so.

Mr. McDONALD: Oh! Go on. Tell us what you want to say.

The HOME SECRETARY: There is plenty of time, and I intend to have my say.

Mr. McDONALD: This is stonewalling.

The HOME SECRETARY: Exactly. I am told I am stonewalling whenever I rise on private members' day.

Mr. McDONALD: I know you do not want the production of the papers. That is all right.

The HOME SECRETARY: On the contrary, I am going to support the motion for their production.

Mr. McDONALD: You will try to talk it out.

The HOME SECRETARY: All except one, and I have a very good reason for that. I think that if the hon. member had thought fully before he tabled his motion, he would have seen the folly of attempting to include that in his motion. However, I will deal with that directly. When I was interrupted by the point of order raised by the hon. member for Flinders, I was pointing

out that, owing to a certain irregularity, no poll was held at Bonna Vonna on the day appointed. I also stated that if I had been presiding officer I would have held the poll notwithstanding the fact that I had not been able to make the necessary declarations giving me the authority, and I think Mr. Baker, the presiding officer, would have done so if he had been better acquainted with the Act under which he was working; but he, not having received the form of declaration which he was required to make before holding the poll, decided no poll could be taken notwithstanding the fact that there is a provision in the Act which would have validated the poll notwithstanding that that declaration had not been made. However, there is the fact that Mr. Baker decided in his own mind that he had no power to take a poll, much as he desired to do so. It then became necessary to consider what action should be taken, not only in regard to taking a poll at Bonna Vonna, but at Brenda, a place also where no poll had been taken, and a poll was directed to be taken on the date mentioned by the hon. member in his resolution at these two places—the 25th of April; and both sides, I have no doubt, endeavoured to do their best to bring up all those voters who had not already voted on the ordinary day for the elections. I do not wonder that hon. members feel a bit sore that they were in a minority at Bonna Vonna. They expected it was going to be quite the other way, and I can quite understand their disappointment. When I say I understand it, I hope I will not be told I am imputing motives. I know nothing about the matter except what is before me in connection with the papers. The letter which the hon. member read as having emanated from the Under Secretary of the Home Department, was written, I apprehend, as a result of a memorandum which I myself put upon the papers, after I had seen the letter from a Mr. Towns; and after I had seen and read a report by the senior-sergeant of police at Cunnamulla, who had inquired into the matter, and also after I had read a letter, somewhat short and not dealing very elaborately with the matter, written by Mr. Carter, from which it would appear that he had several qualifications which would entitle him to be placed on the roll for Cunnamulla. I have not seen the roll; but from what I gather from the correspondence it is a fact that the qualification for which he was on the roll had ceased. At all events, that is the matter in dispute in the question. It is alleged, at any rate, that it had ceased. It was a particular leasehold. He had another property and was also under the impression—according to his own statement—that the two properties were included in the one lease, and that he still held one of these properties. I presume he was asked to make a declaration—he certainly must have made a declaration if the question was raised—that he still possessed the qualification. He possessed a qualification, and, as far as I know, still possesses the right to vote if he has his name on the roll for the Balonne electorate. I have not the slightest manner of doubt about that. I have always understood it was the desire of hon. members on that side of the House that, at all events, every man who is entitled to a vote under the law should have the opportunity of recording that vote.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY: But it appears it all depends on which side of the House a man is giving his vote.

Mr. DAWSON: You know how Carter voted.

The HOME SECRETARY: I fancy I do. If I do not, I should know very well indeed from the attitude of hon. members towards him with regard to this matter. That is a sufficient revelation to me as to how Mr. Carter voted. I

am satisfied—I am inclined at least to the opinion—that if he had been an ardent supporter of the other side the letter would not have been written by Mr. Towns—

Mr. KERR: He would not have been on the roll.

The HOME SECRETARY: But, perhaps, would have voted all the same; but he knows how Mr. Carter voted. At all events, I am prepared to take him as an authority on that point almost as good as Mr. Carter himself.

Mr. McDONALD: He was challenged on that side.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not know.

Mr. McDONALD: He was.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not know.

Mr. DAWSON: Don't you know after being told?

The HOME SECRETARY: I am not in the habit of taking hearsay evidence.

Mr. DAWSON: You ought to take an hon. member's word.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not doubt it if the hon. member says so. The correspondence establishes, at all events to my mind, this fact: Mr. Carter was, at the date of the election, the holder of a vote, or, at all events, that he held the qualification for a vote, and if his name was not on the roll it ought to have been on the roll—that if it was on for a qualification he did not possess, he was entitled to have his name on the roll for a qualification he did possess.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: So ought hundreds of others.

Mr. McDONALD: If he had his name on the roll for a qualification he did not possess, he is not entitled to vote because he has another qualification.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not say he was. The hon. member did not even take the trouble to listen to what I said, or if he did he is guilty of, well, misrepresenting me.

Mr. McDONALD: You are making a good effort at that now.

The HOME SECRETARY: What I did say was this: that if Mr. Carter had his name on the roll for a qualification which he did not possess, he was yet, nevertheless, entitled to have his name on the roll for a qualification which it is pretty clear from the facts he did possess.

Mr. McDONALD: But his first qualification was not legal.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was, I understand, at the time it was made.

Mr. McDONALD: Quite the contrary.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is the matter in dispute. Mr. Carter says clearly it was. I believe it is a question of the duration of the leasehold. At all events, he had the property. The hon. member is clearly wrong.

Mr. McDONALD: We will see about it.

The HOME SECRETARY: He had a monthly lease of the property.

Mr. McDONALD: The principal has made an affidavit that he had not.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not pretend for a moment that Mr. Carter was technically and legally entitled to vote if he had ceased to hold the qualification with regard to which his name appeared on the roll.

Mr. McDONALD: That is the point.

The HOME SECRETARY: But he had other qualifications which, if his name had been correctly on the roll, would have entitled him to a vote. That he was entitled to a vote—that is to say, that he was entitled to have his name on that roll—I have no doubt whatever, and I have always understood from hon. members on the other side that when a man, no matter who he might be, was entitled to have his name on the roll there was no objection to his voting.

Mr. STEPHENSON: So long as he voted right.

The HOME SECRETARY: I understood it was the desire of hon. members not to throw difficulties in the way of people voting when they have a moral qualification, even though it may not be legal—that no man who is entitled to have his name on the roll should be deprived of that vote. I understand that the aim of the motion is to make this House and its machinery a vehicle for prosecuting a man for voting, because he happened to have ceased to hold the qualification mentioned on the roll, notwithstanding the fact that he held other qualifications which ought to have entitled him to a vote.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He never had the qualification.

The HOME SECRETARY: That I take leave to doubt. I believe the hon. member is mistaken. There is no reason why some of the papers should not be produced, but I do not think it is desirable that this House should be made a vehicle for such legal proceedings as that. If Mr. Carter voted contrary to law, if he has infringed the Elections Act, there is the proper tribunal constituted to try his case, and if hon. members desire they can inspect his claim as has been done in other cases—always provided that it has not been burgled by somebody in the meantime.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. TURLEY: Allegedly burgled.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not know whether it was stolen or not. All I know is that suspicion rested on somebody; and the hon. member would be somewhat astonished to find who it was that suspicion rested upon.

Mr. McDONNELL: There have been some queer rumours.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am not talking about rumours, I am talking about something which has come before me officially.

Mr. FISHER: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEPHENSON: Why don't you cheer that?

The HOME SECRETARY: There is one document asked for in the motion which certainly ought not to be included. That is the one referred to in the second paragraph, and I beg to move that the resolution be amended by the omission of the second paragraph. The reason for that is that that document, as the hon. gentleman who moved the resolution ought to know, is not under the control of the Government at all; it is on these premises at this moment sealed up amongst the papers connected with the Balonne election, and the hon. member asks for a copy.

Mr. KERR: We passed a motion yesterday for the production of certain papers by the Clerk.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is the proper way to do it, but this is a direction to the Home Secretary to bring up a copy of a document which is not in his possession.

Mr. LEAHY: Cannot the House give a direction to the Home Secretary?

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. McDONNELL: Suppose there was a case before the court—

The HOME SECRETARY: Some hon. members appear to think my contention is wrong. I am willing to take, by way of interjection, suggestions from hon. members.

Mr. McDONNELL: Suppose it is brought before the court, would not the court demand the paper?

The HOME SECRETARY: That is another thing. The packet cannot be opened without a direction of the court, unless I am mistaken.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Quite right.

The HOME SECRETARY: Nobody dare open it, so what is the use of directing the Home Secretary to bring up a copy of a document which is in a packet which by law cannot be opened without the order of the court?

Mr. KERR : I am pleased you say so. A number of people in the country believe they are opened.

The HOME SECRETARY : I don't know who sent such rumours about, unless it was the hon. member for Barcoo.

Mr. KERR : The hon. member for Barcoo has no time to send such rumours about.

The HOME SECRETARY : We have heard rumours brought here by the hon. member before this.

Mr. KERR : The hon. member for Barcoo tells the truth, too.

The SPEAKER : Order !

The HOME SECRETARY : I trust the reason I have given will be sufficient for expunging the second paragraph of the resolution. I can scarcely understand how it is that the hon. member who moved it did not realise that that would be the outcome of his resolution. As to the other documents mentioned I have most of them here now, and there is not the slightest objection to produce them.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*) : After what the Home Secretary has said, I am of opinion that the amendment should be accepted. If the case was brought into court and this paper was wanted to show whether there was any perjury connected with the case the court could order its production. As I intend to speak on the main question I shall say no more on the amendment.

Question—That the second paragraph be omitted from the resolution—put and passed.

Mr. McDONNELL : Speaking to the motion, it is my opinion that the Home [5:30 p.m.] Secretary's Department has been very slow indeed in this matter, because I understand that the Cunnamulla Voters' Association approached that department on the 10th May, and received no reply till the 30th June following. The Home Secretary contended that the whole question was whether Mr. Carter had a qualification at the time he made his claim, and I think that is really the point at issue.

The HOME SECRETARY : A moral claim.

Mr. McDONNELL : Yes. That is whether Mr. Carter had a claim to a vote as a leaseholder of the Victoria Rooms, in Cunnamulla. That claim was attested by Mr. Fitzwalter, a justice of the peace, and was accepted by Mr. Francis, the police magistrate at Cunnamulla. But the facts are that Mr. Carter never had any qualification as a leaseholder of these rooms. An affidavit to that effect has been made by the owner of these rooms.

Mr. STORY : Who is the owner ?

Mr. McDONNELL : It does not matter who the owner is, but Mr. Patrick McGuigan makes the affidavit as follows :—

In the matter of the Elections Acts (Consolidated) of the election of a member of the Legislative Assembly for the district of Balonne, and of elector Henry John Carter, of Charleville.

I, Patrick McGuigan, of Cunnamulla, in the colony of Queensland, gentleman, being duly sworn, make oath and say as follows :—

1. I know, and am well acquainted with, Henry John Carter, of Alfred street, Charleville, forwarding agent, and whose name appears on the bi-monthly (February) Electoral Roll, District of Balonne, as qualified to vote for the election of a member of the Legislative Assembly in the year 1899, as number 1042, with particulars of qualification—"Leasehold, Victoria Rooms; allotment 2, sec. 4, Stockyard street, Cunnamulla."

2. I am, and have been, ever since the buildings were erected thereon, the sole owner of the fee-simple of the said allotment 2, sec. 4, Stockyard street, Cunnamulla, and of the said Victoria Rooms.

3. The said Victoria Rooms were tenanted up to about June, 1898, by N. C. McKellar and Co. as weekly tenants, and on being vacated the said rooms were taken over by Mr. Reid as a weekly tenant about the

month of July, 1898, and he continued to occupy the said rooms, as said tenant, up to about the middle of March, 1899.

But this claim of Carter's was made before March, 1899.

4. About the month of September, 1898, the said Mr. Reid took up the duties of local manager for the said Henry John Carter in the forwarding business of "H. J. Carter and Co.," and used the said Victoria Rooms in carrying on the said business, but no arrangement was entered into between me and the said Henry John Carter for a lease of the said premises, and at no time were the said premises leased to the said Henry John Carter, or any other person or firm, for any term of greater duration than a weekly tenancy, with rent payable monthly.

PATRICK MCGUIGAN.

Signed and sworn by the said Patrick McGuigan at Cunnamulla, aforesaid, this 27th day of May, A.D. 1899, before me, C. R. Hood, a justice of the peace for the colony of Queensland.

I think that affidavit fairly shows that Mr. Carter never had any qualification to make a claim as a leaseholder in respect of these rooms. It is clearly shown by Mr. McGuigan there that these rooms were never occupied by Mr. Carter.

Mr. STORY : I wonder who paid the rent ?

Mr. McDONNELL : It does not matter who paid the rent. It has been stated that Carter's claim was made in February, 1899, and on this point I would like to make this contrast. The police magistrate, Mr. Francis, who is a friend of the hon. member for Balonne, accepted this claim without making any inquiries at all; and this gentleman, we know from the past, usually puts certain questions to the ordinary working man when he comes before him with regard to their claims. He asks, "Where are you working?" and "How long have you worked at the last place?" and if the answer is "three months," he asks "Where are you going to work? If you can't get work in the district you will have to leave," and if the answers are not favourable the claims are rejected. Mr. Francis never made any inquiries into the *bona fides* of Mr. Carter with regard to this claim. There is another point in the matter, and that is this: That Mr. Carter was the returning officer for the Warrego election, and he was a man who should have had the election law at his fingers' ends, as he was required to compile the roll for that electorate; but according to this affidavit he deliberately made a false attestation.

