

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 1899

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

FRIDAY, 3 NOVEMBER, 1899.

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

QUESTIONS.

NEW GUINEA LAND ORDINANCE.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*) asked the Premier—

1. Has the last New Guinea Land Ordinance, recently proposed to the Government for acceptance by Mr. G. Le Hunte, and which provides amongst other things for offering to European syndicates areas of pastoral lands at a minimum of 1s. per acre, inclusive of sole right of searching for and working minerals, yet become law?
2. If not, what further legal steps are yet necessary?

The PREMIER (Hon. J. R. Dickson, *Bulimba*) replied—

The Draft Ordinance, which has been laid before Parliament, embodying the agreement arrived at between His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of British New Guinea and the Prime Ministers of the contributing colonies, in regard to the regulation of the dealing with lands in the Possession, has been authorised to be introduced in the Legislative Council of British New Guinea, and has doubtless become law by this date. All mines and minerals other than coal are expressly reserved in every grant or lease to be issued under the provisions of the Ordinance.

RINGBARKING BY ABORIGINALS.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*) asked the Home Secretary—

1. Is it true that the head of the Deebing Creek Aboriginal Mission Station is in the habit of taking contracts for ringbarking?
2. Is it a fact that he employs a number of the young aboriginals at the station to assist him in carrying out these contracts?
3. Will the Government consider whether competition of this nature with the working men of the Ipswich district is desirable?

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*) replied—

1 and 2. I have no official information, but believe that work of this nature is performed by the aborigines at Deebing Creek.

3. The Government do not propose to interfere.

NUMBER OF KANAKAS AND CHARGES LAID AGAINST KANAKAS.

Mr. LESINA asked the Home Secretary—

1. How many kanakas were there in the colony of Queensland on the 1st day of June, 1899?

2. How many charges of murder, rape, indecent assault, and common assault have been laid against kanakas from the date of the reopening of the black labour traffic in Queensland up to the 1st July, 1899?

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

It will take some time to obtain the information asked for, which could be best supplied in the form of a return, for which I would suggest that the honourable member should move.

UNCERTIFICATED ENGINE-DRIVERS.

Mr. LESINA asked the Secretary for Mines—

1. Is it true that a number of uncertificated men are engaged in driving engines at Charters Towers and Clermont?

2. In the interests of the qualified drivers of the colony, and the safety of miners generally, will he cause the inspectors at those centres to insist upon those placed in charge of engines being certificated men?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) replied—

1. Not to the knowledge of the Mining Department.

2. Recently at Charters Towers the inspector made inquiries, and could find no uncertificated men driving engines on that field. The inspector for the Central District will be instructed on his next visit to Clermont to make inquiries.

TOTALISATOR PERMITS.

Mr. DRAKE (*Enoggera*), for Mr. Jenkinson (*Wide Bay*), asked the Home Secretary—

1. The number of days for which totalisator permits have been issued to race clubs?

2. Has the Home Secretary satisfied himself that totalisator permits have been issued only to *bona fide* race clubs?

3. Does the Home Secretary consider that private syndicates have the right to use the totalisator for their own personal profit?

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

1. Permits are not issued for particular dates.

2. No permit has been issued without the recommendation provided for in the Act.

3. Permits can be properly issued to any club or association formed for the purpose of promoting horse-racing or for the management of horse-racing meetings.

SECTION OF RAILWAY, GOWRIE JUNCTION TO DALBY.

On the motion of Mr. KATES (*Cunningham*), it was formally agreed—

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing—

1. The revenue, expenditure, net revenue, capital expended, percentage of net revenue to capital, and percentage of expenses to earnings for the twelve months ended June, 1899, on the section of railway, Gowrie Junction to Dalby.

2. The earnings per train mile on the section, Gowrie Junction to Dalby, for the twelve months ended June, 1899.

TRAVELLING AND OTHER EXPENSES OF THE PREMIER.

Mr. LESINA : I beg to move—

That there be laid on the table of the House a full and complete account of travelling and other expenses of the Honourable the Premier between the 1st October, 1898, the date upon which he assumed the Premiership, and 31st October, 1899.

Mr. STORY (*Balonne*) : I called "not formal" to this motion, because I thought, although the hon. member who moved it does a good many things partly in joke, and has asked a number of questions lately that almost fill the

paper, still there is a point at which good taste should teach him to stop; and I think, when he asks by a motion like this that such papers should be laid on the table of the House, relating to the expenses of the Premier, as if he were any messenger, the boundary of good taste has been exceeded, and I, for one, protest against any such papers being laid on the table of the House.

Mr. J. HAMILTON (*Cook*) : I quite agree with the statement made by the hon. member for Balonne. This is a breach of good taste, but we all know what the hon. member has been since he has been in this House during the past five or six months. He has not been in the colony more than twice that time, and since he has been here the House has been disgraced more than it has ever been during the past three years.

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*) : I rise to a point of order. I ask if the hon. member is in order in saying that the House is disgraced by any member being in it?

The SPEAKER : If the hon. member made that statement directly of any member of the House he is decidedly out of order.

Mr. J. HAMILTON : My statement was that since the hon. member had been in this House the House had been disgraced by certain speeches. I did not mention any member. If the hon. member who raised the point of order thinks that it can apply to the hon. member for Clermont, I cannot help it. I did not mention the member's name. I did not look at the member.

Mr. DAWSON : What member do you mean?

The SPEAKER : Order! The hon. member cannot escape the responsibility of his words by saying they did not apply to any particular member. If he applies them to any member of the House he is using language which is not in order.

Mr. J. HAMILTON : Well, I did mean to apply it to that member; but as, although true, it is unparliamentary, I beg to withdraw it for that reason alone.

The SPEAKER : Order, order!

Mr. DAWSON : Chair, chair!

Mr. J. HAMILTON : I say I regret, as a member of this House, the character of the speeches which have recently been made. I have seen a certain member of this House, generally known as "Hinchcliffe's monkey"—

The SPEAKER : The hon. member is using language which is distinctly unparliamentary, and must not continue in that strain. He cannot allude to any member of this House as a monkey. I trust the hon. member will not continue that course.

Mr. J. HAMILTON : I shall not continue, but merely say that it has been generally noticed that one or two members before speaking look up at the gallery, and that a nod from a certain individual there causes them to rise, and when that individual shakes his head they sit down. (Opposition laughter.) That has not only been noticed by myself, but by several other members.

Mr. FISHER : Are you a judge of good manners?

Mr. J. HAMILTON : I do not know at all events that the hon. member is. I did not refer to the hon. gentleman. I think it is generally known to whom my remarks apply. It seems to me that this motion is really meant as an insult to the Premier. It is monstrous to think that he should have to account for every 6d. that he spends in cab fares or any other small amounts which he may have reason to expend in the execution of his official duties as Premier of this colony. If the Premier desired to do anything improper it would not be done in this way. It would be done in a very different way. If a Premier desired to do anything improper he has

it in his power, for instance, to buy land and then come down to this House and propose that a railway should be put through it. The only object of the motion is to insult the Premier, and I for one object to it.

Mr. LESINA, in reply, said: It has been alleged by a certain hon. member that this motion is intended to insult the Premier. I think that idea has not occurred to any other hon. member except the hon. member who has made the statement. Everything that I do in this House that hon. member appears to regard as if intended to insult him, or his party, or some member of his party. However, that does not matter. The hon. member is at liberty to hold whatever views he pleases. I am not answerable to him, I am happy to say, but to my constituents. Therefore I do not care a red cent what he may think of me or my opinions in this House or my effect. It is certainly as good and moralising as the presence of the hon. gentleman in this Chamber, or in the country either. The idea of that hon. member taking up this high moral stand is very amusing to me—distinctly amusing, and must cause many a quiet smile on both sides among members of the Chamber who have a more or less intimate acquaintance with the character of that particular member.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Are you man enough to make a definite statement? I challenge you to.

Mr. LESINA: Yes; I can make a definite statement against the hon. member—

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. LESINA: I do not desire to be out of order, although the example has been set me by the hon. member himself. My object in moving this motion is to place the House in possession of information which is valuable. Many of the papers have pointed out what a valuable thing it would be to have information on this subject; and when the public are asking for this information I think it is desirable that they should be supplied with it. If there is nothing wrong at all about this expenditure, then there need be no fear in making it public; if there is anything wrong, by all means let members of this House and those occupying official positions, such as Government "whip," have an opportunity of setting things right. If the information is refused, then public suspicion is aroused. It looks as if there were something to fear. The Government are afraid to let the Premier's expenditure be known. I think I am doing an excellent piece of work in asking that this information be laid on the table of the House, so that the taxpayers who find this money may know how it is expended. I therefore feel that there is no apology due from me for placing this motion on the paper and asking for the production of this information.

The TREASURER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*): As a Minister of the Crown, personally I have no objection to the House knowing how much money has been spent by me as a Minister; but I do not think it is fair to take one particular gentleman, who has been occupying the position of Premier for about twelve months, and find out exactly what he has spent since he has been in office. I take it that if the country wants to know how much Ministers spend in travelling expenses, the House ought to ask for a full and complete account of what they have spent since the starting of the colony. If the hon. member for Clermont will amend his motion to that extent I shall support it.

Mr. McDONALD: That is each individual?

The TREASURER: Yes; each individual. I move the omission of all the words after "expenses" on line 2, with a view of inserting in lieu thereof "of all Ministers of the Crown since the 1st of January, 1860."

Mr. LESINA: Only giving the totals?

The TREASURER: No; the amounts with each name. We want a full and complete list.

Mr. McDONALD: And the time each was in office?

Mr. DAWSON: That will not cover it.

The TREASURER: Oh yes, it will. It will include every Minister of the Crown since the colony was founded up till the present day.

Mr. GIVENS: We also want the length of time they were in office.

The TREASURER: You can get that in any record-book in the House.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: We want it for each year.

Mr. McDONALD: Give the length of time they were in office.

The TREASURER: If you accept this, you will get all the information. It will take some time to make it up; but it is fair that all Ministers should be treated alike. It is not fair to take one Minister and say how much he has spent in travelling expenses. I suppose the hon. member for Clermont wishes to be just. (Laughter on the Government side.) I take it he is not vindictive; that he does not want to attack the present Premier, and vent any little spleen he has on him. I take it that he wants to get all information possible.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Not he.

Mr. LESINA: I do not object to the motion being amended in that way.

Mr. GROOM (*Drayton and Toowoomba*): Is there any necessity for such a return at all? I feel that it is degrading to the House.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. GROOM: We are asked to go back to the date of separation, and rake up all the expenses of Ministers till the present time. Do we want to rake up the memory of the dead? Do we want to ask the expenditure of Premiers who have passed away?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is nothing discreditable in it.

Mr. GROOM: Is it in good taste to ask for the travelling expenses of Ministers who have done the country good and faithful service, and have now passed away? Why, for mere curiosity, should we want to know what their travelling expenses were?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We do not want it for idle curiosity.

Mr. GROOM: The hon. gentleman will allow each member to express his own opinion. I cannot but think that a motion of this kind is degrading to the character of the House. What would they say in the House of Commons if a member rose and asked for the travelling expenses of each Minister from fifty years ago up till the time of the jubilee? Such a thing would be scouted altogether. This also should be borne in mind—that the circumstances of Ministers of the Crown during the time we have had responsible government have materially altered. Some, for instance, have had to go to England on important State business, and when their expenses are brought out, they will appear of a very large nature when compared with those who have not left the colony at all, and who, having had simply to administer the affairs of their departments, have incurred expenses which will, comparatively, appear light. An invidious distinction will be drawn between those who have discharged duties in the old country and those who remained in the colony. I cannot help thinking, after all, that we are bound to respect responsible Ministers of the Crown. I do not suppose any of them are very extravagant, or that they have exceeded due bounds. If they were, no doubt the Auditor-General would have reported them. There have been cases where attention has been

called to extravagant expenditure on the part of judges, and the Minister has exercised his control, and cut the expenses down to what was called a reasonable limit. But I have never heard that a gentleman occupying the high and distinguished position of Premier or a gentleman acting as a Minister of the Crown have exceeded what is allowed to be fair, or that their travelling expenses have excited public condemnation.

Mr. TURLEY: Has any information ever been laid on the table of the House?

Mr. GROOM: Is it necessary to be asked for?

Mr. TURLEY: How can exception be taken if the House does not know?

Mr. GROOM: I say this, with all respect to hon. members who may differ from me, that when gentlemen are placed in the responsible position of Ministers they should be trusted in the matter of ordinary travelling expenses. I think it is almost degrading to the position of Ministers that we should pry into what their travelling expenses are. They are discharging a public duty, and I do not think any one of them would be inclined to go in for extravagant expenditure. I have not known of any particular cases of extravagance in that direction. It was charged against one gentleman who had to go to England that the expenses of his trip came to £1,600, and it was alleged that that was a very large sum for the colony to pay; but when a return was asked for, and hon. members saw what expenses the hon. gentleman had to incur, it was found that the expenses did not exceed the ordinary limits of a traveller who had to do a trip of that kind. Why should we go into the expenses of Premiers who have done their best, according to their lights, for the good of the colony, and who had to travel about in different directions, some of them to England? One of them went to England to inquire into the condition of the Agent-General's Office, and then came back and accepted the position of Agent-General himself. That gentleman has passed away. What would be gained by publishing information with regard to his expenses? I think we are going a little too far in inquiring into the travelling expenses of Ministers of the Crown.

Mr. GRIMES (*Oxley*): Like the hon. member who has just sat down, I think it [4 p.m.] would be degrading to the House to allow a motion of this kind to be carried. It would be humiliating to every member of this Chamber if this motion were carried, either as it was proposed, or as it has been amended.

Mr. McDONALD: You speak for yourself.

Mr. GRIMES: I am speaking now as a member of the House.

Mr. McDONALD: You have no right to speak for others.

Mr. GRIMES: I am giving my own opinion, and I say that to require that the travelling expenses of all Ministers of the Crown from 1860 up to the present time should be laid on the table of the House is a most humiliating procedure. I believe that the ordinary travellers for firms in Brisbane and elsewhere are not asked for the details of their expenses in travelling, but are trusted to give the whole amount without furnishing details. It would be a shameful thing for this House to ask Ministers of the Crown, to ask the Premier of the colony, to place on the table of the House a return showing the petty expenses incurred by them in travelling, as they are bound to do, throughout the colony. I trust that hon. members will not allow the motion to

pass, but that someone will call for a division, and that it will be thrown out, as it deserves to be.

Mr. DAWSON (*Charters Towers*): I am very much surprised at the amount of heat and warmth put into the speech of the hon. member for Oxley, and that he should think for a single instant that one of the oldest Ministers of the Crown, and certainly one of the most respected Ministers in this Chamber, should do anything that would humiliate the House. The Treasurer who is perhaps the most responsible Minister in this House next to the Premier, has moved an amendment, which the hon. member for Oxley says will humiliate this Chamber, and which is disgraceful and shameful. I am very much surprised that the hon. member has that opinion of the Treasurer. I certainly have not, and I do not think that in moving his amendment the hon. gentleman had any desire to humiliate or disgrace this House, or any member of it. I presume that the object of the hon. member for Clermont in moving his motion is to ascertain what amount of public money has been expended by the Premier since he assumed office, and the Treasurer simply proposes by his amendment that fuller information should be given, which will let the general public know the amount that has been expended by all the Ministers since we started as a separate colony. As far as I am personally concerned, I have no objection to the amendment, because I think the information asked for might very well be supplied to the public. If the Ministers who are alive to-day have nothing to be ashamed of in regard to the public money they have expended, they have no real grounds of objection to the public knowing exactly how much money they have expended, and if the friends of those Ministers who are not living are reasonably sure that there has been nothing undue done by them during their lives, what ground of objection can they have to the passing of the motion? If there is anybody who is entitled to know exactly how much money has been expended, and how it has been expended, it is the one who has to furnish the money, and that is the taxpayer. There is no sentiment about the matter at all, and I say we should do all we possibly can to let the public know how much money has been spent, and what it has been spent for. Some hon. members seem to think that it is quite a new idea to fossick out information of this character, but it is constantly done. It has been done year after year by motions for returns showing how certain sums of money have been expended. As a matter of fact, only this afternoon the hon. member for Croydon gave notice on a motion demanding to know how a sum of £26,000 had been expended by the Agent-General in London. What for? Not to gratify his private curiosity, but for the information of the public of Queensland, and that is certainly a worthy and desirable object. The hon. member for Clermont is, I believe, actuated by the same motive in moving his motion, and so is the Treasurer in moving his amendment. We have frequently asked for returns about special trains, the "Lucinda" and "Otter," and various other matters; and I think we are entitled to get such information, so that we may see whether the expenditure in such cases has been justifiable. If it has not been justifiable, then those who are responsible for it should receive the punishment that the taxpayer thinks fit to mete out to them. But I rose principally to state that, while I have no objection to the amendment, still, in getting the fuller information it proposes should be given, I would not like the amendment to go in such a way that the particular information desired by the hon. member for Clermont will not be forthcoming. If I understand the amendment cor-

rectly, it means that when the return is laid on the table of the House, the amounts expended by different Ministers at different times will be bunched.

The TREASURER: The amounts for each year. You can get all the details, too, if you want them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The number of cabs.

Mr. DAWSON: The hon. gentleman could not give the number of cabs, even if he was willing. I should be very sorry to think he did not know more about agriculture than he does about the number of cabs. So long as I understand that the return will be prepared on the lines suggested by the Treasurer, I shall support the amendment.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*): I speak on this subject with some diffidence, being a Minister. I am not going to say a word about the good taste or the other points of this motion and the amendment, which were dealt with by the hon. member for Toowoomba, with every word of whose speech I agree. But it is desirable that the attitude of the Treasurer towards this motion, and his reason for moving the amendment, should be more clearly defined than they have been defined for him by the leader of the Opposition. If, notwithstanding what has been said by the hon. member for Toowoomba, and notwithstanding what many other hon. members may think, the House considers it is desirable that this information should be given, then it is desirable that it should be given in such a way as not to single out any one individual for special mark, but that it should apply all round. I venture to say that the Treasurer is, equally with myself, of opinion that the motion should not be agreed to, for the reasons given by the hon. member for Toowoomba—whose opinion in matters of this sort is surely worth something, as being that of the father of the House—but the Treasurer considers that his amendment is only less objectionable than the original motion. I think that is the proper way of putting the attitude of the Treasurer on this question. There is another point which I desire to mention—and I think it is only fair and just that I should mention it: Hon. members desire to know what each Minister has spent. I understand that it is generally thought that, not only Ministers, but members of this House—and if necessary members of the other Chamber also—should travel about the colony as much as possible, in order to acquaint themselves with its resources and its wants, and to enable, not only Ministers, but members to better conduct the business of the country.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY: Now it is a fact that when a Ministerial party goes about the country the expense is debited to some Government department—I assume to the department of the senior Minister in charge of such excursion. We know that hon. members on both sides of the House have availed themselves of this privilege at the invitation of Ministers. I myself have done this. I presume my name will figure in this proposed return—not for any very large amount, I imagine—but whatever the amount may be, it will include the expenses of some hon. members whom I now see sitting opposite, and who accompanied me on one or more trips of the character to which I allude, without the slightest cavil on their part, or thinking that they were doing anything improper. It is only right and fair that if this return is to be furnished this phase of the question should be thoroughly understood, not only by hon. members in this Chamber, but by the public outside. I have no more to say on the subject.

Mr. JACKSON (*Kennedy*): I am very glad to hear from the hon. gentleman who has just sat down that it is customary to debit the Government with the expenses incurred when a Ministerial party travels through the country. I have had my own opinion about the matter, but I was not very sure until the hon. gentleman spoke. When a Minister has invited members of this House to accompany him on a trip through the country, it has never been properly understood whether that invitation was given by the Minister as a private individual, and the expenses came out of his own pocket. I have never been able to find out, although I have inquired from several members.

The HOME SECRETARY: Even within the last week I have been told by an hon. member on the other side that such a trip would be of great advantage to the country.

Mr. JACKSON: I quite admit that. Coming now to the question, I do not very much approve of either the motion or the amendment.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. JACKSON: I do not see the utility of it. I quite agree with the Home Secretary that it is very desirable that Ministers and members should travel about the colony.

Mr. DAWSON: Why should not the public get the information?

Mr. JACKSON: If we get such a return as is asked for, it may not prove anything one way or the other. Instead of proving discreditable to Ministers, it may, on the other hand, prove creditable to them. The Minister who travels through the country is probably more to be commended than the Minister who stops in Brisbane. Of course, if such a return is to be supplied, I would prefer to see it in the form proposed by the amendment of the Treasurer. Let us take the case of the late Premier, Mr. Byrnes. He was only in office as Premier for a very short time, but probably his travelling expenses would amount to more than those of some Premiers who were in office three or four years. In fact, during the larger portion of the time the late Mr. Byrnes was Premier he was travelling about the colony, and doing a great deal of good, I venture to say. I do not think any Premier ever travelled about the country whose action was more approved of than was that of the late Mr. Byrnes.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. JACKSON: I must say that I do not approve of the motion, and I shall not vote for either the amendment or the motion. I do not think there is any necessity for it at all.

Mr. TURLEY (*Brisbane South*): I am surprised at the hon. member for Kennedy presupposing that this motion is moved with the object of throwing discredit on anyone. The hon. member says that when the return is laid on the table of the House, it may be found that it is not discreditable to Ministers. Well, I do not know that the motion was moved with the object of throwing discredit on Ministers; and I do not know that the amendment of the Treasurer was proposed with a similar object in view.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member who moved it said it was introduced to prove misgovernment.

Mr. TURLEY: That was not said as a definite statement, but by way of interjection when the leader of the Opposition was speaking. The hon. member for Clermont said it might show how we were misgoverned. It does not say that it is going to throw discredit on Ministers or anyone else. I take it the object is to obtain certain information. How many times since 1893 has the same objection been raised to motions that have been moved from

this side with the object of obtaining information? It has been said that we are endeavouring to pry into this or that, and that the dignity of Parliament is offended by this sort of thing. Well, if you look at the "Votes and Proceedings" of the other colonies you will find information like this supplied regularly. I remember when the Estimates of the Department of Justice were going through about four years ago, and we asked the head of that department, for the first time, if he would kindly give the names of the legal gentlemen who had been receiving pay from the department, it was indignantly objected to.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No. In that case you asked for Mr. Byrnes's own expenditure, and he would not give it.