The HOME SECRETARY : That is one statement against another.

Mr. McDONNELL : This is a sworn affidavit.

The HOME SECRETARY : Was not the other man's statement sworn, too ?

Mr. McDONNELL : I think the Home Secretary's Department is very much to blame over the matter.

The HOME SECRETARY : Do you ?

Mr. McDONNELL : Yes, I do. According to the letter from the Cunnamulla Voters' Association, they say that Mr. Carter never had a claim there. They had found that Mr. Carter had broken the electoral law, and that is what Mr. Carter has done. He was challenged by a man who knew perfectly well he never had a claim.

The HOME SECRETARY : What has the Home Secretary's Department to do with that ?

Mr. McDONNELL : I say that a statement was made that this man never had a claim. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred such as this, I say that the Home Secretary would have taken action and brought up the man for perjury.

The HOME SECRETARY : Not at all. We don't know now whether the man had a claim or not. Why don't you become an informer and lay an information.

Mr. McDONNELL: I don't want to become an informer, but I say it is clearly shown that this man never had a claim in this electorate. It did not matter if Mr. Carter had three, or four, or half-a-dozen claims, but he came forward and made an application for a claim to which he was not entitled.

The HOME SECRETARY: So you say.

Mr. McDONNELL: That is the point. I think the Home Secretary's Department has acted in a manner not at all creditable to it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Oh! Do you?

Mr. McDONNELL: In the letter from the Home Secretary's Department, dated 30th June, 1899, it is stated—

I am to state that the facts of the case have been communicated to the electoral registrar, upon whose subsequent action steps will be no doubt taken by Mr. Carter to get his proper qualification (or one of them—freeholder or leaseholder), submitted for that in respect of which his name now appears on the roll.

Now, that is admitting practically that Mr. Carter had no proper qualification.

The HOME SECRETARY: How is the Home Secretary's Department responsible for that?

Mr. McDONNELL: The Voters' Association at Cunnamulla asked for an investigation and for action to be taken by the Home Secretary's Department, and after inquiries of some sort, no further notice was taken of that letter.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not correct.

Mr. McDONNELL: The department had all the information, but they desired to let down Mr. Carter as lightly as they possibly could.

The HOME SECRETARY: If you want to become an informer, the courts are open to you.

Mr. McDONNELL: No, I don't want to become an informer. I only ask that the electoral law of the colony be administered in a legal and proper manner, and the Home Secretary's Department should see that this is done. The action taken by the Cunnamulla Voters' Association cannot possibly be objected to. In their letter to the Home Secretary, dated 11th May last, they say—

Henry John Carter, No. 1042, qualification given, leasehold, Victoria Rooms, allot. 2, sec. 4, Stockyard street, Cunnamulla. The facts are: Henry John Carter never had any lease of Victoria Rooms, as the accompanying copy of letter of the owner will show; and further, on his vote being challenged at Bonna Vonna, he signed a declaration to the effect that he did possess the leasehold of Victoria Rooms, which, in our opinion, was an act of perjury. My association requests that a full inquiry will be made in this case, and also that a *disinterested* magistrate will be appointed to try the case, as the present police magistrate, being also electoral registrar, will naturally be biased after his admitting the claim without full inquiry into the qualification.

I think the question raised by that association is a very reasonable one, and I think also that the reply from the Home Secretary's Department was not one which we would expect from a department whose duty it is to see that the Elections Act is carried out in justice to all parties. We are now in the position that the Home Secretary has, I believe, agreed to produce the papers, and I hope that, in the interests of justice, something in this matter will be done.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why don't you do it.

Mr. McDONNELL: It is not my place to do it.

The HOME SECRETARY: No, is it mine?

Mr. STORY (*Balonne*): It is most unfortunate, Sir, that the time at my disposal is so limited that it is absolutely impossible for me to go into the question, as I had hoped to do, to clear myself from the insinuations that have been made in regard to this election at Bonna Vonna—insinuations made more particularly by the leader of the Labour Opposition, who knows nothing whatever about it. But although it is absolutely impossible for me to clear myself to-

night, and I must leave it until another opportunity, if that opportunity does not come in the ordinary way of debate, I shall myself move that the papers connected with the voting at Bonna Vonna be laid on the table of the House, when I shall have a chance to justify myself from the slanders that have been uttered about me in connection with this matter by men who absolutely know nothing whatever about it. As there is no time for me to go into that question, I must confine myself to-night strictly to the matter before the House—that is, Carter's vote. It will be supposed that as Carter went a long distance to vote for me he is an intimate and old friend of mine.

Mr. DAWSON: You know he voted for you?

Mr. STORY: Yes. I think I have seen him twice in my life—once at Bonna Vonna, and once some while afterwards at Charleville. He is an older resident at Charleville than I am at Cunnamulla. When the hon. member for Fortitude Valley reads about how Reid took over those Victoria Rooms from McGuigan, and then became the agent for H. J. Carter, he entirely alters the facts as they are known to me.

Mr. McDONALD: It is a sworn affidavit.

Mr. STORY: I know what the hon. member possibly does not know. Do I not know that McGuigan was in Brisbane only two or three weeks ago, and that this is the outcome of his visit? I am not going to say anything in connection with Carter that is not true, and I am not going to try to clear him from anything he has done that he should not have done.

Mr. McDONALD: This affidavit was sworn in May, so you are out of it.

Mr. STORY: I know that McGuigan was down here, and that the leader of the Labour party put his motion on the paper a few days afterwards. Hon. members talk of things they know nothing about. The facts are these: Mr. Reid was a clerk on Thurruagoona station, and left there to start as forwarding agent for himself at Cunnamulla. When he got there he had not a great deal to do, and when Carter started a branch of his Charleville business at Cunnamulla he took Reid in as a sort of partner. The firm then became H. J. Carter and Co., a branch of the Charleville business. It is absolutely certain that Carter was responsible for the rent, and he paid the rent. Hon. members may not know that in our district there are very few legal documents in connection with the leasing of places. I myself leased one for years and years upon mere word of mouth. As I said, Carter leased those premises and paid the rent, which he looked upon as his qualification.

Mr. McDONNELL: He did not lease them.

Mr. STORY: The very fact of his paying the rent weekly or monthly, or whatever it was, is a proof to me that he did. McGuigan does not pretend that Reid paid the rent of those premises. Carter occupied them, and his name was on them, and he did a large forwarding business under the name of H. J. Carter and Co. in those rooms. I will ask any sensible man to say whether, under those circumstances, Carter was not the occupant of those rooms. Whether there was a document in the shape of a lease or not I do not know, but he occupied the premises and paid the rent for them. But he had another qualification. He had a store at Wyandra, on the railway line, and I am informed by a man who knows the whole of the circumstances that his claim was made out not in Cunnamulla but in Charleville, at Mr. Lockett's office there. I will admit, for argument's sake, that Carter had left McGuigan's premises before the election at Bonna Vonna took place, but he still had the premises at Wyandra.

Mr. McDONALD: He was not qualified for that.



Mr. STORY: A nice question arises here. Hon. members on the other side are always contending that a man should not be debarred from having his vote if he has any qualification at all. Carter's name was on the electoral roll, and the Elections Act states that a man's name being on the roll shall be taken as proof positive of his qualification unless he has certain disabilities. It is the certificate of his right to vote. If he loses one qualification and has another he should retain the right to vote. There is some time or another at which a man is qualified to vote; we will say, when the roll is signed and handed over to the returning officer, and a man's name is on that roll, we should take it as his qualification. If he loses that qualification, and the roll is not to be accepted as a proof of his right to vote or otherwise, the question then arises as to whether he has a qualification or not. I will admit, for argument's sake, that Mr. Carter lost the qualification for which he was on the roll.

Mr. DAWSON: He never had it to lose.

Mr. STORY: He had it to lose. When I was in Cunnamulla he rented and occupied those premises, although there may not have been any document. It is a jesuitical begging of the question to say that he never held those premises under a lease. I have lived in a house in South Brisbane for a considerable number of months past, but I have no lease. I have not one scratch of the pen, or one signature, although I pay my rent every week, and I get a receipt for it. Is that not a qualification?

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Not for a leasehold.

Mr. STORY: If I occupy a house for ten years, do I not lease it in actual fact?

MEMBERS of the Opposition: No, no!

Mr. STORY: If ever there was a party that argued that men's rights to vote should not be interfered with, if it could possibly be helped, it is the party on the other side.

Mr. TURLEY: Their legal right to vote.

Mr. STORY: But when they find that a vote is not going on their side they raise all sorts of objections. No one on this side would raise the objection that a man living in a house for years, who paid his rent, and was recognised as the occupier, was not a leaseholder because he had not a lease drawn out. That is the position taken up by hon members opposite.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: No, no!

Mr. STORY: If my contention is right—that there is a time when a man's right to be on the roll for a certain qualification is inviolable—supposing he loses that qualification, he has no qualification so far as the roll is concerned, but he still has a qualification so far as fact is concerned. I take it for granted that Mr. Carter was asked the prescribed questions at Bonna Vonna—

Are you the same person whose name appears on the roll?

I suppose he replied—

I am.

Have you already voted, either here or elsewhere, at the present election in this electoral district?

No.

Are you disqualified from voting?

As he had the qualification, I presume he said that he was not disqualified. Perhaps he was not asked the third question—but even suppose he was—

Mr. DAWSON: Our information is that his very application to get on the roll was false.

Mr. STORY: That is a point that I never heard of until now. The allegation of the Labour party is that he did not rent these premises from Mr. McGuigan at any time.

Mr. TURLEY: That he had no lease.

Mr. STORY: Well, if that is the ground taken by Mr. McGuigan and the leader of the

Labour party, it does neither of them any credit, because they know that it is customary in our district for premises to be occupied without being leased, and Mr. McGuigan knows it better than anyone else in our district, for he wanted me to rent the same rooms, and I should probably have held them under the same conditions as Mr. Castles did; and a man could have held those rooms year after year without a lease, paying his rent honestly and fairly, and yet, at a juncture like this, Mr. McGuigan will claim before the country that that man was not his tenant because he had no lease. If that is what hon. members base their case on, it does not need me to champion Mr. Carter, or to apologise for his vote.

Mr. KERR: Mr. Carter has a residence qualification for the Warrego. He is not being deprived of a vote.

Motion, as amended, put and passed.

#### WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL.

#### SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of the debate,

After a pause,

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge, *Maranoa*) said: I was addressing the House on this question when it was last before the House, when the time for private business expired, but it is now two minutes to 6 o'clock, and I have no wish to talk it out.

Mr. TURLEY: Let someone move the adjournment of the debate.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not want to do anything which will place the hon. member for Gympie at a disadvantage with respect to the Bill, but at the same time I have no wish to relinquish my right to speak.

Mr. McDONALD: Get the permission of the House to speak on the next occasion.

The HOME SECRETARY: Supposing it is not granted? Anyone can object.

Mr. FISHER: By the leave of the House, you can move the adjourn the adjournment.

After a further pause,

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said: I move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. FISHER: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

On the motion of Mr. FISHER, the resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for Friday, 27th instant.

At 7 o'clock, the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government business.

#### RAILWAY STANDING COMMITTEE BILL, ELECTIONS BILL, LIQUOR BILL.

#### FIRST READINGS.

The House having in committee affirmed the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide for the appointment of a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railway Works and for other purposes; a Bill to consolidate and amend the laws relating to parliamentary elections; and a Bill to amend the laws relating to the sale of intoxicating liquor—the Bills were read a first time, and the second readings made Orders of the Day for Tuesday, the 31st October.

#### SUPPLY.

#### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—DEBATE ON FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

Question stated—That there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1899-1900, a sum not exceeding £300 for the Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor.

Mr. DAWSON: I moved the adjournment of the debate when this question was before the Committee last with the full intention of continuing it when it came before the Committee



again, but I rise now to say that I do not feel physically fit to do it. I make the statement because I think it is due to hon. members to know why I do not continue the debate.

The TREASURER: You will be able to speak again.