MR. TURLEY: I am speaking of the time before the hon. gentleman means. It was when the late Mr. Byrnes was putting the Estimates through, and he said he had no objection to laying a return on the table, and he did so as soon as it was asked for. But before he was in office it was indignantly objected to because it was offensive to the dignity of Parliament—just exactly the same objection that is taken now. I remember when in 1893 the hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Fisher, moved for a return, which you can find in the "Votes and Proceedings" of almost every other colony, of the free passes which had been issued during certain years. We were told then that that was endeavouring to pry into the doings of hon. members of the House, but it was nothing of the sort. Hon. members know that these returns are furnished fairly regularly to the members of other Australian Parliaments, and I do not know that we are so much superior to other Parliaments, or that the Ministry here is so much superior to the Ministry in other colonies, that they cannot comply with the wishes of the House in a matter of this kind. As stated by the hon. member for Clermont, it is the wish of a large number of people outside the House to know how the money has been spent. I can hardly support the position taken up by the hon. member for Toowoomba, who points out that certain people have died. I do not know that that is any particular reason why information relating to the administration of public departments in connection with Parliament should not be placed upon the table of the House. That argument would lead to this: That because a man happened to die, there should be no information furnished to Parliament as to the way in which his department was worked while he happened to be alive. There was nothing in that argument at all. Hon. members must know that as a rule there is no objection taken in other Parliaments of Australia to furnishing returns or giving any information required with regard to expenditure. As for this being used for the purpose of discrediting Ministers, I do not see how it can be so used unless Ministers have been awfully extravagant, and no one has said yet that they have been awfully extravagant. I do not know how anyone could arrive at the conclusion that the motion was placed on the paper with that object in view.

* MR. LESINA (*Clermont*): Speaking to the amendment, I have no particular objection if the return was to include the expenses, travelling and otherwise, of every Premier or Minister of the Crown who has held office in Queensland since the inception of responsible government here. I do not see, in any way, how the placing of such a return on the table can reflect discredibly upon any member of this House who at any time has occupied the position of a Minister of the Crown. If everything has been done in a square and aboveboard fashion, they need not have anything to fear; but if they have been

extravagant they have everything to fear, and they will fight against such a motion in their own interests. If they have not been extravagant, if they have kept within the limits laid down, and if they have not shown any disregard for the public welfare in the expenditure of money in travelling or in any other way, then by placing this return on the table they will vindicate themselves. There is a large section of the public want to see this return. It is a common thing in the other colonies, and I remember distinctly several cases in the other colonies on all fours with this. I know that a return of the kind nearly led to the defeat, if it did not really lead to the defeat, of Sir George Dibbs, when it was found that he had drawn £1,000 as Premier of New South Wales for a trip to the old country.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Was that travelling expenses?

MR. LESINA: He took £1,000 from the Treasury and he very promptly had to pay it back again when the matter was brought up in the House. There should be no sentiment in questions of this kind. In ordinary business gentlemen on the other side do not allow sentimental considerations to trouble them. Yet, when we come to a matter like this, where a great body of taxpayers outside want to know how the money drawn from them by taxation on every article they wear and consume is expended, it is pointed out by members on the other side that it is derogatory to the dignity of the House and degrading to Parliament. These are fine-sounding phrases which anybody could use. I could say the same things of a whole heap of proposals that come from the other side—they are degrading to the dignity of the House and derogatory to its high character as a deliberative body. They are only unmeaning cant phrases. They mean nothing, and contain nothing but wind after all. The public should know how their money is spent, and the only way in which they can know is to have these returns laid on the table. If Ministers think they will be discredited by having them placed there, they will in their own personal interest vote against such motions; but if they have nothing to fear, if everything has been honest and aboveboard, the return will prove that they have not been extravagant and will reflect credit upon them, and will show that they realise the responsibilities of the high office they occupy, and that no harm has followed this system which has gone on for so long unchecked. We are dealing with business and money matters, and there is no room here for sentiment at all, and it is the business of every member who realises the responsibility of his position to give his electors and my electors and the electors generally of the colony an opportunity of knowing how the public money is expended in this colony. Another effect it will have is this: A good deal of criticism is passed, and there are a great many rumours now going about reflecting upon Ministers and on Parliament as a whole, and the way to stop this kind of thing is to have everything aboveboard and honest, and the giving of these returns will attain that object. I say that every hon. member who knows his responsibility to his electors will see that this thing is not burked, and any man who really realises his position in this Chamber will rise above the conventional cant which has largely predominated in this Chamber in political matters throughout this and other countries—he will rise superior to that kind of thing for once in his life, and will vote for this return being placed on the table of this Chamber.

MR. STORY: I am altogether free of the charge of having used these round phrases of deprecation. I simply spoke to the question as a

matter of good taste ; but it seems likely enough that the hon. member could not see it or understand it in that way. He insists upon the motion being carried, but I would like to know what he is going to get out of it if it is carried? How is he going to separate the expenses that a Minister pays upon his trip? I understood the Home Secretary to say that on one of his trips he took certain members of Parliament with him. I do not know where it was.

Mr. LESINA : He never took me with him.

Mr. STORY : Those gentlemen, of course, travelled free by the railway as they had a right to do, and they had a certain claim upon the country for the expenses they incurred in going back to their electorates, and when the paper was handed to them for their certificate of the amount of their claim on the country in this respect I assume they said, "We have no claim on the country for that trip, because the amount was paid by the Minister."

Mr. LESINA : Let us know who it was. I would like to know the members who do that kind of thing.

Mr. STORY : The hon. member misunderstands me, as he always suspects some insults or misstatements. I am saying that where a Minister paid the expenses of an hon. member back to his electorate that member probably would not take the amount allowed him by the House for travelling back. He would not allow the Minister to pay his expenses, and also take them from the Clerk of the House. When that account is rendered the Minister will be debited with the amount he paid for himself and his guests, but no credit will be shown for any amount paid back, and the trip will appear to have cost a great deal more than it did. I do not know that, when you come to discriminate between those things, you will get anything at all satisfactory. You

[4:30 p.m.] will get a huge mass of figures that will mean nothing. There may be long trips taken by some of the Ministers, accompanied by a number of members of Parliament. In other cases a Minister might take a short trip and be able to go alone. What object will be served? A Minister might take quite a large number of members of Parliament with him to the opening of the bridge at Rockhampton, which is a perfectly justifiable thing to do, because if he were to go alone the people of Rockhampton probably would not be satisfied; there would be no function; and they might say that members took so very little interest in them or in their town that nobody would come up with the Minister. The more he takes with him the better they will be pleased, and the larger the expense will be. It will appear that he expended the money. It may suit the hon. member for Clermont to move this motion, and make a great to-do about these expenses, but when he gets the information it will be absolutely valueless for any purpose for which he requires it. In many cases it will be found that a Minister has taken a number of members with him for the purpose of enabling them to see the country, and to obtain information which will be useful to them afterwards, and also of considerable value as members of the House. As I do not see what useful object is to be gained, I shall certainly vote against both the motion and the amendment.

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*) : The hon. member for Balonne has evidently taken his cue from the Home Secretary.

Mr. STORY : I did not take it from anybody.

Mr. McDONALD : What I mean is that it was the Home Secretary who started that argument, and the hon. member has followed it up. If the expression is offensive to the hon. member I will withdraw it. It was the

Home Secretary who first pointed out that on certain trips Ministers took a number of members with them, and that that would appear in his expenditure. I do not see why that should appear in his expenditure at all. If it is to a public function it has nothing to do with the Minister; he is merely for the time being the figure-head in carrying out the function, and the expenditure ought not to be charged to him at all.

The HOME SECRETARY : It will all appear in this return.

Mr. McDONALD : It would be charged as the personal expenses of the Minister.

The HOME SECRETARY : Yes.

Mr. McDONALD : I do not see how it could possibly be charged. It is to a public function.

The HOME SECRETARY : You cannot distinguish.

Mr. McDONALD : Even if that is so, it is just as well that we should know where we are. I have travelled on those trips, and I suppose other members have done the same. What I want to point out is that the fact that some members are taken by Ministers to public functions at a distance is a very good argument for some special provision being made, so as to give hon. members an opportunity to travel. I do not think it is a good thing that hon. members should have to depend upon the Minister for the time being to travel at any particular time at his special invitation. If it is a good thing that members of the House should travel in order to see the various parts of the country, they should have an opportunity of doing so. It is a complaint on the part of many Southern members that the Northern members have an advantage over them, because, owing to certain facilities afforded them, they can see their constituents in the North once a year, and have their fare paid both ways. Southern members cannot visit the North, or any part of the colony away from railways, except at a great expense to themselves.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : It is an advantage to live near your electorate.

Mr. McDONALD : I agree with the hon. gentleman that it is, and it is a pity he does not follow it up. However, I do not see that there is anything especially objectionable in the original motion if there is nothing to hide in the matter; and the Treasurer has stated his willingness to give even the details of the expenditure. The hon. gentleman also stated that no Minister objects to those details being given if it is deemed desirable. It is necessary to have a motion like this passed. When rumours are flying about, no matter where they emanate from, it is just as well to have them settled as soon as possible. The very moment I hear a rumour of any kind, I come here and try to get information as to whether it is true or untrue.

The HOME SECRETARY : And to push it along.

Mr. McDONALD : Even that is a good thing to do at times. Only within the last few weeks matters very similar to this have been brought forward, and there has been no objection to them on the other side of the House. Various questions of this nature have been asked, and the answers given to them have proved beyond all doubt that it was for the good of the country that those questions had been asked. Personally, I have no objection to either the motion or the amendment. Certainly, the return to the Treasurer's amendment, if granted, would be a very cumbersome one, and I do not see that it is going to satisfy any reasonable purpose. However, if the Ministry are prepared to accept that particular form of the motion, I have no objection, considering that the mover of the motion has accepted it, but I would rather have seen the original motion pass as it stands.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. D. H. Dalrymple, *Mackay*): I do not see any objection either to the original motion or to the amendment, if I really thought there was any necessity for information of that kind. Personally, I should have been more disposed to vote for the motion if it had proceeded from a member who represented any considerable body on the other side of the House. If, for instance, it had been moved by the leader of the Constitutional Opposition or by the leader of the Labour Opposition, we should understand that probably there was some meaning in it. But it has been brought forward by an hon. member who has been here a very short time, who appears to possess a preternatural activity, who is always asking questions, and who seems to think that if he cannot become famous he will become notorious. The hon. member who spoke last said something about the Ministry having no objection to the amendment. I do not think there is any Ministerial view about it at all. What I intend to do is to vote against the amendment, and I shall vote against the original motion too. I agree with the hon. member for Toowoomba in this matter. The hon. member for Clermont may be animated by conscientious motives, but it is not his intention to get information in the slightest degree. The leader of the Opposition stated his intention to support the motion, on the ground that he desired information, but the hon. member for Clermont distinctly denied that that was his object; he said that what he wanted to do was to prove that the Government had been guilty of malpractices.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Oh!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: With misgovernment—it meant nothing else. The condition of affairs has been good enough for most hon. members on the other side who have been in Parliament a good many years. They did not desire to prove in this matter that the Government were guilty of anything improper. It is left for the hon. member for Clermont. With regard to the motion itself, I consider that the amendment is preferable to the motion, for this reason: It does not make an invidious distinction. The motion is for a return apparently to show that the Premier has spent so much money, and if it were furnished in the manner desired, it would have been open to the hon. members opposite to have drawn attention to this fact, to impress persons with the idea that this expenditure was something abnormal, and was evidence of extravagance on the part of the Premier with regard to the taxpayers' money. He did not even ask that the expenses of the Ministry should be produced in this House, so that it is quite evident even if the hon. gentleman had made the disclaimer, which he did not, that it was not moved with the desire of protecting the public exchequer or to discover how public money was spent. If he had any desire to know that, he would have asked not only for the expenses incurred by the Premier, but also for the expenses incurred by other Ministers. Therefore, I do not see why expense should be incurred to satisfy—I do not know whether it is parliamentary—what I should call malevolence—perhaps it is not, but at any rate it was not a desire on the part of the hon. member to get the information for the public good.

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*): I think the time has arrived when the Treasurer should put on the Estimates a certain sum to indicate what Ministers require for petty cash during the year.

The TREASURER: You would be astonished if you knew the amount sometimes.

Mr. FISHER: Why should not the amount be stated? I do not want the items.

The TREASURER: Sometimes there might be nothing at all asked.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That would be all the worse.

Mr. FISHER: In that case Parliament should insist on them spending more. If the hon. gentleman's view is correct—if the Ministry fail in not spending enough, Parliament would direct them to spend more. When I first came to Parliament Sir T. McIlwraith said there was no mystery about Parliament, and every shilling of expenditure should be made public—there should be nothing concealed. Why not follow that up and put a stated sum on the Estimates to cover extraordinary expenditure on the part of Ministers, and then if the vote or part of it is allowed to lapse the Auditor-General would look after that matter very carefully, and we would know exactly how much was expended by Ministers from year to year?

The HOME SECRETARY: The Auditor-General audits it now.

Mr. FISHER: Can the hon. gentleman tell how much Ministers spent during the last financial year from any paper laid before the House—can he tell within £100.

Mr. TURLEY: No. How can he tell you?

Mr. FISHER: I think I go as carefully through the financial papers as any hon. member, and I have failed to see anything to indicate how much was spent, even within £1,000.

The TREASURER: If you ask the question you can find out.

Mr. FISHER: I do not want to be placed in the position of asking information that should be given voluntarily or by order of the House, or by order of responsible Ministers. This is a financial matter. In the same way as the managing director of a company has a certain amount for petty cash, I think a certain amount should be put on the Estimates for the extraordinary expenditure of Ministers. I trust, whether the motion is passed or not, the Treasurer will put a certain amount on the Estimates as extraordinary or miscellaneous expenditure of Ministers, and that information will be given from time to time showing how much has been expended; and if they exceed the amount in any year, no doubt the House will willingly vote a supplementary amount.

The TREASURER: All the Ministers would be glad to get travelling allowances.

Mr. FISHER: I have no objection. I do not wish to see Ministers lose money. I would like to see them paid sufficiently to enable them to carry out the duties of their offices in the most efficient way for the benefit of the country, and travel about as Ministers should travel. What I wish, as a representative, is to know the total amount expended from time to time, and how and why it is expended.

Mr. KERR (*Barcoo*): I think the hon. member for Clermont is to be commended for the action he has taken. Some seem to think it is a question of bad taste to bring forward this motion, but the hon. member no doubt has been asked the question by several in his own electorate and when he has been travelling round other electorates in the Central district; it is a question very often asked how much the travelling expenses of Ministers amount to, and I think the hon. member moved the motion in a very proper manner. A good deal has been said about members travelling with Ministers and Ministers paying the whole of the expenses, and the Home Secretary gave us the information that he had been asked by a member on this side to travel with a number of members. I think it would have been much better if the Home Secretary had given the name of that member who wants special travelling, because if there is any member on this side,

or on the other side of the House that specially wants to travel through the Barcoo electorate during the recess, I am at his service. I have taken the opportunity during the recess, ever since I have been a member, of taking various members round my electorate, to make them acquainted with the district, and we never asked any travelling expenses and never got any; we travelled at our own expense. I did ask once to have a buggy and two horses taken by rail from Barcaldine to Longreach, to save 100 miles of a journey, and I was denied that, when there were three or four members travelling with me. I think, if a member is not allowed that small privilege he has no right to expect anything of the department. When the hon. member for Balonne got up to speak to the amendment he intimated that a train was going to travel to the Central district on the occasion of the opening of the bridge at Rockhampton. Now, it appears strange that members of this House representing important electorates in the Central district, and who have an interest in the welfare of Rockhampton, should get the first intimation in this Chamber from a private member that such a thing is going to take place. I think, as a matter of courtesy, the Minister for Railways ought, if there was a train going to the opening of the new bridge across the Fitzroy, to have at least informed the members of the Central district, so that they might have had an opportunity to attend a function like that if they were prepared to travel. I think it is an act of discourtesy on the part of the Minister for Railways that he has not informed us that such a thing was going to take place.

Mr. FISHER: He has informed the hon. member for Balonne.

Mr. KERR: Yes, but he has not considered it of sufficient importance to inform members who represent important constituencies of which Rockhampton is the port. I can say from my place on the floor of this House that I do not want to travel at the expense of Ministers. I am quite prepared to pay my own expenses when I am travelling either on private or public business.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Murray, *Normanby*): In reply to the hon. member for Barcoo I may say that I intimated to both members for Rockhampton, Mr. Curtis and Mr. Kidston, that it was my intention to go to Rockhampton to open the railway bridge, and asked them to intimate to their friends on the other side that if they desired to go I should be only too pleased. I assume that that information was conveyed to members.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Other Ministers do not invite us in that manner.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have not the slightest doubt that those two hon. members mentioned the matter.

Mr. KERR: No, they have not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: At all events I am not to blame, and as far as I am concerned there has been no discourtesy whatever. I have no desire to go on trips of this description by myself, and I thought it would be of great interest to hon. members to attend this little function. I hope the hon. member for Barcoo will in future endeavour to be a little more correct in his statements than he has been on this occasion.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): It is rather surprising to get that information for the first time. I have no doubt the Minister had no intention of being discourteous, and thought that by telling the hon. members for Rockhampton other hon. members would get to know his intentions, but I would suggest that in future it would be better if each individual were asked

personally. With respect to the motion, I must say that I hope the House will grant the information requested and pass the motion. I would like to see the motion itself passed and not the amendment.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Why?

Mr. HARDACRE: It appears to me that it is one of the first duties of a representative of the people to keep a check over the public purse, and from time immemorial one of the methods adopted for doing that has been by moving motions such as we have now before us. To refuse to give such information will be establishing a very bad precedent, no matter what are the reasons which impel the hon. member to ask for it. It may be that the hon. member wants to prove misgovernment, and if he does he has a perfect right to ask for the information if he thinks there has been misgovernment and wants to know whether there has been or not.

The HOME SECRETARY: What do you mean by misgovernment in this connection?

Mr. HARDACRE: It may mean many things. It might mean unreasonable expenditure. If it means merely keeping a check on expenditure, he should not be refused the information. That is what he is here for. No matter what the reason may be, any member has a right to be supplied with such information. It is not a question of privilege, but a question of right. I do not like the amendment for the reason that it is altogether unnecessary. I do not know what good information about the expenditure of Premiers thirty years ago will do.

The HOME SECRETARY: For comparison's sake.

Mr. HARDACRE: I do not see any utility in the comparison, because the circumstances of the colony are entirely different, and we will not be able to compare the expenditure of one Minister with another under similar circumstances. It appears to me that the mover of the amendment is really confusing the information requested by the hon. member for Clermont. I do not know that there is very much in the matter after all, or there may be nothing in the information when we get it, and it must be remembered that with regard to the Premier there have been special circumstances. There has been considerable complaint, whether rightly or wrongly, with regard to the large number of free trains that have been used during the election time for electioneering purposes, and also during the federal campaign. With regard to free trains during the federal campaign, I have myself been asked by some of my constituents to endeavour to get that information if possible. I can well understand that the member for Clermont has in the same manner been requested to get this information, and that that is one of his reasons for moving the resolution. Personally, I hope the information will be given, in order to save a bad precedent. I would suggest that the Treasurer withdraw his amendment.

The TREASURER: The motion is unfair. You want to pick out one Minister specially.

Mr. HARDACRE: I do not think it is unfair. The public know pretty well that every Minister, and particularly the Premier, must have a large personal expenditure, and therefore there will be no unfairness in being supplied with his special expenditure. It will be large no doubt, but unless it is unusually large there will be no reflection cast upon him, and if it is unusually large it is but right that this House should know.

The TREASURER: You can only judge by comparison.

Mr. HARDACRE: You cannot judge in this case very well by comparison.

The TREASURER: Oh, yes, you can.

Mr. HARDACRE: How can you compare the expenditure of the Premier last year with that of Sir Thomas McIlwraith in 1891, 1892, or 1893? There is no earthly good in such a comparison. But if we are supplied with the total amount expended we can judge very well whether it was extravagant by considering the circumstances. I have no animus, or desire to cast any reflection on any Minister, but I think, as a matter of courtesy to the hon. member for Clermont, and following the usual practice, the information should be granted.

Mr. CURTIS (*Rockhampton*): With reference to the matter mentioned by the hon. member for Barcoo, I should like to say that the Secretary for Railways told me he had mentioned the matter to Mr. Kidston, member for Rockhampton, and therefore I did not think it necessary to communicate with the members of his party. I conveyed the information to the members of the party I am identified with. I do not think I need say anything more about that. I did not conceive it necessary for me to go round to extend the invitation to the members of the Labour party, seeing that Mr. Kidston had already been spoken to by the Secretary for Railways.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: He did not ask him to invite the members of the Labour party.

Mr. CURTIS: Perhaps not; but as the Secretary for Railways mentioned that he had spoken to me about the matter, I thought it was very desirable I should say a few words about it in order that there might be no misunderstanding. I do not approve of the motion of the hon. member for Clermont, neither do I approve of the amendment of the Hon. the Treasurer, and I intend to vote against both proposals. It appears to me that the motion involves an invidious distinction in singling out the Premier, nor is it such as I deem desirable even if it were made to apply to all Ministers. With regard to the amendment it appears to me that it would involve a large amount of labour, and after it was made out I do not think it would be the least use to anybody.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIDSTON (*Rockhampton*): I did not intend to take part in this discussion at all, but I have just been informed that the Secretary for Railways has said in this House that he asked me to invite any of my friends on this side of the House to go up to Rockhampton to take part in the opening of the new railway bridge there. I rise to give that an emphatic and categorical denial.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Oh, oh!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not ask you?

Mr. KIDSTON: No. The Secretary for Railways called me over last night. Hon. members might have seen us sitting together on the front cross bench there.

Mr. DAWSON: We thought you had gone over.

Mr. KIDSTON: He did not invite me at all. He asked me if I was going up, and I said I was afraid I should not be able to. He said he was sorry, and reminded me the bridge was going to be opened on Monday.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I asked you distinctly.

Mr. KIDSTON: I said I would try to get up, but the hon. gentleman did not invite me. He never mentioned anything at all—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: About what?

Mr. KIDSTON: About me inviting any other members on this side of the House. I think the hon. gentleman will not deny what I have said.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put and negatived.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 19.

Messrs. Philp, Ryland, Lesina, Dawson, Kidston, G. Thorn, Maxwell, Kerr, Fisher, Smith, W. Hamilton, Fitzgerald, Browne, McDonald, Turley, Dunsford, Givens, McDonnell, and Hardacre.