Mr. DAWSON: Yes. I want to say that I do not intend to go on with the debate now, but at a later stage I may have something to say on the question. A matter has been engaging the attention of hon. members of this Chamber for some time which they have not so far been able to get at. Acting under advice from the highest parliamentary authority we have, I understand, it can be taken up now, and therefore, without saying anything on the Financial Statement, I shall give way to another hon. member.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): Some eight or ten days ago I intended to have moved the adjournment of the House to call attention to a matter of urgent public importance—to consider the necessity for the Police Commission visiting the Northern and Central divisions of the colony before they complete their labours and send in their report. I think it is advisable at this stage to draw attention to the necessity for them visiting those divisions, and to offer my reasons for believing they should go to those centres before they complete their examination. I think that nearly all dispassionate minded persons will admit that if the report of this Police Commission is to be at all comprehensive and representative, the members of the Commission, before they complete their labours, should visit those important centres of the colony, which so far have not been able to give evidence in connection with the administration of the Police Force in Queensland. The question has already been raised by a question placed upon the business-paper some time ago by Mr. Dawson, and to which an answer was given by the Premier. The question asked whether it was intended that the Police Commission should visit the Northern and Central portions of the colony before they completed their labours. The Premier, in reply, read out a letter, from which it appeared that the Police Commission had sent a circular letter to nearly all the magistrates throughout the various parts of the colony, asking them whether they thought it would be a wise thing for the Police Commission to go to those parts of the colony, and whether it was possible that evidence would be forthcoming if the Commission visited those centres. The letter the Premier read was to the effect that the general tenor of the replies received from the magistrates was that there was no evidence likely to be forthcoming in those centres. I do not know whether the Premier read the full text of the letter, but from what I know of the matter I am inclined to think that the whole of the letter was not read, and that some portion of it, for some purpose which I am not in a position to grasp, was not read to the House. Now, I believe that the writer of the letter which the Premier read out in reply to the question asked by Mr. Dawson added that though the magistrates in the various centres communicated with did not believe that any good purpose would be served by the Commission visiting the various centres in the North and the Centre, he did not feel himself that any particular weight could be attached to that argument. I believe there is not, and the Commission should, I think, visit those two centres of the colony before they complete their labours and send in their report. It is utterly impossible that this Police Commission can bring in a report which will have any useful effect at all if they do not obtain evidence in those centres. A Police Commission appointed some time ago in New Zealand spent five months in

gathering evidence, and during the time they were engaged in gathering evidence they visited almost every important centre in New Zealand. Their report, I believe, can be obtained in the library. It has been very carefully compiled, and contains most useful information, which, it is evident, the Commission would never have been able to obtain if they had not visited the most important towns in New Zealand in quest of it. Now, when the Government of New Zealand appointed that Commission their object was not to make it a farce, not merely to placate public opinion and meet a demand of a big section of the public, that the police administration should be subjected to inquiry. They felt, as the public felt, that any commission appointed to inquire into the administration of the police department should be thoroughly representative; that it should not confine its inquiries to the town of Wellington, but should be at liberty to go all over the northern and southern islands. All the important centres were visited, and useful information obtained, which was embodied in the report. Now, the Commission appointed in Queensland is one of those commissions which so far has justified its appointment. They have already gathered valuable evidence, and if we are to judge by the tenor of the articles in the Press, I think the public of Northern and Central Queensland, while giving the Commission a mead of praise for the work they have done, are anxious that they should visit those centres. It is recognised that the work they have done has been of such a useful character that it will have far-reaching effects in improving the administration of the Queensland Police Force, and if it has had a beneficial effect to inquire into the working of the police system in the South, the same result must naturally accrue in the Centre and North. The contention I make is that when this Commission has done such good work already, they should be allowed to do better work if possible, and the way to do better work is by leaving Brisbane and visiting the Central and Northern parts of the colony. It may be said that there is no object in them doing so. But there is. It is said that some members of the Commission object to leaving Brisbane and going North. Mr. Unmack, one member of the Commission, desires to get back to his work in Brisbane. Mr. Sadleir wants to get back to his southern home. Another gentleman also wants to get away. They are satisfied that they have done quite enough work already within the environment of Brisbane. The other two members of the Commission, the two men who have been the life and spirit of the Commission—Mr. Dickson and Judge Noel—who have done very excellent work, are anxious to go to the North and Centre to get evidence upon various matters.

Mr. LEAHY: They certainly have done good work.

Mr. LESINA: I think the public generally recognise that, and they are anxious that they should do better, and the only way to do better is to make inquiry outside of Brisbane. Some time ago when the various police magistrates were circularised for the purpose of obtaining opinions as to whether it was possible to obtain further evidence in the Centre and the North, the general tenor of their replies was that they did not know that anybody desired to give evidence. But take one instance as a reply to that statement. There is the town of Gatton, which has become notorious because of certain murders committed there. The Police Commission advertised in the local papers that they would be at Gatton on a certain date, and they desired persons who wished to give evidence to send in to them information upon the various

matters they desired to speak. No replies were forthcoming, and when the Commission went to Gattton they went there not knowing whether one witness would be forthcoming. They opened their sitting, and eight witnesses came forward and gave evidence regarding the Gattton tragedy. Again, there is another illustration in connection with the Oxley case. The Commission have unearthed most valuable evidence which the police themselves could not gather, and I think we can safely assume that if the Commission visited Rockhampton, Townsville, Charters Towers—

Mr. KERR : What about Longreach ?

Mr. LESINA : Yes, I would like to see them go there, and to Hughenden and Barcaldine, and any other Northern or Central town where inquiry would be useful, and in which they would be able to gather evidence upon various matters in which the police have been working unsuccessfully. There is this fact that I would like to impress upon the public: The Northern and Central portions of the colony will have to pay, conjointly with the South, the cost of this Commission. I suppose it will run into £2,000, or £3,000, or £4,000, and the people generally will have to pay for it. Is it therefore wise to appoint a commission which is going to sit in one corner of the colony and gather evidence in regard to crimes committed in that part of the colony only while they ignore the Central and Northern parts of the colony? I have heard no argument which would convince me that it would not be a wise and judicious step to send that Commission to the Northern and Central portions of the colony. Nearly all the newspapers in the North and Centre, and some of those in the South, are advocating it. The *Courier* has recently, in several articles drawn attention to the necessity for extending the sphere of inquiry. They have pointed out that where the lives and property of the citizens are at stake, where the administration of the force has been brought into question, it is only a wise thing that every part of the colony should be visited which it is possible to visit within the prescribed time that the Commission have to do their work, and that the question of expense should not enter into the calculation at all. It may be said that it will cost a lot of money to send the Commission to the Northern and Central portions of the colony. Do we always consider the cost of doing a certain public work when that work is considered beneficial, and when it concerns the lives and property of the citizens? Only a night or two ago we decided to send away a contingent of troops to South Africa to take part in a war which has for its purpose the granting of certain British citizens, in common with others, certain political rights which are denied to them by a foreign power. We propose to spend anything from £30,000 to £50,000 upon that, and if we can spend such a sum of money in fighting the cause of persons who live out of Queensland, shall we hesitate about a paltry £2,000 or so, when the lives and property of our own citizens are at stake? This Commission has been appointed to gather evidence; to find out how far the administration of the Police Force has been carried out with effect. Well, if we are going to make its report representative, the members of that Commission must of necessity go outside Brisbane to gather information on which to base their conclusions. I tell you that, in some of the Northern towns of the colony, a reign of terrorism prevails. In Charters Towers alone there have been two explosions, and the Government have, in each case, offered £1,000 reward for the discovery of the perpetrators. Another outrage is the cutting of the throats of a

number of valuable horses on Charters Towers.

The authors of that crime have not [7.30 p.m.] been discovered, although the Government have offered big rewards. There are also several undiscovered murders for which the Government have offered big rewards. There have been several cyanide works robbed of gold to the amount of several hundred pounds, and the perpetrators of these deeds have not been discovered so far. The other night a clergyman of my acquaintance was stuck up practically by a highway robber. He did not report the matter to the police; but I know that it is so from his own lips. No evidence has been obtained by the police of that district to track any of these criminals. Charters Towers is but one town. In Townsville there are various crimes undiscovered in which big rewards have been offered by the police.

The TREASURER : What kind of crimes ?

Mr. LESINA : In connection with the gambling—the evidence-gathering in connection with Detective Grimshaw. These are the cases I referred to. There are several murders at Mackay, the adjoining port.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : Some years ago you refer to.

Mr. LESINA : It matters not. I see, looking down the columns of the *Government Gazette*, large sums of money offered for the apprehension of persons who have been guilty of crimes in these districts. The sending of the Commission there to obtain evidence in connection with these crimes, and in connection with the failure of the police to discover the perpetrators of these crimes is very reasonable, and one to which no reasonable-minded person can offer any objection. I have pointed out that on the score of expense they can offer no objection, because if they can spend £40,000 or £50,000 in sending men to the Transvaal to protect the interests of the people there, they cannot object to spending an extra thousand pounds to protect the interests of the people of Queensland whether they live in the North or the Centre. So far, the scope of the Commission has been confined exclusively to Brisbane, and as far as we can judge, the Commission, or a majority of the Commission, are against going North. If they are to give a comprehensive report—a report that will be useful in the future—they will have to go further afield to obtain evidence. There are the police at Charters Towers who want to give evidence. There are business people in Mackay, Townsville, Cairns, and Cooktown, and there are also business people in Rockhampton, Barcaldine, Longreach, and Clermont, who want to give evidence, and are they going to pay their own expenses to come down? They could not possibly, even if they could afford to pay their own expense, leave their businesses for some considerable time to come down here for the purpose of adding to the usefulness of this report. The Commission must go to them. If the majority of the members are opposed to going they should resign their positions. As a matter of fact, the matter should not be left to them at all. They should be instructed to go. The House should express its opinion on the matter. I am sure the majority of the members for the North and Centre are in favour of the Commission visiting the North and Centre, and I believe there are members in the Southern portion of the colony who are in favour of it extending the sphere of its labours. Therefore, I think it is a wise thing, at this stage of the proceedings, to point out that, to my mind, it is a very wise thing that the Commission should extend its labours and visit these centres. Other members of the Committee may have something to say with respect to this matter. The points I have briefly laid before you are, to my

mind, evidence enough in themselves that if the Commission is going to be useful, and its report nothing more than a farce, it should certainly extend its labours so as to include the Northern and Central portions of the colony. What argument can be advanced why the Commission should not go to the North and Centre? I have not heard so far, in private conversation, or by reading the papers, any argument which influences me in the belief that it should not go further afield in search of information or evidence, or which would induce me to believe that it would do harm by extending the sphere of its labours. I do not know that any hon. member can offer such an argument. I should be anxious to hear it. I have gone through the files of the newspapers in the library—papers published in Townsville, Rockhampton, Barcaldine, Longreach, Charters Towers, and Hughenden—and there is an anxiety expressed by the people there, if the Press represents their feeling correctly, that the Commission should certainly visit those centres and give the business men and the citizens of those places the opportunity of giving the Commission the evidence in their possession with regard to the administration of the Police Department. We cannot expect them to come down here, either by train or steamer, and spend weeks to give evidence. It is absurd. With respect to the police themselves, it may be said that those in the North and Centre who have got complaints against their superiors, or who may have had disputes amongst them, can send a delegate to Brisbane to tell the Commission the facts of the disputes and the opinions expressed by members of the force. I have spoken to members of the Police Force in Rockhampton, more especially in connection with the federation referendum, Charters Towers, and Townsville, and I find there is a desire on their part to meet the Commission and give evidence with respect to police administration. Detective Grimshaw's case alone shows the necessity of sending the Commission, before it completes its labours, to Townsville, if it is sent to no other town at all in the Northern part of the colony. As I pointed out before, the other objection is that it will cost another £300 or £400 or £1,000. One last word before I conclude. I have spoken to members of this Chamber in connection with this matter, and it also appears to be impressed on many of them—I hope they will express their opinions to-night before it is settled—that it would be a good thing to send the Commission to these two centres, which, so far, have been ignored in the matter. In conversation with many of them they pointed out that the members of the Commission are opposed to going. The members of this Commission are servants of the people of Queensland. They are and will be paid by the people of Queensland for the services they render. The object in appointing the Commission is to gather evidence of a character which will be suitable for the future use of the country, and for the purpose of more honestly administering affairs in connection with the Police Force in the future. If one of the members of the Commission or a majority of its members are opposed to going, those members who are opposed to going should certainly have the decency to resign their seats and give place to others who are willing to do the work. As I pointed out, there are only three members who object to going anywhere else outside Brisbane for evidence. There is Mr. Unmack, who wants to stay here and attend to his business, and who thinks the Commission has done well enough. There is Mr. Sadleir, who holds a brief for the police, and wants to get back, and there is the other gentleman—

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Mr. Garvin.

Mr. LESINA: Who desires to get back to his southern residence. If those three gentlemen want to go away and attend to their business let them go, and let the other two who have taken a most important and most useful part in this inquiry, and whose work speaks for itself—that of Judge Noel and Mr. Dickson—with three others who will co-operate with them loyally, obtain information in the North and Central portions of Queensland. If that is done I shall be perfectly satisfied, and I think the Government will have done a work for which the people of those parts of the colony will be grateful; and when the report of the Commission is presented it will not only be of use to Parliament, but it will lead to an improvement in police administration in the future.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. R. Dickson, *Bulimba*): I presume the hon. gentleman has been addressing us in connection with the financial debate. Is that so? The hon. gentleman has introduced the subject in connection with the financial debate, otherwise it seems to me *ultra vires* of the motion which is on the paper for discussion on the Budget. I should like to learn if the hon. gentleman has spoken—of course he is at liberty to select his topic—but it would be desirable to know whether the speech with which he has favoured us is his speech on the Financial Statement?

Mr. McDONALD: That is his business.

Mr. FISHER: To quiz is not usual.