NOES, 25.

Messrs. Rutledge, Chataway, Murray, Newell, Hanran, Dalrymple, Finney, Grimes, Stephenson, Curtis, Boles, Drake, Forsyth, Moore, Groom, T. B. Cribb, Bridges, Bartholomew, Story, Stodart, Foxton, Tooth, Lord, J. Hamilton, and O'Connell.

Question resolved in the negative.

The TREASURER: Is the motion disposed of?

The SPEAKER: What is left of the original motion is meaningless, and if the House is not disposed to proceed further with it, the first Order of the Day will be taken.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

The TREASURER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*): I move that you do now leave the chair.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): There is a matter I should like to refer to before you leave the chair, Sir. The other evening the Treasurer, in reply to a question or interjection by the hon. member for Flinders with respect to the employment of certain shipwrights on the "Cornwall," which has taken the troops to South Africa, made a statement which I have been informed on very good authority was not exactly in accordance with facts.

The SPEAKER: Order! As hon. members are aware, upon the motion that the Speaker leave the chair, and that the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply, our Standing Orders permit the general rule of relevancy to be set aside. But there are certain other rules that ought to be had in remembrance. One of those rules is that a question which may be raised upon the Estimates for a department then about to be considered cannot be debated under cover of the motion that the Speaker leave the chair. I consider that the matter the hon. member is raising is one that may be discussed in Committee of Supply, and therefore he is not justified in intercepting the motion that the Speaker leave the chair by initiating debate upon it.

Mr. LESINA: I want to read this letter to the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in proceeding with the discussion of the matter.

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*): Do I understand that that ruling has been given from the Chair?

The SPEAKER: What I have said must be taken as a ruling.

Mr. McDONALD: Then I move that your ruling be disagreed to.

MEMBERS of the Government: Oh, oh! What!

Mr. McDONALD: I regret very much, indeed, that I have to take that course, but one of the privileges that members of Parliament have is that of discussing grievances before Supply, and, as far as I know anything about the procedure of Parliament, that is one of the oldest privileges that members possess, and I think it is one that should not be curtailed in any shape or form. I could understand the ruling if the question could be discussed immediately we got into Committee of Supply. But if we are to be debarred from discussing grievances on the motion to go into Committee of Supply, it simply means that members will be forced to have

recourse to moving the adjournment of the House day after day in order to bring forward matters which it might not take five minutes to discuss. There was a question asked the other day, and an answer was given to that question. The Speaker has stated that this matter can be immediately discussed, but I ask anybody to show me that it is possible to get to that particular question for the next two weeks.

The SPEAKER: I understood the hon. member to say that he was going to move a motion.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has not reached his motion yet.

Mr. McDONALD: I stated that I was going to move a motion, and I want to show why I take that course. If I am not in order in doing so I will resume my seat. It is for the good conduct of business in this House that I am trying to show a reason why I should propose the motion.

The PREMIER: You are setting a very bad example.

Mr. McDONALD: What I want to point out is that if it can be shown that immediately we get into Committee of Supply this question can be discussed, then the ruling of the Speaker is perfectly correct.

The TREASURER: So it can be.

Mr. McDONALD: Immediately we get into Committee of Supply?

The TREASURER: Yes, on the military Estimates. The Defence Force vote is the next item on the Estimates.

Mr. McDONALD: The Federal Garrison is the next item.

The TREASURER: We can discuss it on that.

Mr. McDONALD: If I understood that that could be done I would immediately resume my seat, but personally I do not think it could.

The TREASURER: I am very anxious to explain the matter to the House if you will give me the opportunity.

Mr. McDONALD: Under those circumstances I do not wish to proceed with the motion. The reason why I was so anxious about the matter is that I have a similar matter to bring forward myself, and if the hon. member for Clermont is out of order it would probably be ruled that the matter I want to refer to is also out of order. But, as I understand now, that it can be brought forward immediately we get into Committee of Supply, I am prepared to waive my objection to the ruling, and reserve what I have to say until we get into committee. I hope that when we get into committee no attempt will be made to burke discussion of the matter; if any attempt is made in that direction we will find some other means of getting at the thing.

The TREASURER: Don't threaten. I promise you at once that I will make a statement when we get into committee.

Mr. McDONALD: On that understanding I will not press the motion, and I regret having made the mistake in proposing it.

The SPEAKER: Since the hon. member has raised the question, I may say that the position I took up is quite right, and is supported by the best authorities. I think, if the hon. member studies the matter he will find my position entirely justified.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS OF PARLIAMENTARY REFRESHMENT-ROOMS COMMITTEE.

The PREMIER: Before any motion was made in connection with the Estimates he wished to inform the Committee that he had received a letter from the Auditor-General in connection with a statement he had made the other evening with reference to the accounts of the Parlia-

mentary Refreshment-rooms Committee. He stated that he had no doubt that the accounts of that committee were duly audited.

Mr. KERR: They are audited by the members of the committee.

The PREMIER deemed it his duty to intimate to the Committee that the following accounts had been exempted from detailed audit by Executive minute of 4th February, 1875:—The Government House establishment, the Parliamentary Rooms Committee, the Rockhampton orphanage, and the travelling expenses of the judges of the Supreme Court. The Auditor-General said in his note: "I do not wish to trouble the Premier, but have quite enough real faults to answer for without taking any imaginary ones. All I have to see is that the money voted by Parliament is not exceeded. What is done with it when drawn is no business of mine."

Mr. LESINA: We were right on this side, then, after all.

Mr. STEPHENSON: The exception proves the rule.

Mr. McDONALD: He would like to ask the Premier, before he moved the first vote, if he was going to see that the accounts he mentioned were audited? He could alter the Executive minute.

The PREMIER: It is a matter for Cabinet consideration. I am not prepared to answer at a moment's notice.

Mr. McDONALD: Would the hon. gentleman undertake to give them a reply at an early date?

Mr. KIDSTON asked if it was proper for an Executive minute to exempt any particular accounts from audit? It seemed an extraordinary thing.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The statement made by the Premier is a correction of something which occurred in the Committee on a previous occasion. I do not think the matter is open to discussion.

Mr. McDONALD: We do not want to discuss it. We only ask a question upon it, in order to save a considerable amount of time.

DEFENCE—FEDERAL GARRISONS.

The PREMIER moved that £2,715 be granted to defray the proportion due by Queensland for maintenance of the garrisons at Thursday Island and King George's Sound. The amount showed an increase of £333. £33 was Queensland's share of a small increase to the Queensland Defence Corps at Thursday Island, and £300 represented Queensland's share for additions and repairs to the barracks at King George's Sound, as agreed to by the contributing colonies.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*) was opposed to the increases in the vote. In speaking generally upon the Defence Force of Queensland, there was a matter he specially desired to draw attention to. In the *Telegraph* of yesterday reference was made in a letter to the carpentering on board the "Cornwall."

The PREMIER: That has nothing to do with this vote.

Mr. LESINA: Yes.

The PREMIER rose to a point of order.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: All right.

The PREMIER: Although it was not strictly in order, the Treasurer had promised to give certain information, but that vote was for the federal garrisons. When they came to the Defence Force vote the matter could be discussed.

Mr. McDONALD: There was a distinct understanding to do it on this vote.

Mr. DAWSON (*Charters Towers*) pointed out that it had been the practice ever since he had been a member of that Assembly, to deal with the general administration of a particular department on the first vote in that department.

The PREMIER: The vote for the federal garrisons is not a defence vote. The hon. member does not discriminate.

Mr. DAWSON: This was the first vote for defence.

Mr. McDONALD: I asked that distinctly.

Mr. DAWSON: According to their practice, every grievance that any hon. member had got, and the general administration of the Defence Force, could be raised on the first question that was submitted to the Chairman.

The PREMIER: Look at the heading—"Federal Garrisons."

Mr. McDONALD: The very word "Defence" appears above "Federal Garrisons."

Mr. DAWSON: The first vote last night was the Chief Secretary's Department, and they could have raised every grievance against the administration of the Chief Secretary on that vote. The next vote was the Agent-General for the colony, and every grievance against that department could have been raised on the first item. The reason why it had not been raised was because there was an agreement between the hon. member for Croydon and the Government that the discussion on the chief item—immigration—should be adjourned until they came to the immigration vote; but it was quite competent for the hon. member for Croydon to have raised the whole question on that item, and they had always previously done it. The Secretary for Mines knew perfectly well that every mining member brought forward his grievances against the department on the first vote that was submitted by the hon. gentleman. That had been their practice.

The CHAIRMAN: With reference to the point of order raised by the Premier, this appears on the Estimates as the first item of the Defence Estimates. It has been usual heretofore to take the general discussion on the first item in the vote, and then when that is finished go into the specific items, and, if desired, move amendments on them. I think it is better to pursue our usual course, and take the general discussion upon this, which is the first item in the defence votes.

Mr. DAWSON: Before the hon. member for Clermont went into the matter which he was about to raise, the Premier the previous night, in answer to a question put by him, faithfully promised to produce certain correspondence before hon. members were called upon to discuss the Defence Force Estimates. They had not got that correspondence, and he wanted to know the reason why. They could not discuss the question with any accuracy unless they had that correspondence.

The PREMIER: I understand it is the fault of the servants of the House that hon. members have not got it. I do not distribute papers.

On the papers being handed round,

Mr. McDONALD: This is not the correspondence we want. Of course, we want this too; but what we particularly want are the papers which were laid on the table two days ago—the general correspondence.

Mr. DAWSON: Even hon. members on the other side must acquit them of blame [5:30 p.m.] when they objected to be called upon to debate the very important item of defence without having been furnished with the documents necessary. They were being put into his hands now, and the vote was before the Committee. The Premier should have taken steps to see that those papers were circulated with the papers circulated to hon. members that morning, and not have them put into their hands now.

The TREASURER: The Premier does not print the papers.

Mr. DAWSON: The Premier could give orders to have those papers printed and circulated to hon. members that morning.

The PREMIER: The orders were given. What more do you want?

Mr. McDONALD: Oh, keep cool.

Mr. DAWSON: They wanted the papers in sufficient time. Did the hon. gentleman presume for a single instant to say that if he had those papers put into his hands then when the vote was already before the Committee he could intelligibly discuss the items of the vote?

The PREMIER: Of course I could.

Mr. DAWSON: Could he? Then the hon. gentleman was one of those great political geniuses the world had been sighing for so long, and had only just discovered. Probably that was the reason the hon. gentleman had lost his hair.

The HOME SECRETARY: Oh! Can you not be respectful?

MEMBERS on the Government side: Shame, shame!

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member is not in order.

Mr. DAWSON: He had no desire to interrupt the discussion the hon. member for Clermont wished to raise, but it was unfair treatment that necessary documents should not be circulated to hon. members until they were actually called upon to exercise a vote and had no time to read and study them.

The PREMIER: You will have plenty of time to read and study them during the tea hour.

Mr. DAWSON: The hon. gentleman should have shown a little more consideration for hon. members on his side of the Chamber.

The HOME SECRETARY: How much do you show for us?

Mr. McDONALD: Oh, we fairly love you.

Mr. DAWSON: The irritable member of the Ministry, or, he should say, the irritating member of the Ministry—

The HOME SECRETARY: Ah, that is more like it.