The PREMIER: It is not usual for the financial debate to be opened with the selection of a special topic; it is usual in discussing the redress of grievances before Supply to embrace a review of the whole of the subjects embodied in the speech of the Treasurer, and to emphasise any particular subject deemed necessary; but it is most unusual for an hon. member introducing a discussion on the Budget simply to select one topic alone, and then to consider that he is at liberty to resume the debate upon other subjects on the financial debate. I very much regret that the leader of the Opposition has been debarred from opening the debate in a legitimate form. I have no objection to it being opened by the hon. member for Clermont in the form in which it has been opened so long as we understand that it is his speech on the financial debate. I accept it in that light, and in that light I will reply to him as I would to the leader of the Opposition if he had opened the debate. It is of course a very important subject which the hon. member has dealt with, but it does not form any feature of the Budget Speech of my hon. friend the Treasurer, which is a very able review of the finances of the colony. And while speaking on that subject, I think the Treasurer of this colony might well have received from the leader of the Opposition the usual complimentary expressions on exhibiting to the people of the colony the view of its finances in the lucid, clear, and intelligent manner in which he has done. It has been customary within my knowledge of parliamentary procedure for the leader of the Opposition to express a few graceful words acknowledging the care and attention which the Treasurer for the time being has devoted to the very intricate yet interesting subject; and I am sure hon. members on both sides will agree with me that the Treasurer, on this occasion, has certainly placed before us a review of the whole position of the colony—financial, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and otherwise—in such a manner as to command our attention, and, as far as many of us are concerned, our highest approbation.

Mr. HARDACRE: You want to raise a different question.

The PREMIER: I want to understand on what ground I stand. Am I replying to the hon. member's speech on the Financial Statement? I assume that I am.

Mr. HARDACRE: No.

The PREMIER: If any hon. member has spoken on this question to-night without bringing to bear his views on the Financial Statement, he is taking advantage of the forms of Parliament in a manner not justified by anything done before. There should be a certain amount of relevancy.

Mr. LESINA: I merely desired to raise that particular question.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has other opportunities of doing that to-night. The Chairman is in the chair for the purpose of discussing the question whether £300 should be granted to the aide-de-camp. The hon. member is at liberty to traverse the whole scheme of government and their delinquencies, or otherwise the whole platform; at the same time he ought to have attached his speech to a review of the Financial Statement. That is unmistakable. The leader of the Opposition would have traversed a much wider range of subjects than the hon. member has, but in reply to the hon. gentleman I shall reply to him as having criticised the Financial Statement.

Mr. LESINA: No—only one question.

The PREMIER: That is the only justification for him speaking at the present time. I am confident that my position is correct—that in taking up that one topic the hon. gentleman has committed himself to his speech on the Financial Statement. I presume so.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. gentleman knows he can raise it again when the Speaker is in the chair—when the Speaker is being moved out of the chair to go into Supply, he can raise it then.

The PREMIER: That would be exceedingly bad form, and has never been done before. I can only attribute the course taken by the hon. gentleman to inexperience of parliamentary procedure, because dealing with one subject only is not the usual form in which to debate the Financial Statement.

Mr. DAWSON: He acted on the advice of the Speaker.

Mr. LESINA: I made my speech on the advice of the Speaker with respect to one topic alone.

The PREMIER: I am certain that if the Speaker or any other parliamentary authority were appealed to he would say that while the hon. gentleman had a perfect right to freedom of discussion, at the same time his speech delivered at this juncture while the Chairman is in the chair, must be accepted as his speech on the Financial Statement, and not otherwise. That is the point, and in that light I reply to the hon. gentleman. I can assure the hon. gentleman and the Committee that the Government are most desirous that this Police Commission should obtain the fullest information and evidence throughout the colony. Every facility has been placed at their disposal; they have been constituted in a manner which, I think, has commanded general respect. The members of that Commission are most able, intelligent men, culled not only from Queensland, but from other States of Australia, where they occupy very prominent positions. They have done, I believe, very good work, and I think their work will bear good fruit. We have not seen their report yet, but I am confident that report will contain many recommendations which will tend to reorganise reform and vitalise our Police Department. But I say this Commission have at all times been allowed the fullest opportunity of investigation; no limit whatever has been placed upon the number of witnesses they may choose to call; no limit has been placed upon the number of police who have been allowed,

if they chose, to come to Brisbane and give their evidence. Their expenses have all been paid, and no member of the police has been restricted, and no member of the public has been debarred, from giving evidence as fully and freely as he chose before the Commission. They have been guarded from any consequence of freedom of speech—that is to say, from the consequence of any feeling manifested before their superior officers if their statements were adverse or tended to criticise the action of their superior officers. As a matter of fact I have never seen a commission where more latitude has been allowed with regard to witnesses giving evidence, and where witnesses have been more safeguarded in connection with the giving of their evidence.

Mr. McDONALD: Have they power to pay the expenses of the witnesses from the North?

The PREMIER: The whole of the expenses of these witnesses have been paid without demur. If the Commission still want further witnesses, or if the police in other parts of the colony want their grievances placed before the Commission, they will have the fullest opportunity of so doing, without any injury or prejudice to themselves.

Mr. LESINA: Business persons from the North cannot come down here and neglect their business.

The PREMIER: They are allowed to come if they so desire.

The TREASURER: How many business men in Brisbane have desired to give evidence?

The PREMIER: I wish this to be understood: That every facility has been afforded to the Commission by the Government to travel, in order to obtain evidence, whether it is policemen or private citizens who desire to give evidence; but I do say that it is unusual for any Government to instruct any Royal Commission to go to any part of the colony. The members of the Commission must use their own judgment in the matter. If the hon. member for Clermont chooses to call for the correspondence in this matter, he will see that the fullest facilities have been afforded to the Commission, if they desire to itinerate. When the Government received the first intimation that some of the members of the Commission desired to travel, I pointed out that they had not fully exhausted the scope of their investigations in the South, where some serious crimes had been committed, and they should endeavour to discover what had been left undone by the police here, or what mistakes might have been made; because the sooner those mistakes are rectified the sooner will justice be put on the right track.

Mr. LESINA: The strong point is that this matter should not be left to the Commission.

The PREMIER: The hon. member seems to think that the mission of the Commission is to detect crime in all parts of the colony, but their duty is to discover whether the police methods are good and up to date. The Commission has hitherto been engaged in these places where crimes have occurred of late, and yet their investigations have not covered the whole of these matters. The Commission must use their own judgment as to the necessity of travelling, and we should not interfere with them in that respect. If they say that their investigations are not complete, and that they wish to proceed to other parts of the colony, the Government will place the fullest and most complete facilities at their disposal.

Mr. LESINA: The majority of them are against travelling.

The PREMIER: Well, the Commissioners are the best judges of that.

Mr. LESINA: Mr. Unmack is one of those who does not wish to travel.

The PREMIER: I do not think it is right or decorous to introduce the name of that gentleman. I know that he has done excellent work in the past in any position he has been appointed to, and the Government place full reliance on what that gentleman is doing and will do. As a matter of fact, he has not said anything to me on the matter, but the Government place the fullest confidence in that gentleman as one of the members of this Police Commission. If the Commission desire to travel, every facility will be afforded them to do so; but I think it would be very unwise for the Government or Parliament to interfere with them and say they must go here or there. If they were to appoint a sub-committee to proceed to other parts of the colony, the Government will give them every facility for doing so.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I think that may be a way out of the present difficulty—that is if the Commission approve of it; but I am not going to interfere with them. From past experience I have arrived at the conclusion that all they will learn by travelling is that the police elsewhere have more complaints with regard to promotions, or something of that sort, and as they have already learned the views of a large number of police in this category, I think their report will contain some proper suggestions on this point. I do not see that anything more can be done by the Government. The hon. member for Clermont may relieve his mind of any idea that the Government desire to restrict the Commission in their freedom of action. I hope the result of the Commission's efforts will redound to the improvement of the Police Force, as I believe it will; not that I wish in any way to disparage the efficiency of the police service—although I think there may be some room for improvement in the Criminal Investigation Branch. But we must not judge too harshly in this respect by what we have heard. I feel it is hardly necessary for me to say more at present, but as the hon. member for Clermont has at this stage spoken on the police question, according to parliamentary usage we must accept his speech as one on the Financial Statement. In that light I have replied to him, but I think it would have been more convenient for him if he had chosen another time to introduce this subject. I trust that what I have said will satisfy the hon. member that the Government desire as much as he does that before the Commission conclude their evidence that they will exhaust all the subjects referred to them, and that they will make a report to Parliament which will be worthy of the Police Force and tend to an improvement of the service.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): I think some credit should be given to the hon.

[8 p.m.] member for Clermont for the object he has in view. No doubt it would have been more convenient, and it would have given greater prominence to the question, if the discussion of this particular matter had been raised in the House, before the Speaker left the chair, rather than in committee. I believe that was the desire of the hon. member for Clermont, but under a misapprehension, no doubt, though, after consultation with certain other members, he thought this was the right way. His idea, as far as I could gather, was not to deal with the general question of the Financial Statement, but to raise this particular subject for discussion. The last days of the Commission's labours are approaching, and it is believed that there is, on the part of several members of that Commission, a desire to visit other parts of the colony with the view of enlarging the scope of their inquiry and

coming to wider results. At the same time there is no doubt that some of them, whilst, perhaps, they have no objection to a sub-committee travelling, have themselves a natural reluctance to leave their own business. That reluctance prevents the Commission from travelling as a whole. I do not know how true it is, but there is a feeling that the Premier is averse to their going to the other parts of the colony. I am very glad to learn, from the Premier's remarks to-night, that he has no objection at all to their going, provided that they themselves think it is desirable to go. That will remove a misapprehension from the minds of a number of people.

The HOME SECRETARY: It has been stated here over and over again.

Mr. HARDACRE: It is the first time I have heard it. I had the opinion that the Premier had an objection to finding the expenditure that would have to be incurred by their travelling, and I am very glad to find that that is not so. I differ with the Premier on this one matter. He has no objection to their going, but he desires to leave it altogether to the judgment of the Commission themselves. I think it should not be left altogether to their judgment. They at least ought to pay some deference to the expressed wishes of members of country districts. Though they themselves may not see any good results come from it, if the members for country districts think that good results would come, that there is a necessity for them to go there, and that they would find out many matters which require to be remedied in connection with the police, the Commission ought, and probably would, pay some deference to their desires and make the visit. I desire to support the remark of the hon. member for Clermont that it is the general desire of the people in the Central district that the Commission should visit that part of the colony. What the opinion of the people of the North is I cannot say from my own knowledge, but I believe it is the same. From the conversations I have had with police officers themselves I gather that dissatisfaction and disaffection are widespread in the police force in the Western and Central districts. I believe the Commission would learn many things out there by actual visits and personal observation which they can gain no idea of from the information they can gain from police officers around the Brisbane district. Therefore I think the suggestion of the Premier is a good one—that if the Commission cannot go as a body, a sub-committee of the Commission should be appointed for the purpose of making an investigation in the further parts of the colony.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): I am very sorry that my hon. colleague, the leader of this party, is not physically capable of taking part in this debate to-night. I am also sorry that an irregularity has occurred in the way the question of the Police Commission has been brought forward by the hon. member for Clermont. I understood the hon. member to say he acted on the advice of the Speaker. At any rate, there seems to have been a mistake made somewhere. The Premier, and I do not blame him for it, speaking on behalf of his colleague, the Treasurer, took it as a discourtesy that the leader of this side did not make any remarks.

The TREASURER: Not on my behalf.