Mr. DAWSON: Must have his interjection. It was not fair to members on the Opposition side, and it was decidedly unfair to members on the Government side, because it pre-supposed that it did not matter whether the Ministerial following desired information or not, when important documents like those were kept back to the eleventh hour. He entered his protest. He thought every Minister who had Estimates to put through should let hon. members have documents bearing upon them sufficiently early to enable them to study them.

Mr. LESINA: The matter he had so far vainly attempted to bring before the Committee was that of the carpentering on board the "Cornwall." The hon. member for Flinders had asked a question on the matter the other night, with the object of finding out whether Queensland workmen seeking employment were getting the preference in fitting up the boat, the cost of chartering which they had to pay as taxpayers. The Treasurer stated in reply that they had, but that had been denied in the *Telegraph* in a letter by Mr. John H. Dawson, president of the Brisbane Shipwrights' Society, a person specially qualified to know exactly what had taken place, so far as the members of the Shipwrights' Society were concerned. He wrote as follows:—

TO THE EDITOR.—Sir,—In to-day's issue of your valuable journal there appears a paragraph in which the Hon. E. Philp is credited with stating, in reply to Mr. C. McDonald, that twenty shipwrights went away from Brisbane to make the necessary alterations to the steamer "Cornwall," in which the Queensland troops are to be conveyed to South Africa. Dr. Points, in commenting on this statement, says the agents of the "Cornwall" and the foreman in charge of the carpentering work aver that not a single carpenter went south in the steamer. As president of the Brisbane

Shipwrights' Society I desire to endorse the latter statement and give an emphatic denial to Mr. Philp's reply, which is exceedingly misleading, and has not the vestige of truth to support it. Furthermore, I may state that there are plenty of shipwrights here who would have been only too glad of the chance of getting a job on the steamer, and nearly all these are married men with families, who would have spent their earnings in the colony and not have taken the money to New South Wales or elsewhere. Apologising for trespassing on your space, and thanking you in anticipation.—Yours, &c.,

JOHN H. DAWSON.

The Treasurer had stated that twenty shipwrights had gone south in the "Cornwall" on purpose to fit her up. He wanted to know which of those statements was correct that they might understand how the Defence Department was carried on, and what value was to be attached to the statements of Ministers in reply to questions by hon. members on matters of that kind. He would like to know whether the Treasurer or the president of the Brisbane Shipwrights' Society was right or whether the *Telegraph* had been lying about that matter.

The TREASURER felt quite grateful to the hon. member for Clermont for giving him the opportunity of explaining why he had called out as he did the other night in answer to the question without notice put by the hon. member for Flinders. He had said that twenty went from Brisbane, and he thought every member of the House would admit that he believed at the time that twenty had gone.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: He had said every member, but perhaps the hon. member for Clermont would not believe it.

Mr. LESINA: I believed you at the time.

The TREASURER was astonished that the *Telegraph* should have twitted him in the matter.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It was a letter written to the *Telegraph*.

The TREASURER: He had seen that, but there also had been references to the subject in the "Points" column. He might say that he read every respectable paper in the colony, and he read the two daily papers in Brisbane regularly. He noticed this in the *Telegraph* a night or two ago—

The latest matter in doubt is as to whether Queensland carpenters were sent away from Brisbane in the "Cornwall" when she went south a few days ago.

Mr. Philp informed the House yesterday that twenty Queensland workmen went away in the steamer for the purpose of putting up the fittings.

The agents of the "Cornwall," however, state that not a single carpenter went south in the steamer, and this is confirmed by the foreman in charge of the carpentering work. Who is telling the truth?

Looking back in that paper to the 20th October hon. members would find a paragraph from which he first got the information on the subject. He assumed that the authorities of the paper took the trouble to find out the truth of the matter, and he found the following reference to the "Cornwall" under the heading of "Arrangements for Transport":—

When she left Brisbane for the south she took with her a large number of carpenters, about 100, who are pushing on with the fitting up of the vessel as speedily as possible while she is away. The plans for the necessary accommodation on board ship were prepared under the direction of Captain T. M. Almond, the portmaster.

He implicitly believed that when he saw it.

Mr. JENKINSON: That may have been inspired.

The TREASURER had not inspired it, and was not in the habit of inspiring newspapers. He had discussed the matter with one hon. member, and had mentioned that he had seen in the paper that 100 had gone down.

Mr. DAWSON: I told you something about it, too.

The TREASURER: He was informed by a member of the House that ten carpenters and

ten joiners had gone in the ship. In the face of those paragraphs and that statement—

Mr. KIDSTON: You made a mistake in believing the *Telegraph*.

The TREASURER: He would be more careful in future not to trust newspaper paragraphs.

HON. G. THORN asked whether the Government of South Australia had last year paid its share towards the federal garrison at Thursday Island?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. LESINA: Do I understand from the Treasurer that no Brisbane shipwrights were employed in fitting out this boat?

The TREASURER: None went from Brisbane. The ship was fitted up by the owners. That was their business, and he supposed they found it more convenient to fit up in Melbourne and Sydney and along the coast. On the first visit of the "Cornwall," Brisbane was not her final port of call. She went back to Sydney and Melbourne, and then returned for the contingent.

Mr. McDONALD said he understood that on the occasion of the second visit here of the "Cornwall," when a number of southern shipwrights were working on board her, an attempt was made to get some shipwrights here, but the Brisbane shipwrights objected to work with non-union men.

The TREASURER: She was only here two days.

Mr. McDONALD: Just before she went an attempt was made to get twelve or fourteen shipwrights here, and he was informed—he would not say it was absolutely correct—they refused to work with non-union men.

The TREASURER: As a matter of fact the Government had nothing to do with fitting up the ship. She was chartered to carry so many men and horses to South Africa, and the owners had to find the fittings. It was impossible for the vessel to fit up in Brisbane inside of two days. Of course they could have started on the downward trip, but that was not done, and the Government could not interfere. It was open to the owners to fit up wherever they liked.

HON. G. THORN said he was astonished at the hon. member for Flinders raising an objection to the carpenters. The ship had to get away on a certain day, and if southern carpenters had not been employed that would have been impossible. He rose now more particularly to ask the Premier if any other colony besides South Australia had defaulted with regard to the maintenance of the garrison at Thursday Island?

The PREMIER: No.

HON. G. THORN: Then he was surprised that a colony which went in so strongly for federation had shown such an anti-federal spirit in meeting its federal obligations.

* The HOME SECRETARY: With regard to the question of the carpenters, it would be very interesting to find out how it was that no carpenters were taken from Brisbane. Let hon. members recall the interval between the time when the vote for the contingent was originally proposed and the time when it was actually passed. A comparison between those dates and the date when it was necessary for the steamer to start on her interim trip to Sydney would be very instructive. He had seen it stated in the Press—as to which, after what they had just heard, he spoke with somewhat bated breath—that if the vote had not been delayed in the way it was in passing through the House, the agent for the "Cornwall" would have been only too glad to have employed Brisbane carpenters to do that work. Seeing that the vote was not passed up to the time the vessel was compelled to leave, it was not deemed advisable to take carpenters on

board to do work which might not be necessary at all. It was just as well that that should be thoroughly understood if it was the fact.

Mr. McDONALD: He also had seen the paragraph in the Press referred to by the Home Secretary, and the hon. gentleman was somewhat inaccurate in his account of it. The reason given was not because the vote had not passed, but because the ship had a large amount of cargo to discharge, and if men had been taken from Brisbane they would have to be kept on board a considerable time before they could be employed. Somewhere about sixty men were required, and the agent declined to keep them on board for a long time doing nothing. Therefore, the reason given by the Home Secretary would not hold water. With regard to a remark of the hon. member for Fassifern, he might say that he had never raised any objection as to where those men came from. He had merely pointed to the fact that no Queensland men were employed, the reason for which was that they objected to work alongside non-union men in that particular trade. As a matter of fact, the day the boat sailed, on Wednesday, an attempt was made to get twelve or fourteen shipwrights to go to Sydney in connection with this work, and they could not be got.

Mr. LESINA asked what was the use of a garrison at Thursday Island, a place that was already practically in possession of the Japanese? It was common talk among the Japanese there that they had discovered secret passages by which they could lead a Japanese war boat within reach of Thursday Island without risking any danger from the garrison at all. Recently there was an election for a member of the committee of a charitable institution there, and the two white candidates were defeated by Japanese. The Japanese had taken complete control of the place, and the Government were spending money year after year in fortifying an island that was practically an outpost to Japan, and from which they would some time or other direct their guns against Queensland territory. Unless some action was taken in other directions to minimise the evil, the fortification of Thursday Island was merely a waste of public money, and he objected to the increase for that reason.

Mr. J. HAMILTON (*Cook*) said the information just given by the hon. member about the secret passages had been stale to the Committee for the last five or six years. There were foreigners in Thursday Island, and there were foreigners in Parliament. It was well known that Thursday Island was required as a coaling station, and the best military authorities considered that the fortifications were desirable, and their opinion was worth a little more than the opinion of the hon. member.

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*) asked the Premier if any word had come to the Government officially that the passages referred to by the hon. member for Clermont really existed?

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*) said he understood that Imperial naval authorities looked with favour on Fitzroy Island as a place suitable to be fortified, as it commanded the passage inside the Barrier Reef more completely than any other place on the whole coast line, and he would like to know from the Chief Secretary if he had received any communication to that effect from the naval authorities, and if so, what steps were likely to be taken. Further, he would like some information as to what port or ports in North Queensland were likely to be set apart as naval depôts.

The PREMIER: Those questions would be tabulated and, if necessary, submitted to the commander-in-chief of the naval station. This item was simply to provide for the contribution due by Queensland in pursuance of an agreement with the other colonies for the maintenance and

equipment of garrisons for federal purposes. The Government had received no communication from the Admiral as to any new passages having been discovered, but he was informed that the defences at Thursday Island were approved of by the most competent military authorities, and, at present, were sufficient for all purposes. South Australia had, from the first, paid nothing towards the expenditure on account of the garrison at Thursday Island, and the proportion which should have been provided by that colony up to 31st December, 1897, amounted to £5,292. In the absence of their contribution, it was agreed, a couple of years ago, that the deficiency should be made up by New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, and Queensland; and accordingly they had contributed in proportion to the population.

Mr. McDONALD: The hon. gentleman had not answered his question with regard to those passages. There had been statements made for the last four or five years that one or two passages had been found through which a vessel could be taken without going near the fortifications at Thursday Island, and he wished to know whether the hon. gentleman had any official information as to the truth or otherwise of the statement.

The PREMIER said no representation had been made by the Imperial authorities to the Government here about any such new passages having been discovered. He was not in a position to say whether such was the case or not—Torres Strait, of course, was a wide expanse of water—but he understood that the fortifications at Thursday Island were sufficient.

He desired to point out that the [7 p.m.] whole arrangements connected with the federal contributions to the garrison at Thursday Island were to be found in the first volume of "Votes and Proceedings" for 1892. That was the foundation of the federal agreement in connection with the garrison. Since then, owing to the defalcation of South Australia, the Governments of Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland had retained the establishment. It was not in the true sense of the word for military purposes, but was to protect the coaling station kept there for Imperial purposes. Although the vote showed a small increase it was necessary in connection with certain improvements which had had to be introduced to make the garrison more effective.