Mr. BROWNE: Not at the hon. gentleman's request, I know, but I give him credit for speaking on behalf of his own colleague if he thought he had been slighted. What I want to say is that I am very certain the last thing the leader of this party, or any member of it, would do would be to slight the Treasurer in any way, however much they may disagree with him. Although there are many things in the Statement that I cannot agree with, I am prepared to

give the Treasurer every credit for the way he has laid his Statement before us every year since he has had charge of the finances of the colony. And the hon. gentleman can claim for himself that his prognostications have been pretty well realised. I am not going into a lengthy discussion on the financial part of his Statement. I do not happen to be a budding Treasurer. When I was a new member I used to sit up night after night going through figures, and fixing them up in different ways, in conjunction with an old friend and colleague, Mr. Rawlings, the then member for Woothakata. But after a year or two we found that, however we mixed up the figures, when it came to real juggling, the Treasurer was always a good few paces ahead of us. Until I happen to be a colleague of the Treasurer I shall not attempt it again. With regard to the figures before us, the Treasurer again has a surplus, this time of £149,000. I do not doubt that for a moment, and am quite willing to take his word for it, and I congratulate him upon it. We must all admit that during the last few years the colony has been going ahead. With good seasons and the increased output from our mines the colony must go ahead. No doubt hon. members on that side will say it is good government that is making it go ahead. We on this side are quite at liberty to express the opinion that the country is going ahead and recuperating in spite of bad government, and that it would get ahead much faster if we were on the other side of the House. I cannot help noticing the great increase during the last few years in our revenue and our expenditure. In the first Financial Statement I had the pleasure of listening to, in 1893, there was nearly £1,000,000 difference in both revenue and expenditure. In the Budget Speech for 1893, Sir Thomas Mell-wraith estimated the revenue for the year 1893-94 at £3,375,500. The revenue expected for the year 1899-1900 is £4,388,445, being an increase in six years of £1,012,945. The same with regard to the expenditure. The expenditure for 1893-94 was estimated to be £3,378,690. The expenditure for the year 1899-1900 is set down at £4,364,420—again an increase of nearly £1,000,000; so that there is not the slightest doubt about the colony going ahead, judging by the revenue and expenditure. The only thing further I will say with regard to the figures in the Financial Statement is that, looking through the Estimates, I notice there is a very large number of increases in all departments of the service. I am not very much objecting to that. In a great many instances they may be deserved; but I would point out to the Treasurer—sanguine as he is, and though his expectations have so far been verified—that we do not know when a little bit of rough times may come again; and when things are booming like they have been the last year or two, from the Treasurer's point of view, it is advisable not to increase our expenditure too fast. It is better to have a little surplus instead of spending every farthing coming in, so as to provide for a bad day. There are several matters referred to in the Statement that I am going to criticise, and I think I shall be able to give good reasons for my criticism in each case. Among the sources of revenue mentioned in the Treasurer's Statement the first I shall deal with is under the heading of "trade and commerce—imports," page 7. About the middle of the page, among the various items specified, are "acids, chemicals, drugs, including opium." Now, there are some very serious charges being made against the Government at the present time with regard to the traffic in opium. Hon. members will remember that a little while ago I moved for a return showing the amount of opium imported

into the colony from 1st January, 1898, to 30th June, 1899. My reason for asking for the return for that period is that the Aborigines Protection Act came into force in the beginning of 1898. According to that return, the amount of opium imported during that period was 33,692 $\frac{4}{10}$  lb., and the duty paid was £33,692 5s. 4d. When you come to look at it, that is a fearful amount of opium to be brought into a little colony like this. Then look at the places where the largest quantity has been imported. The highest on the list is Townsville, where 10,991 lb. were landed inside of eighteen months. Next to that—and a great deal worse when you consider the population—is the little town of Cairns, where 6,969 lb. have been landed inside of nine months.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Australia for the white man.

Mr. BROWNE: Of course we know that it used to be said of Cairns that it is a place where a white man takes off his hat to a Chinaman.

Mr. GIVENS: That is a distinct libel on Cairns.

The TREASURER: The consumption of opium is falling off all the time.

Mr. BROWNE: It is very hard to say. I have information to the contrary.

Mr. DUNSFORD: More is being smuggled perhaps.

Mr. BROWNE: I shall quote from the report of the Government Resident at Thursday Island, the Hon. John Douglas—a gentleman who is respected by everyone in this House. I may point out here that the reason I am bringing this matter up more especially is that when the Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Bill was passed the Poisons Act was repealed, as it was contended that the former measure contained more stringent provisions than the Poisons Act. The distinct charge is now made against the Government that since the passing of the Aborigines Protection Act they have sent instructions to their officers not to enforce this duty.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you say that the Poisons Act was repealed?

Mr. BROWNE: So far as it applied to the Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act. I think the hon. gentleman referred to that himself.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, but you made no modification.

Mr. BROWNE: I will read a short extract from Mr. Douglas's report for 1898—his last report. On page 6 he says—

As for the restriction of the sale and distribution of opium, which has been most explicitly provided for under the Act—

That is the Aborigines Protection Act—

I have already pointed out in my report of last year that the Act has been ignored, and practically repealed by the instruction issued under Executive authority by which the sale of opium has been sanctioned. The aborigines of this portion of Australia are very little given to opium smoking—the practice can scarcely be said to exist among them. We know, of course, that it prevails inland, and that it has the worst possible effect upon the natives. The Act, however, clearly contemplated that it would be applied not only to the aborigines, but also to "certain other inhabitants of the colony, to whom great and widespread injury is being caused by the consumption of opium." Here, the Chinese and Malays are regular consumers of opium. Their example spreads, and sometimes even contaminates Europeans. After the passing of the Act it was found that the stringent provisions of the Act were likely to make the sale and consumption of opium difficult if not impossible. The Act was exceedingly unpopular among the Chinese at Cairns, as it was likely to be. At this place the police were enabled, under the provisions of the Act, to close the opium dens which had become the seed-plots of idleness and immorality. Sufficient pressure, however, was brought to bear upon the Executive, and the Act itself was

suppressed. The Collectors of Customs at the different ports were directed to invite applications for the sale of opium, and these applications were authorised on the condition that a monthly return should be made to the police of the wholesale and retail dealers.

At the present time there are two wholesale dealers in opium at this place, and there are eight retail dealers. It is needless to say that the opium dens are now comfortably established, and can set the police at defiance. Section 13 of the Act for regulating the sale and use of poisons is also repealed, so that the sale of opium is absolutely unrestricted, and this it seems to me demands the attention of the Legislature. If it is deemed desirable that the sale should be authorised, then those portions of the Act of 1837 which refer to the prohibition of it should be repealed by the Legislature, and the Executive should be relieved of the responsibilities which they have, for good reasons I presume, taken upon themselves.

I must add that the use or rather the abuse of smoking opium has in some instances extended to white men and women, and if the habit is allowed to grow I feel satisfied that it will work incalculable mischief—mischief far beyond that of alcoholic excess.

I think words like those from a gentleman of the position and experience of the Hon. John Douglas should have some weight, even if the words of a humble individual like myself do not. We know that all over the colony this opium vice is spreading, that Asiatic aliens especially are regular users of opium, and that, as the Hon. John Douglas points out, other aliens are also addicted to it. All along the coast of the North, and in fact further down, the vice is spreading. I have been told by squatters who have been in the habit of employing blacks on their stations, and who had good reliable blacks whom they fed well, clothed well, and looked after—that those blacks had now got from Chinamen the habit of using opium, and were perfectly useless to white employers, because neither feeding them well nor clothing them well would keep them unless they could get opium. Two gentlemen told me that at last in self-defence if they wanted to keep blacks about the place at all they had to give them a little opium. We know the mischief it does, and we know the Chinese dens that exist in many towns in the colony, even in Brisbane. It is a scandal that in a country like this such things should exist as those mentioned by the Hon. John Douglas, and they have been verified to me by different Customs officials, who have told me that they have instructions that instead of carrying out the terms of that Act, they are to suspend its operations and invite applications for the sale of opium, so that the sale of that drug is going on unrestricted. It would be far better to have a deficit every year than to obtain a surplus by raising revenue in this way, more especially when it is distinctly against the provisions of the Act. There is a great deal of talk about the unreliable whiteman who takes a glass of beer, and happens to get drunk now and again, and it is said that he cannot be depended upon, and yet the very persons who say that are willing to allow opium dens to exist, and the smoking of opium to go on, though it is a ten times more terrible vice than the vice of drinking. One hon. member opposite taunted us the other day when another question was under discussion by asking us, "Are you British or are you Boers?" I think we are justified in throwing back that taunt, and asking the occupants of the front Treasury bench, "Are you whitemen or are you coloured aliens?" I have brought this matter forward, because I think it is one of the most important matters referred to in the Financial Statement, inasmuch as it affects the social position, the morals, and the physique of a great many people in the colony. If the Government are inclined to pamper aliens, if those people must be allowed to have their opium, then let the Treasurer increase the duty on the drug three or four times what it is at present, so that

only the very luxurious among the aliens will be able to get it; and not allow it to be sold indiscriminately and be used to contaminate not only blacks, but also white men and white women. The sooner the evil is nipped in the bud the better. I hope that the evidence which I have brought forward to-night, and which I could multiply by reference to letters I have received on the subject, will induce the Government to take some action in the matter. I may say that when Doctor Roth, the Aboriginal Protector in the North, who is an acquaintance of mine, was down here a few weeks ago, I had one or two conversations with him on the subject, and he told me that one of the most difficult things they had to deal with in the far North was the unrestricted sale of opium to coloured aliens. He said that to me before I had seen this report of the Hon. John Douglas. The matter was brought up here when the Aborigines Protection Bill was before the House, but at that time I had neither seen the report of the Hon. John Douglas nor received the letters which have since come to me from the North, or I should have discussed the matter then. I bring it before the Government now in the hope that they will take some steps to enforce the Act, or if that is not stringent enough that they will adopt more stringent measures to stop the spread of this terrible evil in the colony. The next matter that I shall refer to is a local one, and concerns the Gulf country, and that is with regard to the Gulf mail service. The Treasurer in his Statement gives a very exhaustive report of the operations of the Postmaster-General's Department during last year, and refers to the very satisfactory results of the improved Northern mail service. That service is of very little benefit to the country north of Cairns or to the Gulf district. I believe the present member for Carpentaria, who was a resident of the Gulf country some years ago, will bear me out when I say that twelve or thirteen years ago the Gulf had a weekly mail service, and that at the present time, though this improved service may be a benefit to other ports in the colony, the Gulf has practically no overseas service at all.

The TREASURER: It has a service.

Mr. BROWNE: It has a temporary overseas service, which I shall allude to presently, but practically it has had no overseas service during the last six months. In his Statement the Treasurer says—

Strenuous efforts have been made to provide a more satisfactory steamer service with the Gulf ports, but hitherto no acceptable tender has been received. Negotiations are, however, still proceeding, and it is hoped that some satisfactory solution of the difficulty may be arrived at. It is, of course, recognised that this service is not so necessary in connection with mails—which are provided for by a coach service twice a week from Mareeba, and a temporary service between Thursday Island and the Gulf—as in connection with the safe and regular carriage of passengers and of cargo.

On the surface that looks very well to anyone who knows no better; but I would point out with regard to the first statement that there is a coach service twice a week from Mareeba; that eleven or twelve months ago the then member for Carpentaria, Mr. Sim, and myself, and since then the present member for Carpentaria, the member for Burke, and myself informed the Postmaster-General that it is only a farce as a bi-weekly service, because as a general rule it practically resolves itself into a weekly service, and the people are quite content with one weekly overland service. During a good few months of the year it is perfectly impracticable as a bi-weekly service, as the coach is blocked by floods and one thing and another.

The TREASURER: A steamer went last year during the wet season.



Mr. BROWNE: I admit that the Government have tried some palliatives, and [8.30 p.m.] that steamers run every three weeks during the wet season. It is said here that it is recognised that this service is not so necessary in connection with mails as in connection with the safe and regular carriage of passengers and cargo. That is so, but the members for Carpentaria and Burke, and anyone who has gone round, know that the service of a little boat of about 100 tons is practically little good. With her coal on board she could not carry more than about 70 or 80 tons of cargo, and there is very little accommodation for passengers. I would not like to say either whether that boat would be fit or safe to cross the Gulf in during the wet season and the change of the monsoons. Of course there are a few small boats of 100 tons, or even less, that are as seaworthy as many larger vessels, but there are not many small wooden steamers of 80 or 100 tons that you would like to make that trip in. I may say that I know the Postmaster-General and his Under Secretary have been doing as much as they can in some respects to try and remedy this, in calling for tenders, and one thing and another, but they have been blocked by the monopoly which, I am sorry to say, exists. I am not blaming anyone interested in it, but I say it is a monopoly. That monopoly the Government have an opportunity to break up. Hon. members know that there is a bar at the mouth of the Norman River, as there is at the mouths of nearly all the Queensland rivers. That bar entails lightering, and the lightering plant there is practically in the hands of the A.U.S.N. Company. Of course any other company that tenders for the service must know that they will have to provide a lightering plant and send it round to the Gulf. The cost and risk of sending a lightering plant round to the Gulf from Brisbane or Sydney is not very light, and it would be no picnic to go towing punts and lighters round there. That bars other companies from entering, and places the Government in this position—that they have to agree to terms with the A.U.S.N. Company that perhaps may not be fair to the rest of the country, or else the people of the Gulf, while the Government are fighting the company, are suffering from want of mail communication or regular communication for passengers and cargo. The difficulty, I think, may be met by the course I suggest. It will be in the memory of hon. members that Sir Hugh Nelson, having a lot of trouble about the Northern mails, threatened that if he had any more trouble he would put a Government steamer on. Later, the Hon. T. J. Byrnes, after his trip North, and finding out for himself the facts of the case, went further, and put £50,000 on the Estimates for a Northern mail service. That never came to anything. A service was inaugurated which gave some little satisfaction, and that proposal went no further. Personally, I believe that the Government should have a boat running there, considering all the years there has been a promise to dredge the bar and that the promise has not been fulfilled. Even if it was attempted to carry out the promise now it would be twelve months before the work could be done, and I would therefore suggest as a solution of the difficulty that the Government should either make arrangements for the purchase of the lightering plant there or place a Government lightering plant there. That would give the other companies a chance, and the Government would be able to say to them, "If you run your boats round here there is a way of getting rid of your cargo the same as if we built a wharf or a jetty for you." Wharves and jetties are built in other

places for the use of the people and for the encouragement of trade and commerce, and the least the Government could do is to provide lighterage accommodation for shipping in the Gulf the same as they provide jetties and wharves for the shipping in other places in the colony. This is a matter which affects not only one department or only the people of the Gulf. It also affects our railway receipts. If hon. members will look through the Railway Commissioner's report they will find that in the receipts from the Croydon and Normanton Railway there is a decrease of something like £2,000. That is easily accounted for through the want of boats running or a regular service for the carriage of passengers and cargo to the Gulf. With that the Croydon trade would go over its legitimate railway to Normanton and through its natural port, and would not have to go as present overland to Cairns. A great many of the storekeepers in Georgetown, through the irregular running of the boats, have been getting a lot of goods overland from Townsville with teams.

The TREASURER: They always did.

Mr. BROWNE: Yes, but not to the same extent. We know the place has increased in population, there is more gold got there now, there are a great many more people travelling, more of the luxuries of life are going there; and that being the case, how can it possibly happen that the receipts from the railway have fallen by £2,000 unless it is that the trade and passengers have been travelling in the opposite direction?

The TREASURER: Last year was not a good year at Croydon.

Mr. BROWNE: It was a very good year. The population has increased, and the people have not knocked off eating and drinking, or anything else, and there are a great many people travelling, but nearly everyone that comes down here now has to tackle that unpleasant journey overland to Cairns because of the irregularity of the boats. The Treasurer here says it is not so much in connection with the mail service that a regular service is required as in connection with the carriage of passengers and cargo. The Premier, in talking over this matter, and in answers sent to the Normanton and Croydon people, reckoned that the Government had no right to subsidise boats for this purpose, but I draw the hon. gentleman's attention to the fact that we are subsidising boats where there is no possibility of getting any return from the mails. Take, for instance, the line to Vancouver.

Mr. GIVENS: That is to help the Empire.

Mr. BROWNE: I quite agree with it. The contract entered into is not so much a subsidy for the mails as to encourage trade and commerce between the two countries, and I for one consider that the Government were not wrong in their action. Then for years we were paying a subsidy for the Torres Straits mail service, and when there was some objection raised to it, it was stated that the boats were fitted with insulated machinery, and it was really a subsidy for carrying home frozen meat. The same thing should apply to far away places like the Gulf. In the case of large places where there are four or five lines of steamships competing against each other a subsidy is almost unnecessary, as the competition will work its own cure. But here we have a place far away—and we are always being told that we want the country opened up and settled—where the trade is not sufficient to cause much competition; I say it is the duty of the Government by way of subsidy to give those people the best communication they can in every possible way. I brought this up because it is mentioned in the Financial Statement, and I am sure the hon. members for



Carpentaria and Burke, as well as myself, have been inundated with letters on the subject. I am very pleased to say that I have information from the Postmaster-General that he hopes shortly to have this matter fixed up.

The TREASURER : It is practically settled now.

Mr. BROWNE : I am glad to hear it, but I think it is just as well that the matter should be ventilated. I do not blame the Government for trying to fight this monopoly, but I think there was another way of fighting it, by taking the monopoly right out of the company's hands, and that would have beaten them much quicker. There is just one matter on page 13 that I will deal with, though I will not dwell long upon it, as the Treasurer himself has supplied the strongest argument against it. The item I refer to is—

Immigration requires a steadily increasing expenditure amounting to £22,500. The vote proposed for passage money exceeds that of last year by £20,000, and advertising, commission, &c., by £5,000.

I, in common with other members on this side, object to spending this money in inducing immigrants to come here, and for this reason : We have stated that we believe this country to be capable of maintaining millions instead of thousands, but our contention always was that if the conditions of life in the colony were made attractive enough we would not have to pay people to come here. I am happy to see that the Treasurer has come round to that opinion also, and for that reason I cannot understand why he has put this large sum on the Estimates for immigration. At the end of his Statement he has a few admirably written paragraphs, with most of which I heartily agree, and the fourth one reads—

The prosperity of our own people after all is the greatest inducement we can offer to the surplus population of the old world to come here and participate in our advantages.

To that I say, "Hear, hear!" I hope he will adhere to that sentiment. "Example is better than precept" any day, and I say give the newcomers every advantage ; make the condition of the people who are here more prosperous, and then you will find that there will be no necessity to pay the passages of people to induce them to come to this colony. They will come here of their own accord, and I honestly believe they will be of a better class than the class we pay for importing. There is just one matter on page 18 to which I wish to allude. The hon. gentleman had dealt with the mining industry, and here I would say that he has every reason to be proud of the department over which he presides. With regard to sending specimens home to the exhibition, and advertising our mineral wealth in the old country in the way that has been done, although perhaps there are members who do not agree with me, I am heartily in sympathy with him. I believe the money which has been spent in advertising our resources, and in showing what we can do, is money well spent, and will do more good to the colony than all the lecturers we could send home. But there is one paragraph that I may say I am not altogether in sympathy with. The hon. gentleman says—

The new Act passed last year giving power to grant increased areas for mining and reducing the labour conditions has been the means of bringing fresh outside capital to develop our mines ; and it is anticipated that lands which previously—owing to stringent labour conditions—could not be worked, will now be taken up and thoroughly tested.

Well, I do not agree with that altogether. As is well known, I and other hon. members were very much opposed to the granting of these increased areas and liberalising the labour conditions. At the same time when the law was passed I fell in with it at once, and was in

hopes that it would have that effect. I may say referring to the report of the late Under Secretary for Mines, Mr. Sellheim—a gentleman who was as good an Under Secretary as we are likely to get for many years in Queensland—a gentleman from whom I differed in many things, but who had a large amount of practical knowledge and a stubborn will to enforce anything that he thought right—that he winds up his report by saying, as he has said before, that he did not think the increased areas were going to do so much good, and that they had not been taken much advantage of. The way in which the alteration of the labour conditions has brought in increased revenue is that a large number of leases have been taken up, but as far as extra work being done is concerned it is not a fact. What has happened has been that syndicates or companies have come along in the good old way, have taken up double and treble the area that they did before, and in the good old-fashioned way they have gone in for exemption exactly as they did before.

The TREASURER : They have not got it.

Mr. BROWNE : Yes ; and in a good many instances they have not put a pick into the ground. There is one case that I may refer to. It may be a good thing, and I hope it will be. A gentleman representing Mr. Plant and others on Charters Towers came to Croydon and took up seventy-five acres, three twenty-five acre leases, on the Premier line backing off most of the claims that were getting gold. The very day that the application for the lease was recommended an application was put in for six months' exemption. The matter was postponed for a fortnight, and I am pleased to say that the Minister reduced the exemption term to three months.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : You cannot start a large company instantly in any case.

Mr. BROWNE : If a company comes along professing to have any amount of money, and takes up seventy-five acres, and says, "We must have time to get money and get things together to work our ground," then, I say, when the poor working-miner comes along and pegs out his claim, he has an equal right to say, "I must hold this for a week or two until I see if I can get a storekeeper to keep me in tucker and tools, or get hold of a mate or two to help me." Now what is the difference? Why has not the man who has not got money the right to the same breathing time as the representative of these big absentee companies? In this instance I am speaking of at Croydon, it is rather curious that Croydon is now being worked by Charters Towers mining managers. Mr. Williams, who is a well-known man and an old mining manager, after he had been all over the field, he spoke about its wonderful resources and reckoned it was going to be about the greatest field ever opened in Australia ; but, like a great many others, he criticised Croydon's want of energy, and wondered why they did not do this and did not do that, and said what they did on other fields. I can say, in defence of the people of Croydon—and I have been on most of the goldfields of the colony for the last thirty years—that, as far as they are concerned, and more especially the business men, and also a large number of miners, they are co-operating together, and putting every shilling they have into the ground. I was never on a field where I saw more money put in by the local people. The hon. member for the Barcoo—I remember the time he was there. He put in all the money he could afford.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : This side of the House, too.

Mr. BROWNE: I am speaking of local residents. I know the Secretary for Lands was very unfortunate, and the hon. member for Carpentaria knows something about it. I think there is hardly a moneyed man on Croydon today, with all the money they have made—and they have made a lot of money—who is as well or better off than he was when he went there, because what he has made there has gone into the ground. The gentleman who criticises their want of energy and says Charters Towers is going to wipe them out, takes up three twenty-five-acre leases and, when he gets to Charters Towers, gets exemption for three months. Then the Croydon people say, "If that is the sort of energy which is going to develop the field, we have plenty of people who can take up the field and get exemption."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Plenty do that.

Mr. BROWNE: I am pointing out that there is only one man employed to four acres. The question was talked over when the Mining Bill was going through. The Secretary for Lands then brought in a return which showed that, taking all the leases under exemption, practically at the time they only had one man to five acres. My contention, and the contention of other hon. members, was that, given the same system of exemption of one man to four acres, the result would be that there would be only one man to twenty acres. That state of things has actually resulted because these large leases are being taken up and allowed to lie idle. More than that—I am only going to refer to it incidentally—we happen to know that these large areas do not suit them because a very big effort is being made to get a little bit more, and 200 acres is the next thing they are going to ask for, but I earnestly hope they will not get it. With regard to the remainder of the Statement referring to mining, I may say that I agree with the Hon. the Treasurer in all he says in the last paragraph of the Statement, and will admit, in common with most members of this House—certainly the mining members and with mining men in the colony—that I regret we have lost the services of Mr. Jack. He was one of the best men we had in the colony. But he thinks he has a better thing on in England. He is certainly a loss to Queensland. There is just one other matter before I sit down. It is on page 22. We have a reference to the working of the Sugar Works Guarantee Act—

The large increase in the output of sugar last year was due to the operations of the Sugar Works Guarantee Act, under which eleven mills are now working.

A few days ago I asked a question of the Hon. the Treasurer with regard to alien labour employed in these central mills. You remember well—and I know the Hon. the Treasurer will remember—that when the Sugar Works Guarantee Bill was going through the House in 1893, a determined stand was made on this side. When the then leader of the combined Opposition, Mr. Charles Powers, introduced an amendment and tried to get it inserted in the Act that no alien labour should be employed in or about a mill, there was a stonewall erected—on the Government side, as it usually is. I know we were kept here all night and all next day, and it resolved itself at last into a sort of compromise—that was a distinct assurance from Sir Thomas McIlwraith. He said he did not think there was any need to incorporate it in the Bill; that if any Japanese, Chinese, Javanese, or any other "ese" were employed in any of these mills they would know about it, and the Government would introduce some measure to prevent them from being employed. There is no use disguising the fact, whether Ministers know it or not, that in most of these central mills in the North alien labour is continually being used in or

about these mills, and I have had letters from people of all shades of opinion, not merely from white working men, but from employers and everyone, complaining about it. With regard to the particular question of the Mulgrave mill, I think the hon. member for Enoggera referred to it. There was conclusive evidence that they did employ that labour, and I saw it in one or two different Cairns papers, particularly the *Cairns Advocate*.

Mr. GIVENS: They are being muzzled now.

Mr. BROWNE: It makes the distinct statement, and challenges contradiction, that there were twenty Japanese employed in the carrier trade last week. If so, it can easily be found out from the paysheet. In fact, more than that, I believe attention has been drawn to it by Mr. McCulloch, the travelling inspector.

Mr. GIVENS: At the time the Minister for Agriculture went through the mill I pointed out these aliens working there.

Mr. DRAKE: They know it all right.

Mr. BROWNE: However hon. members' opinions are divided on the question as to the necessity of alien labour in the cane-fields or in any other employment in the sugar industry, I think there is only one opinion that members of this House should hold—that these mills which are subsidised by the Government, practically by the taxpayers of the colony, that were erected, to a very large extent, with the idea of providing a means by which coloured labour might gradually cease. The idea was that by starting these mills the small farmers could take up land or, at least, have a certainty that they could get their cane crushed, and by that means get rid of coloured labour.

The TREASURER: It has had that effect.

Mr. BROWNE: The contention, or rather the excuse, that is made by those people in these central mills is that there is no white labour available for the field, and it is not satisfactory labour for work in the mills as well as in the fields. There is the correspondence of directors attached to the mills, where they state distinctly that the class of men is not good enough to work about the mill. I say that if we are going back to the old system that coloured labour is to work inside as well as outside the mills, then the House should refuse to sanction the loan of this money to the mills, and make the guarantors pay it, or the Government take them over and run them themselves by white labour. I am not going to dwell any further on that. I think it is a very important matter to the taxpayers of the colony, inasmuch as these people are subsidised by the country, and the subsidising of them by the country and allowing them to employ black labour is actually subsidising black labour itself. That is one thing I most decidedly object to. I am not going to take up any further time of the House. All I can say is, I do not begrudge the Hon. the Treasurer a little bit of the success he had during the last year. More than that, I hope if he continues in power—and I cannot say that I hope that—I hope next year he will be able to come down

with a more satisfactory Budget, [9 p.m.] and that all his expectations will be realised. In wishing that, it is not so much for the hon. gentleman's good, or the good of the Government; but when we get good financial statements, when we see the different industries progressing, we know that the colony is going ahead. Of course, we can see the progress the colony is making without looking at this Statement, but this is an admirable synopsis of it. Everyone benefits from an improvement in the condition of the colony, and I hope, as long as the Treasurer stops there, whether it is long or short—and I hope it will be

short—I hope every year he will be able to come down with a Statement a little better than the one he has made this year.

After a pause,

HON. E. B. FORREST (*Brisbane North*): I did not intend to speak to-night on this subject, but I do not want to let the debate close without saying a few words on the Statement. First of all I want to compliment the Treasurer on the Statement submitted to us. Exception has been taken to-night to the fact that he was not complimented by the leader of the Labour Opposition; however, I am sure that the leader of the Labour Opposition, when he addresses himself to the question, will take the opportunity—

The TREASURER: He has done so.