Mr. SMITH (*Bowen*) asked how much had been spent on the fortifications at King George's Sound and Thursday Island? Up to 1898, an amount of £9,408 had been spent. He would like to know what had been done at King George's Sound and at Thursday Island, and to what amount was South Australia a defaulter? Thursday Island had received a great deal of attention, but he thought very little had been done at King George's Sound. He should also like to know whether it was intended to take any steps to make South Australia pay up?

The TREASURER: New South Wales and Victoria are paying for her.

Mr. SMITH: It was very good of them.

The PREMIER: If hon. members wanted to understand the position he would again refer them to the first volume of "Votes and Proceedings" for 1892, in which the agreement for the fortification of Thursday Island was laid down. To explain the position he would read the following extract:—

No practical steps were taken, however, to give any effect to this feeling until the Colonial Conference held in London in the year 1887, at which delegates from all the colonies met to discuss various matters of Imperial concern with the Secretary of State for the Colonies. It was then agreed that Her Majesty's Government should provide armaments for King George's Sound and Thursday Island, which, from their positions, were regarded as the first points to be defended, owing to their value

as coaling stations, etc., the value of the armament being set down at £12,726. It was also agreed that the cost of providing the necessary works and barracks at these stations—King George's Sound £12,700, and Thursday Island £14,800—should fall upon the Australian colonies, which should also maintain the necessary permanent garrisons. In addition to providing the armament the Imperial Government was willing to garrison the forts at the expense of the colonies with contingents of the Royal Marines under the orders of the Admiral commanding on the station. The representatives of the colonies at the conference somewhat demurred to the nature of the armaments proposed to be supplied, and after considerable correspondence had taken place, in 1889, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Knutsford, wrote stating that Her Majesty's Government had agreed to supply new type guns, which would bring the value of the Imperial contribution from £12,726 to £26,400. The cost of mounting these guns would increase the expenditure at King George's Sound to £14,300, and at Thursday Island to £17,100, so that the total amount to be provided by the colonies would be increased from £27,500 to £31,400. The Government of West Australia, it may be stated, agreed to contribute £5,000 towards the cost of the works at King George's Sound, leaving a balance of £9,300 to be contributed by the other colonies on a population basis. The garrisons of marines were estimated to cost £3,513 for King George's Sound, and £4,807 for Thursday Island, but as there was a general feeling that the garrisons should be provided by the colonies, and not by the Imperial Government, Lord Knutsford, in a despatch dated 14th January, 1890, stated that the latter did not wish to press that proposal, and would leave it with the colonial Governments to suggest some alternative scheme. He stated at the same time, with reference to the claims of other ports to defences, that he thought such should be left to be dealt with upon their merits when the colonies thought proper to undertake further expenditure in this direction, but in the meantime it appeared essential that the two stations whose strategical importance and claims to be defended had been admitted both by the Imperial Government and the Australian colonies should be promptly dealt with.

At the close of the Federation Conference held in Melbourne in 1890 an informal discussion took place between the delegates of the various colonies on the subject of the defence of King George's Sound and Thursday Island, and it was resolved that in view of the divergence of opinion as to the nature of the armament required, a meeting of the Commandants of the several colonies should be convened, and that these officers should visit these places and report as to what armaments would be necessary for their adequate protection, and also that the Admiral in command of the station should be requested to nominate a naval officer to go with them. The Imperial Government was to be asked to contribute the sum of £26,160 in cash instead of in armament (a proposal which was subsequently declined), and it was decided that the garrisons should be provided by the colonies.

He need not address himself further to the subject. The only recalcitrant member of the contributing colonies was South Australia.

Mr. DAWSON: We have not paid towards fortifying Port Darwin.

The PREMIER: He did not know whether that would be considered a federal garrison.

Mr. DAWSON: Wasn't that the agreement?

The PREMIER: No. The agreement was that Thursday Island and King George's Sound were to be federal garrisons.

Mr. SMITH: South Australia stipulated that Port Darwin should be also fortified.

Mr. DAWSON: That was the arrangement.

The PREMIER:

On 30th September, 1892, a letter was received by the Premier from the South Australian Government containing an estimate of the cost of the works at Port Darwin, and confirming a statement conveyed in a telegram received previously to the effect that that Government had agreed to recommend Parliament to join with the other colonies in defraying the cost on a population basis of giving effect to the proposals for the defence of Thursday Island, but on the understanding that the proposals respecting King George's Sound and Port Darwin were similarly treated.

Mr. DAWSON: There you are.

The PREMIER:

Sir Samuel Griffith, who was then Chief Secretary, replied to this communication, stating that Queensland was prepared to join with the other colonies in contributing upon a population basis to the cost of the Port Darwin defences; and it does not appear that this colony ever departed from the agreement, nor does it seem that the other colonies concerned refused to contribute to the cost of the Port Darwin defences.

In a memorandum written by the Minister of Defence in Victoria, forwarded under cover of a letter from the Premier of that colony, dated 27th November, 1894, certain difficulties in the way of providing the necessary garrison at Port Darwin were pointed out, South Australia having objected to the proposed employment of *Lascars*, and it is stated that Sir Frederick (then Mr.) Sargood was of opinion that the defence of the cable would be more thoroughly secured by naval than by military means. No action, however, was taken by this colony or by any other colony concerned, and if the scheme has not been proceeded with, it consequently appears that the responsibility rests solely with South Australia itself.

There did not appear to be anything which would relieve South Australia of its liability to contribute with the other colonies. If there had been any expenditure at Port Darwin it would be incumbent on Queensland as well as the other colonies to contribute *pro rata*; but as none had taken place, he did not see how South Australia could be honourably relieved of its obligation for the maintenance of the garrisons at Thursday Island and King George's Sound.

Mr. DAWSON: They had had this question before the Committee before; and he remembered distinctly reading the reply of Premier Kingston, when he was asked the reason South Australia did not fulfil her obligations to contribute towards the Thursday Island garrison. He said she had a counter-claim against Queensland, which was not recognised—that it was not because she wanted to back out, but because Queensland would not recognise her claims with reference to Port Darwin. Seeing the doubt there was on this point, it would be much better for the Premier to lay the whole of the correspondence relating to it on the table of the House, so that hon. members would know exactly what the position was at the present time. He had been assured by members of the South Australian Parliament that the objection they had to paying their contribution towards the maintenance of the garrison at Thursday Island was because Queensland refused to contribute her share towards the erection of forts at Port Darwin. That might not be so, but that was the position that was taken up by the South Australian people, and that was the reply, he understood, that was made by Mr. Kingston to Sir Hugh Nelson.

The TREASURER: Until Queensland erected the fortifications at Thursday Island they did not call on the other colonies for contributions. Queensland agreed to pay her share of the cost of the maintenance of the garrison at Port Darwin; but as there were no fortifications at Port Darwin she could not be called on to pay her share of a sum of money that was not owing. South Australia agreed to pay her share of the cost of maintaining the garrison at Thursday Island, and had not done so, and Queensland, Victoria, and New South Wales were paying her share jointly in proportion to population.

Mr. SMITH: Western Australia pays her share.

Mr. FOGARTY (*Drayton and Toowoomba*) had reason to think that certain members of the Defence Force at Thursday Island were not treated at all fairly. If he was informed correctly, and he believed he was, their pay was in arrears and their uniform also; and, further, that they were employed in road-making, which certainly was not what they were engaged for. He hoped inquiries would be made, and if it was found that his information was correct—and he

had no hesitation in saying it was—the arrears of pay and the uniforms would be forthcoming immediately, also that the men would be put to the work for which they were engaged.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They are navvies.

Mr. FOGARTY: They were not navvies, but they were being made navvies of.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member referred to the Permanent Force, all he could say was that their pay was not in arrears, nor was he aware of their clothing being in a bad condition. With regard to working on roads, all soldiers were supposed to work on military roads. If these men worked on other roads they were paid for it. If the hon. gentleman would give specific information he would have the matter looked into.

Mr. FOGARTY: Thank you.

Mr. SMITH: Will you give the separate amounts charged to Thursday Island and King George's Sound?

The PREMIER: He could give the amounts for the whole of the colonies.

The PREMIER: He had already stated what was the expenditure on account of the maintenance of the garrison at Thursday Island. The amounts due by South Australia represented £5,292. The amount which was now paid by New South Wales was £2,229, by Victoria £2,124, by West Australia £146, and by Queensland £793. He was unable to tell the hon. member what was the amount due in respect of St. George's Sound, as he had not the papers.

Question put and passed.

LAND FORCE.

The PREMIER moved that the sum of £77,423 be granted to defray the expenses of the Land Force. It would be observed that the amount voted on the Estimates-in-Chief for 1898-9 was £59,639, but in addition to that certain services had to be provided for to the extent of £5,183, which brought up the appropriation for that year to £64,822, so that the Estimate presented for the present year showed an excess of £12,601 over the appropriation for 1898-9. He would first deal with the items of unforeseen expenditure for last year, and then represent to the Committee the necessity for the increased appropriation.

Mr. DAWSON: Don't you think we had better take the fodder question first?

The PREMIER: Very well.

Mr. DAWSON had a personal interest in the compressed fodder question apart altogether from the general interest he felt in the matter as a member of the community.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: Are you one of the syndicate?

Mr. DAWSON: No; but he happened to be the particular victim of that banquet. He noticed that at that banquet the Premier, with a great flourish, announced that in order to relieve him from his embarrassing position, and to remove the much debated question of compressed fodder from discussion in Parliament, a patriotic citizen had offered to take the compressed fodder out of the hands of the Brigade Office, and had enclosed a cheque for £750 for that purpose, and the hon. gentleman called for three cheers for that patriotic citizen—(Opposition laughter)—which were immediately followed, he believed, by three hearty and lusty groans for himself (Mr. Dawson).

Mr. FINNEY: No.

Mr. DAWSON: Well, that was what was stated by the *Courier*, which was a little more reliable than the usual newspaper. According to the correspondence placed before hon. members,

Mr. J. P. De Winton sent along his cheque for £750, and then later on the Government received the following letter from the Queensland National Bank:—

Brisbane, 30th October, 1899.

SIR,—This is to give you notice that J. P. De Winton's cheque on Union Bank, city, for £750, forming a portion of your deposit of to-day, has been refused payment at the place where payable.

Answer—Refer to drawer.

The amount has therefore been placed to the debit of your Colonial Treasurer's general account this day, and the document itself is held by the bank at your disposal.

I remain, &c.,

A. MOODIE.

It appeared that the three cheers called for by the Premier and given by the audience for that patriotic citizen were hardly as complimentary to the hon. gentleman as the three groans that were given were complimentary to himself (Mr. Dawson). The Premier ought to have given hon. members some explanation about that matter without waiting to be asked for an explanation, as the hon. gentleman had given authority to the statement that Mr. J. P. De Winton had purchased that compressed fodder in order to relieve the Government from an embarrassing position.

The PREMIER: I never said so.

Mr. DAWSON: The cheque was dishonoured, and the Premier who was, to a very large extent, responsible for the false impression created at the banquet on Saturday night—acting, no doubt, under the impulse of the moment, and feeling the wild enthusiasm of the moment—should have corrected that false impression, which had been flashed, not only all over Queensland, but in all probability all over Australia, about the patriotic action of that particular individual.