HON. E. B. FORREST: Will take the opportunity of complimenting him on the Statement he has made. It is not my intention to refer to every paragraph in the Budget Speech, but there are a few matters of a business character which I think it is the place of a business man to say something about. I shall content myself to-night with a few words on trade and commerce, a few words on the estimates of revenue, expenditure, and loan expenditure, and also a few words on the subject of harbours, rivers, and shipping. I may say that I regard this Statement as a very valuable contribution to the statistics placed before us; and anyone who wants to understand the position of the colony, and is able to understand it when he has the figures before him, should be able to do so first of all from the Statement, secondly from the tables, thirdly from the Auditor-General's report, and fourthly from the statistics for 1898. The first matter on which I will make a few remarks is the expenditure for 1898-9. It says here that the total revenue for the year proper was £4,174,086, and the total expenditure £4,024,170 giving a surplus of £149,916. The Statement then reads—

This amount, in accordance with the provisions of the Audit Act Amendment Act of 1895, will be handed over to the trustees of the public debt reduction fund, to be applied by them in the purchase of debentures or Government stock, thereby reducing the national debt to the extent of such purchases.

I do not hesitate to say that I think the Audit Act Amendment Act of 1895 ought to be repealed. I disapprove altogether of transferring this £150,000 a year for the purpose of reducing the national debt. I say that if there is that amount to be dealt with, it should go in reduction of taxation.

Mr. STEWART: Hear, hear!

HON. E. B. FORREST: I find on reference to the figures that already the sum of £360,000 in five years has been transferred in that way.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is in reduction of overdraft.

HON. E. B. FORREST: It is in reduction of the national debt, and I take exception because of that. I say that up to the present time in five years the sum of £360,000 has been transferred for that purpose. Now I cannot see the object of transferring this amount for the purpose named. I take it for granted that there is no intention on the part of the Treasurer or anybody else of wiping out the national debt, because if he contemplates anything of the sort he has rather a big job on hand. Our national debt is something like £32,000,000, but taking it in round numbers as £30,000,000 and transferring £150,000 per annum, it would take 200 years to get rid of it. I do not suppose anybody contemplates a performance of that kind.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: And increasing the debt at the same time.

HON. E. B. FORREST: And the debt increasing all the time. It is a most absurd proposition, and I have never been able to

understand why this £150,000 every year should be treated in this way. The reason is given here in these words—

Opinions have been expressed as to whether it would not be better to place these surpluses aside to meet deficiencies which may hereafter occur; to establish, in fact, a sort of equalisation fund to be used as occasion may require.

I think that would be a very much better proposal myself.

Due consideration has been given to this suggestion but a little reflection will show that the present system is much the better, inasmuch as it compels the Treasurer of the day to so present his Estimates, and so regulate the finances of the colony, that, as far as lies in his power, expenditure shall not exceed revenue.

I say, however desirable it may be to treat this £150,000 per annum in this way, it certainly is not desirable to do it for the reason given here, because the Act gives the Treasurer no special power to regulate the finances of the colony in any particular way, and there is nothing to prevent him from regulating the finances of the colony so that as far as lies in his power, expenditure may not exceed revenue, whether this Act is in force or not. It is a simple question of bookkeeping, and there is nothing to prevent him from regulating the finances in any form he likes, whether this Act interferes or not. Whether this £150,000 is treated in the way proposed or not, I say it is a perfect farce to talk about it as a reason for treating it in this way, and the reason given here is, to my mind, an absurd one. Turning to page 7 on the subject of "Trade and Commerce," it says here—

Cotton, woollen, silk, and linen piece goods, together with the manufactured articles thereof, show an increased import of £132,489; boots and shoes, £14,767. Both these classes of imports showed a considerable falling off during 1897-98, and as they both consist of articles of daily use it shows how the improved prospects and production of the colony are stimulating the import trade.

There is no doubt about that. I would sooner see the increase in this respect a result of local production. Take, for instance, cotton or wool, which are produced locally. In my opinion it would have been far better if the report stated that the local production had been greater. The Statement goes on—

The total value of flour, grain, maize, oats, barley, wheat, &c., imported is still large, amounting to £569,617, but this is a decrease of £4,003 on last year's import.

No doubt the decrease in this respect is very small; but still the imports in this connection are so great that this is not satisfactory, because we have within ourselves the means of producing many of these articles. I would like to see more local production instead of having to import so much. Except that the exports from Queensland show a similar increase, I should regard the following sentence in the Statement with great disfavour. The Statement goes on to say—

Green fruits, seeds, plants, and vegetables show the comparatively large increase of £8,043.

This is to some extent a redeeming feature, and I am very pleased to see it. Turning to exports, there is nothing more satisfactory than the increase in the export trade of Queensland. The only thing is that the export trade should be done more directly with English and continental ports. To-day too much of the export trade goes to the southern colonies, and it would be a great improvement if this were altered. Then coming to the revenue estimates, I think the Treasurer is extremely moderate in his ideas. In the last paragraph the Treasurer says—

Judging from the collections for the past quarter this estimate appears to be amply justified.

Judging from the progress that the colony is making, I think no other conclusion can be arrived at than that there will be a considerable

increase in the revenue of the colony. Then we come to "Probable Expenditure." The balance mentioned there is a very small one, and it does not require much foresight to see that it may be wiped out very easily. We are running into expenditure over the Transvaal business. Whether that will be from revenue or loan I do not know.

The TREASURER: All from revenue.

HON. E. B. FORREST: At any rate, £24,000 is cutting it very fine as a surplus. I would like to see the margin much larger. Now we come to "Loan Expenditure," which, I must admit, requires more consideration than I have been able to give it. I have not studied this matter very closely. Under this head it is stated—

Immigration requires an increased expenditure amounting to £27,500.

That practically means that £50,000 is to be spent this year. Well, I think that amount is far too little. We want more population, and this is not the way to get it. It is only playing with the matter to attempt to get more population by means of this sort. To some extent I am in accord with the hon. member for Croydon when he says that we should make the conditions here attractive—that is, to induce people to come here. But how are we going to make these conditions attractive? The history of the past shows that we have not got immigration of a desirable sort by the present means.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Utilise the land for that purpose.

HON. E. B. FORREST: Yes, utilise the land; but how are we to do that? There is no doubt that we want population here; we have any amount of room, but the present means of inducing immigration simply results in one thing—that we do not get it.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: The other colonies get it.

HON. E. B. FORREST: I say that £50,000 in this respect would be far too little, in my judgment. The matter of our railways is also referred to under this head, but I think it will be much more interesting when that important subject is discussed under the new Loan Bill. Our necessities in this direction result from various causes—particularly federation. Our necessities for making railway extensions are very great, and the important character of the investment, together with our necessities, will make the matter of our railways a very live subject very soon. I just make these few remarks on this subject because I think this matter of our railways should form a very important feature in the business of this session. I am speaking about the extensions of the trunk lines, and also on the matter of running cheap lines into the farming districts. Now we come to the harbours and rivers, and I think the Treasurer's remarks on this head are somewhat disappointing. The Treasurer says—

Since my last Financial Statement was presented to the Committee, all the available dredge plant at Brisbane has been employed in deepening and widening the cuttings in the Brisbane River, and there is now a depth of 20 feet at low water through a channel varying in width from 100 to 200 feet. It is expected that the latter width will be established throughout the whole of the dredged cuttings by the end of the year. The rock-boring plant has been continuously employed. At Lytton there is now a channel through the rocks 300 feet wide and 20 feet deep at low water. At Queensport, and at the Railway Wharf, South Brisbane, the whole of the area of rock has been bored, and at the latter place cleaned out. The plant is now at work at the Hawthorn rocks, which will be completed in October. The deepening of the Lytton rocks cutting to 28 feet at low water will then be commenced. This work is of great importance, as the depth of water at this spot practically controls all the dredged cuttings of the river. It is estimated that it will take two years to

cut a passage 300 feet wide to the depth named, and it is anticipated that by that time good progress will have been made in deepening the other river and bay cuttings to a similar depth and width.

The disappointment comes in with regard to this width of 200 feet. The Statement further goes on—

Following upon the visit of Mr. Lindon Bates to the colony, a contract was entered into with him in June last for the supply of two of his new hydraulic dredges, to be delivered by the 31st October, 1900. The larger one of these is to be capable of dealing with 5,000 and the smaller one with 2,500 cubic yards per hour, while both are to be capable of depositing the dredgings at a distance of 800 feet from the side of the dredge. Mr. Bates inspected all the chief ports of the colony, and reported fully on what he considered the best method of improving them for the accommodation of large vessels.

I take it that the Government are quite satisfied with Mr. Lindon Bates's report, and that being so it becomes necessary to see what Mr. Bates really recommended, because it is not what the Government now propose to carry out according to the Treasurer's Statement. Mr. Bates's proposal embraced river and harbour improvements and the lowering of the flood level, and for this double purpose he recommended that the minimum depth at low water should be 26 feet, with a channel 500 feet wide, the cutting to be carried out to a contour near to that depth outside the Pile Lighthouse. Subsequently, after interviews with the Chamber of Commerce and conversations with various people, Mr. Bates estimated that it would take two years with the existing plant to complete his scheme, and the cost of the works he proposed were estimated by various people at that time to be from £750,000 to £1,000,000. In addition to Mr. Bates's recommendation we have recommendations from Mr. Henderson, the Hydraulic Engineer, and his report is of a most interesting character, and all who have read it will agree that the amount of work put into it and the information it gives is really beyond all praise. Mr. Henderson, in his report, goes very fully into the subject—more so than Mr. Bates—and he submits three proposals. His first proposal is that there should be a depth of 26 feet with a width of channel of 912 feet, gradually increasing to the mouth of the river, carried on a contour of that depth to the Pile Lighthouse. He estimated the cost of that to be something very large, from £2,000,000 to £2,250,000. His second proposal also consists of a channel by 942 feet wide by 26 feet in depth, but it also involves a cutting through Kangaroo Point, the estimated cost being £3,000,000. His third scheme is in reality more like what Mr. Bates recommends. He recommends that the cutting should be 26 feet deep and 500 feet wide, the cost of which he estimates at £1,500,000. It will be observed that both Mr. Bates and Mr. Henderson propose to deepen the river to the extent of 26 feet, and that the channel should be 500 feet wide as a minimum. The Treasurer now, in his Statement, is unable to get beyond 300 feet.

The TREASURER: That is in two years.

HON. E. B. FORREST: The hon. gentleman says nothing about any more. He confines himself exclusively to the 300 feet. Whether it is intended to go further at the end of two years is a matter entirely left to the hon. gentleman himself, or to somebody else, to determine afterwards. There is not a word about it here, and I am justified in assuming that the idea is to reduce the width of the channel from 500 feet, the minimum recommended both by Mr. Bates and by Mr. Henderson to 300 feet. For all purposes of navigation I am prepared to admit that 300 feet would be sufficient; but an extension to 500 feet would make a tremendous difference as regards flood mitigation; and that is a matter which the people here lay very

great stress upon. They want relief from damages by flood. And with reference to that Mr. Bates, in paragraph 3 of his recommendation, says—

That a definite duty be assigned as the expected work of the waterway from Victoria Bridge to the Bay, to reduce the level of such a flood as 1893 to safely 20 feet above datum on the dock gauge. That flood relief measures, so far as they affect the lower river and navigation, be calculated by the flood engineers to this end, exclusive of the possibilities that may be found to exist to make a diversion spillway or a reservoir system. That the means for the prevention of overflow of riparian property by use of bulkheads or levees be projected with reference to this standard, with a safe margin of additional height.

In the 1893 flood, to which Mr. Bates refers, the register was 29 feet above the datum on the dock gauge, and he contends that the adoption of his scheme would have the effect of reducing that to 20 feet; in other words, it would reduce the level of the 1893 flood, which was the highest ever known here, by 9 feet. In point of fact it would reduce it to a very ordinary flood, which in itself is not very much dreaded. Therefore, I say, that Mr. Bates's proposal to widen the channel to 500 feet as a minimum is one we cannot afford to have ignored; and if it is proposed to narrow the channel to 300 feet it will have a very material effect upon the mitigation of flood damage.

The PREMIER: Let us complete the 300 feet first.

HON. E. B. FORREST: That is all that is referred to here; everything else is left entirely to conjecture, and I am inclined to think the intention is to make the channel 26 feet by 300 feet, instead of 26 feet by 500 feet as a minimum. I am quite prepared to admit that cost is a most important matter for consideration. To show what has been done at another Australian port in the way of harbours and rivers improvement, I will quote to the Committee a passage from the report of the Melbourne Harbour Trust for 1898. The report says—

At the end of the second decade of its existence as a corporate body, the Melbourne Harbour Trust can refer with a justifiable feeling of confidence to the manner in which it has carried into effect the duty imposed upon it by the Act which created it. That duty was to make and keep the port of Melbourne abreast of the rapidly expanding sea-borne traffic of the colony of Victoria. How this duty has been performed can best be shown by reference to one or two salient facts. Prior to 1877 all mail steamers and vessels of a draught which would now be considered even moderate were compelled to lie at anchor in Hobson's Bay, and there discharge their cargoes into lighters; the river Yarra was about 140 feet wide and 12 feet deep; and Melbourne was approached by the narrow, circuitous, and difficult course known as Humberg Reach. In 1897 the largest vessels that enter the Heads of Port Phillip may find convenient berthing at the Williamstown and Port Melbourne piers, while vessels of 8,000 tons burthen, with a draught of from 22 feet to 23 feet, approach the city through a gently-curving channel 300 feet wide throughout its whole length, and are safely accommodated at the Melbourne wharves and in the Victoria Dock, in close proximity to the railways. Two cardinal principles of commerce are efficiently recognised for the benefit of both importers and exporters in the provision thus made for the shipping of the port. First, that freightage is diminished proportionately as the size of ships increases; and, secondly, that the nearer merchandise can be brought in one bottom to large centres of distribution, the more economical the cost of distributing. Thirty-seven large and commodious transit sheds, including two now in course of building, have been erected for merchandise, and good road approaches have been made to every portion of the eight miles of wharfage which have been constructed. This accommodation is still barely sufficient for current needs; but when the new constructive works in the Victoria Docks are completed, it is thought that the accommodation will be fully abreast of the present traffic. In carrying out these extensive works, and in maintaining all the services and administration of the port, the commissioners have expended £1,645,000, of which only £2,000,000 are loan moneys. All the facilities and advantages provided by this expenditure are enjoyed by producers throughout the

colony, who ship their merchandise from Melbourne, absolutely without charge; and the more the cost of freight can be thus reduced, the greater will be their gain.

That shows what they have done in Melbourne.

Of course we cannot expect to [9:30 p.m.] follow the example of Melbourne.

We cannot afford to spend anything like £5,000,000; but it is our duty to do what we can. We have a river here—that is, a real river. It is not a ditch like the Yarra; and when we see what they have done with that ditch, there is every encouragement for us to go on and improve our magnificent river.

MR. GIVENS: What about the other ports in the colony?

HON. E. B. FORREST: I will refer to them later. I shall finish first of all with Melbourne. The revenue for the year 1898 was as follows:—Wharfage rates, £147,033; rents from lands, etc., and licenses, £13,423; ferries, £528; steam tows and crane fees, £210; license fees, £389; storage, £31—making a total of £161,616. One-fifth of that is paid to the consolidated revenue—£31,846; refunds on wharfage, £1,995—total, £33,842, which leaves a net revenue for 1898 of £127,774. I only regret that we cannot work our figures up to something like those. Of course they have a trade that we have not got yet.

The TREASURER: And four times our population.

HON. E. B. FORREST: Reference has been made to the other ports and harbours of the colony. If hon. members turn to Table Y, accompanying the Treasurer's Statement, they will find a return showing the total value of imports into and exports from the various ports of Queensland, also borderwise, during the year ended 31st December, 1898. According to that return, the trade of Brisbane, exclusive of the border trade, amounted to 34·54 per cent. of the total trade of the colony; the trade of Rockhampton to 18·12 per cent.; and the trade of Townsville to 20·70 per cent. Now those are the three principal ports of the colony. There is not the slightest doubt that the great bulk of the trade of the colony is done with those three ports, and I submit that every one of those ports is entitled to every possible consideration in the shape of improvements, because the oversea trade of Queensland undoubtedly is done from those ports. My strong disposition is to open up every one of them and give every facility for trade to them. Then the trade of the colony will prosper. I have no desire whatever to claim for Brisbane anything more than I am prepared to give to Rockhampton and Townsville.

MR. GIVENS: What about the other ports?

HON. E. B. FORREST: The other ports are receiving every attention now, and there is no doubt they will continue to receive every attention. If the hon. member looks at the expenditure in regard to harbour improvements, he will find that the other ports have had a very big share of the expenditure up to the present time. But I am speaking now of the three principal ports of the colony where the great bulk of the trade is done.

MR. ANNEAR: What about Maryborough?

HON. E. B. FORREST: According to Table Y, the trade of Maryborough amounts to 1·56 per cent. of the whole trade of the colony.

MR. ANNEAR: Wait till we get the Nanango trade.

HON. E. B. FORREST: Of course, when they get the Nanango trade it will increase very much. There is one other paragraph I wish to refer to in connection with the harbours and rivers—

The prominent points in the river proposed to remove, in order to facilitate navigation and to relieve the river at flood time, have been bored to a depth of twenty-

two to twenty-eight feet below low water, and in no instance has any substance harder than gravel and stiff clay been met with. It is intended to deal with this matter at an early date, commencing with Kangaroo Point.

I am exceedingly glad to see that statement, because the sooner something is done to improve the river at that point the better. This leads me to another matter. It is well known that Messrs. Howard Smith and Sons and Captain Collin have applied for permission to build wharves opposite that point. The application, I understand, was not favourably received by the Marine Board, and the Treasurer very properly gave instructions that the evidence of seafaring men was to be taken as to the difficulties or dangers that might attach to the building of wharves in that particular quarter. That evidence was taken, and the application was absolutely refused. I am not going to deal with the evidence. It has been submitted to this House in the shape of a return, and the time will come when we will have an opportunity of discussing the question more freely. I will say, however, that the evidence points conclusively to this: That when Kangaroo Point is cut down there will be no difficulty whatever, in the judgment of competent men, in building wharves there. Now, I take great exception to the decision of the Marine Board, because they make no reference whatever to this. I am not going to cavil at their having refused the application now. If they had confined themselves to the present time, and said they did not think present circumstances justified the granting of the application, and had then gone on to say that as soon as Kangaroo Point was cut down there would be no trouble whatever, and no difficulty in building wharves there—if they had gone to that extent, I should have appreciated their position.

The TREASURER: There can be no difficulty when the point is cut away.

HON. E. B. FORREST: Why do not the Marine Board say so? As it stands, they have absolutely declined to give permission for the wharves to be built there. As soon as that point is cut away there can be no reason whatever for the wharves not being built, and there is no reason why the Marine Board should not have said so. It damages the reputation of the place. Here are Messrs. Howard Smith and Sons prepared to spend £15,000 or £50,000 in the erection of these wharves, and their application is absolutely refused. There is no hope given that at some future time, when the point is removed, there will be no objection. This sort of thing discourages people, and when they are prepared to spend £15,000 or £50,000, they deserve some encouragement. There is only one other remark I wish to make in reference to this matter, and I take this the first opportunity of referring to it with a view to putting it right to some extent. Captain Cundith, commander of the steamer "Duke of Argyle," stated that in his judgment Kangaroo Point is the most dangerous or most difficult point in the world. Now, what will be the effect of a statement like that going forth throughout the length and breadth of the world? Shipowners will decline to send their ships here. I complain that the Marine Board should allow such a statement to go unchallenged. It was the duty of the Marine Board—if it has any duty to perform—to put Captain Cundith through his facings and ascertain from him what was his knowledge of the world. It is not my business now to enlighten him, but when the proper time comes I will enlighten him, and I may say that there are three ports in England where there are worse curves than Kangaroo Point, and that there is no difficulty in navigating these particular points. Captain Cundith did not require to travel over the world to arrive at the conclusion that

Kangaroo Point is not the only difficult point, and that it is not the most difficult place in the world to navigate. Evidence of that sort being allowed to go unchallenged, and a man being allowed to gabble along without being checked, is anything but creditable to the intelligence of the Marine Board. Such a statement is most damaging to the port, and I contend that it was the duty of the board to challenge it, or, at all events, to give Captain Cundith an opportunity of showing what his knowledge of the world was. Now I come to the paragraph under the heading of "Shipping." The Treasurer says—

Under this heading the figures for the last five years show that there has been a considerable increase in the number of vessels trading to and from the various ports of the colony. In 1894 the tonnage inwards for all ports was 459,647 tons, and in 1898 it reached 602,006 tons, an increase of 142,359 tons. During this period the tonnage entered at the port of Brisbane increased by 120,840 tons.

It has been asserted that owing to what are called "the disabilities of the port," we are losing our oversea trade. But this assertion, like others that those who deery the port are so fond of putting forth to the world, fails in truthfulness when judged in the light of facts. The fact I have already stated proves that the shipping trade is steadily increasing.

Where is the trade increasing? To the southern colonies. It is not proved that the oversea trade, which is the trade that we are particularly interested in in this part of the world, is increasing. The fact is that of the 602,000 tons mentioned, 400,000 tons were with the Australian colonies, and only 200,000 tons with the United Kingdom and other parts. The tonnage basis, however, is a very misleading one to work upon; you cannot form an estimate of what is going on by the tonnage alone, and the Treasurer has dealt with that basis only. I will give the Committee an instance of what it really means. The "Kent," which was here about a fortnight ago, is a vessel of 3,554 tons. She practically brought nothing whatever here, and she took away 550 tons of tallow, 12 tons of hides, 50 tons of butter, and 363 bales of wool.

The TREASURER: She took all she could get.

HON. E. B. FORREST: That is true, but I want to give an illustration of what is the effect of taking the tonnage alone as a basis of calculation. In the case of the "Kent," it was 3,554 tons in and 3,554 tons out, that is a total of 7,108 tons for less than 1,000 tons of cargo, so that, as I have said, the tonnage basis is a most misleading one. If the Treasurer wanted to get at a proper view of the position, if he wanted to get at the facts, he should have made a calculation on the tonnage basis, and then of the quantities and value of the actual cargo brought here and exported. As he has not done so I shall give him the figures, taking the years 1897 and 1898. The volume of business was larger in 1898, but as a matter of fact there was not much difference in the relative proportions. I shall first take the exports, excluding everything coastwise within the colony. On the tonnage basis the exports for those two years were one-third direct, and two-thirds by way of the Australian colonies. On the value of the cargo basis they were one-half direct, and one-half by way of the Australian colonies. On the actual quantities basis, half the wool and half the tallow went direct, and half by way of the Australian colonies. Practically the whole of our meats, preserved, frozen, and tinned, and pearisshell went direct. Now, a fair inference from those figures is that nearly one-half of our export trade went by the southern colonies, leaving one-half to go direct.

The TREASURER: Whose fault was that?

HON. E. B. FORREST: It was our own fault, because we do not give facilities to ships to come

here and trade direct with the colony. As an illustration of the imperfect basis on which the hon. gentleman has been arguing, I have referred to the case of the "Kent," which came here out of the season for the purpose of taking whatever cargo was available at the time. Steamers come to this port irregularly; we have not a regular trade here, and the consequence is that half of our export trade goes by way of Sydney and Melbourne. The reason more vessels do not come is that our river does not offer ships the necessary facilities. They cannot come here except at a very great disadvantage as compared with what they can do in Sydney. It takes a day to come up the river, and a day to go down. We want to so improve our port that a vessel can come up and go down the river the same day if that is desired; and unless we give facilities of that sort, oversea vessels will not come to Brisbane, because time is money to them, and their expenses are going on all the time. Until we deepen the river to 26 feet, and give freedom of access to the port, we shall never get these oversea vessels to come here regularly.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: You want another Port Jackson.

HON. E. B. FORREST: No, there is only one Port Jackson; but in a commercial sense we can make our river as good as Port Jackson, because in that port they have only 27 feet of water, and we propose to deepen the Brisbane to 26 feet. With regard to our imports for the two years I have mentioned, practically only one-third was direct on the tonnage basis, and on the value basis three-fourths of the trade was direct. The actual quantities are not obtainable, as the Customs keep no records showing those particulars in regard to goods coming from England to Sydney and then being transhipped from Sydney to Brisbane, but I think we may fairly conclude that three-fourths of our import trade is direct, leaving one-fourth by way of the southern colonies. On those facts I say it is not proved, as the Treasurer states, that our "shipping trade is steadily increasing." They prove exactly the contrary—that the oversea trade, which is the trade we are particularly anxious about, has not been anything like what it ought to have been. Now there is another trade we want and should cultivate, and that is what is known as the Eastern trade. That trade is growing largely, not with Queensland, I am sorry to say, but with Australia.

THE TREASURER: What do you call the Eastern trade?

HON. E. B. FORREST: With China, Japan, and the Philippines. I say that trade is growing considerably, but we are not doing it here. They are doing it in the southern colonies, and there is no reason in the world why we should not do it here. The reason we do not do it here now is because we do not provide sufficient facilities. They take a large quantity of meats, tallow, wool—they took £60,000 of wool last year from Sydney. They will take coal, sugar—they are commencing to take sugar, and 2,000 tons went last year from New South Wales. Do you mean to say New South Wales can give them better sugar than we can?

THE TREASURER: That was Queensland sugar. We ship more meat here than they do in New South Wales.

HON. E. B. FORREST: We have got it and they have not; but we should ship tallow, wool, coal, meat, sugar, and manure if we had the facilities they have in the south. There is no doubt about it, the steamers go south, where they can get facilities far better than anything we can give them; and it is for that reason they pass our port. I will not detain the Committee much longer. I may say, I believe the colony is

on the eve of very great prosperity. Our resources are being developed at a rate that is highly satisfactory, and our trade may have tremendous developments with improvements in our harbours. I am not speaking for Brisbane alone, but for our principal ports, when I say that I trust the advocacy of improvements in our harbours will be responded to by the Government and by Parliament in a liberal spirit.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

The House adjourned at six minutes to 10 o'clock.