Then they found that his cheque [7.30 p.m.] was dishonoured, and the Premier should immediately have corrected the false impression. The Premier had expressed his indignation in the correspondence at the action of Mr. De Winton, but he had expressed it in such a way that was hardly likely to reach the public. It would have been much better if the hon. gentleman had expressed his indignation in that Assembly. It was not a matter between Mr. De Winton and the Premier. It was a matter between the Premier and the public. The Premier stated that he viewed with great indignation the action of Mr. De Winton, and could not repose further confidence in any representations he might make. It was only natural that he should feel in that way. But, later on, Mr. De Winton still claimed that he had a right to the fodder, and that his cheque held good. There the correspondence ceased, and they had no further information. Mr. De Winton evidently was under the impression that he could meet that cheque, but that he was not allowed to do so by the subsequent action of the Government. He (Mr. Dawson) could not take any other meaning out of letter No. 33 on page 11 of the correspondence. He protested very vigorously against the Government shifting that fodder—what he called "my fodder." He said, "I object to any such action, and regret that I am 'off' the offer." They were entitled to a little more information from the responsible authorities than they had got in the correspondence. He noticed in the Press that the Government had finally to give Messrs. E. Rich and Co. a cheque for the fodder in order to stop litigation. That was a matter that wanted explaining. He was given to understand that that action was rendered necessary, not because Mr. De Winton had not the funds to meet his cheque, but because Messrs. E. Rich and Co. were going to prevent Major

Ricardo from embarking last Wednesday unless they were paid for their fodder. They were going to issue a writ.

After a pause,

Mr. McDONALD thought they were entitled to some explanation.

The PREMIER: What explanation do you want? You have the correspondence.

Mr. McDONALD: There were more statements in connection with the matter than were contained in the correspondence now in the hands of hon. members. They had been informed through the Press that actually litigation was likely to take place over the matter.

The PREMIER: Is that in the correspondence?

Mr. McDONALD: No.

The PREMIER: I have nothing to do with what appears in the Press.

Mr. BROWNE: Look at Mr. De Winton's letter to the Premier—No. 33. He says, "I called on the Under Secretary to-day, and was informed that I could not get the delivery order, as legal proceedings being pending as to whom the 'fodder' belonged."

The PREMIER: That is about as reliable as his cheque.

Mr. McDONALD: Apart from what Mr. De Winton said, the person with whom the contract for the supply of the fodder had been made expressly stated in a letter over his signature that litigation was likely to take place. That was a very serious matter, and it was well that the country should be cleared up.

The PREMIER: All the correspondence has been supplied to hon. members.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Major-General Gunter, in letter No. 13, said: "Up to the present no offer to supply fodder of any description has been recommended for acceptance." One would naturally suppose that Major-General Gunter, when asked by the Government if he knew anything about it, would ask the proper authorities under him whether any order had been given. He distinctly stated, after asking those under him, that no order had been given, and it was therefore desirable to ascertain who it was that deceived him. Some person was lying in the department.

Mr. DUNSFORD (*Charters Towers*): The trouble that had arisen as to who should get the contract for the supply of the fodder had caused the Premier to be "had" by a confidence trick. It would be seen from the correspondence that on the strength of twenty years' acquaintance with Colonel Ricardo, Mr. De Winton claimed that he should take over the fodder and make a profit out of the Defence Force. The Government "fell in," and handed the fodder over to him—because he was given to understand they removed it from the boat and placed it on the wharf, and then it had to be reshipped when they found that the cheque was no good. The most serious part of the business was that the Government recognised that they had made a bad bargain, and were willing to sell the fodder again to a syndicate who were going to resell it to the Defence Force at a profit. Mr. De Winton had been cheered by the populace as a patriot. It showed what the populace would do if they had a little wine in, and when there was a lot of "tall talk" going on. But the syndicate behind Mr. De Winton was different. With them it was not patriotism but "pocketism." Now, what was the move of the Government in agreeing to hand over 100 tons of fodder at £7 10s. a ton, when it was worth more than that in the market? The Government were agreeing to hand the fodder over to Mr. De Winton at the cost price of £7 10s., when the price in the market at the time was £8 10s. or £9. The evidence they had proved that the fodder was necessary, and it was generally admitted now that

Lieutenant-Colonel Ricardo did a wise thing in securing it, because it could not be got in the colony. He had made a good bargain, and the Government handed over that good bargain to Mr. De Winton that he might sell it back to the Defence Force at about £27, South African prices. It was evident that the people who cheered understood that the cheque for £750 was a free gift, and not that it was to purchase the fodder. He had met members of Parliament the next morning who were under the same impression; but the Premier, from the order to take over the fodder, knew it was not a free gift, and he should have made that clear to the people before they cheered. He hoped the Premier would not go on falling in in that way, as it was not a good thing for the country, for the coffers of the State, or for Parliament.

Mr. DAWSON had already asked the Premier to give some further explanation than they found in the correspondence. There were many other things which required explanation besides that upon which he had asked for it. The hon. member for Cook had shown that there had evidently been deception somewhere. They wanted to know who had been deceiving the Brigade Office, who had deceived the Government, and induced the Government to mislead the country. If the Premier would turn to letter 28 of the correspondence, he would find that it contained exactly the words reported to have been made use of by the hon. gentleman in announcing the patriotic offer to the people at the banquet. Mr. De Winton there spoke of the "compressed fodder we have heard about *ad nauseam*." That was rather striking. He went on to say—

This fodder cannot be made in Queensland, and as Colonel Ricardo is going in command of 250 of our best men and £30,000, I for one am prepared to endorse whatever he may think necessary to do.

Mr. BROWNE: That is where the confidence came in.

Mr. DAWSON: Yes, and knowing that he went in command of £30,000 Mr. De Winton added that he was prepared to endorse whatever Colonel Ricardo might think it necessary to do. It was remarkable that it should be almost word for word what the Premier had said.

The PREMIER: I read the letter on that occasion. Of course the words were the same.

Mr. DAWSON: The hon. gentleman had not been reported as having read a letter. There was one very serious matter in letter No. 32, where Mr. Dutton, on behalf of the Premier, wrote to Mr. De Winton expressing very justifiable indignation, and in the next letter in which Mr. De Winton made a complaint about the action of the Premier, and to that letter there was no answer.

The PREMIER: Do you believe Mr. De Winton?

Mr. DAWSON: The fact that he had been in close contact with the evil influences of the Queensland Club did not induce them to consider him very reliable, but they were entitled to get the facts, and there was evidently more than appeared in the correspondence. If the Premier was not in possession of the information he could not give it, but if he was, he should give it, and if the reply was not favourable to the hon. gentleman, he should certainly not press the matter further out of sympathy with the Premier.

The PREMIER: If he had any information further than what appeared there, of a satisfactory nature, he would certainly give it, but he had no further information. He would refer to the main points as they appeared to him. The first was letter No. 17, from Major-General Gunter, in which that gentleman said—

When preparations were being made for the despatch of the contingent for South Africa, Lieutenant-Colonel Ricardo, S.O.M.I., with my authority, made preliminary

inquiries from several merchants in the city as to the possibility of obtaining patent compressed fodder. It appears that great difficulty was experienced in securing any at all, owing to the demand for this kind of fodder for shipment to South Africa, but no action was authorised. Very soon after, in order not to lose the opportunity, which was impressed upon him by Messrs. Rich and Co., Lieutenant-Colonel Ricardo, acting upon his own initiative, authorised a purchase, intending that if the Government did not require the fodder he would keep it himself. This transaction appears to have been conducted entirely through the telephone, and no record of it was kept as an official transaction.

Then he went on to say—

I am convinced that any action taken by Lieutenant-Colonel Ricardo in this matter was only prompted by his zeal for the efficiency of the Queensland contingent; and without doubt, had he not assumed this responsibility and taken such prompt action, there might have been considerable difficulty in obtaining this very necessary class of fodder.

To that his reply would be seen in No. 18—

In reply, I am directed by the Chief Secretary to inform you that he considers Lieutenant-Colonel Ricardo's action, without your instructions or approval, to have been injudicious and censurable, and greatly aggravated by the fact that the officer referred to did not, on the first inquiry being made into the matter, admit his share in the transaction, when his impulsive action might have been overlooked on account of his zeal (although mistaken) for his service.

Mr. Dickson moreover considers that both you and he have been placed by Lieutenant-Colonel Ricardo in an unpleasant position before the country, and he much regrets that he is compelled, on the eve of that officer's departure, to so emphatically express his dissatisfaction at the manner in which the transaction has been conducted.

That was his deliberate opinion still. But that severe measures would have had the effect of perhaps delaying the departure of the troops and creating—should he say?—a scandal, he should have taken more severe measures. No doubt Lieutenant-Colonel Ricardo had acted in a most irregular manner, yet he did so in what he considered the interests of the service; and he thought the censure conveyed in that letter would be as effective as a reprimand couched in even stronger language. With regard to the letter from Mr. De Winton, it had previously been unintentionally opened by one of the leading gentlemen on the banquet committee, who said that he (the Premier) would be exceedingly gratified to see the contents. He received that letter in the light of a gift. That was on Saturday night, and nothing could be done with regard to it until the following Monday morning. The letter clearly expressed it as a gift. But when the Under Secretary saw Mr. De Winton on the Monday morning it turned out to be a letter to which no business man would attach the slightest importance. It was an entire prevarication, and a most disgraceful trick on the part of Mr. De Winton, whoever actuated him to do it, and it certainly deserved the severest condemnation. He trusted every hon. member in the Chamber would express his entire disapprobation of the trick played upon the Premier of the colony—he was not speaking of himself in a personal sense—placing him in such a false and ludicrous position, as was done by that man who had the audacity to send him a valueless cheque under such circumstances. Had it been an ordinary commercial transaction, why should Mr. De Winton have sent him the cheque in a letter? Why not have come to the Treasury and said he would relieve the Government of the fodder? The letter was evidently sent to make an impression.

Mr. DAWSON: And I suffered by it afterwards.

The PREMIER: He certainly received the letter as a very patriotic offer, and the gentlemen who were sitting alongside of him, and saw it, read it in the same way. But, as he had said, when on the Monday morning he sent to exactly understand the purport of the letter, before negotiating

the cheque, he was informed of the true nature of the trick that had been played upon him. He would have been pleased to see the transaction carried out, because there was a feeling in the Chamber that, by using that fodder for military purposes, they were preventing the producers of the colony from having their products consumed.

Mr. DAWSON: Lieutenant-Colonel Ricardo was trafficking in it.

The PREMIER: He did not think there was the slightest suspicion of that.

Mr. GLASSEY: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: It was most injudicious of Lieutenant-Colonel Ricardo to get the fodder on his own account, but he would relieve him of the imputation that there was any traffic in the matter. There was no doubt he committed himself, and therefore committed the country, to the fodder. He was one of the officers of the department, and in that light the transaction must be recognised. To return for a moment to the business of the fodder, he might say that it had been a very unpleasant affair throughout, and it had been added to by the tactics of Mr. De Winton. There had been quite enough trouble in connection with it already. He would repeat that he considered the action of Mr. De Winton had been most contemptible, and deserved the strongest condemnation, not only of every member of the Chamber, but of every right-minded man in the colony.

* Mr. LESINA: While admitting that Mr. De Winton had been guilty of a rather dishonourable action, he was not inclined to side with the Premier in publicly denouncing Mr. De Winton in that Chamber, and endeavouring to shift the responsibility for his action on to Mr. De Winton's shoulders. When the receipt of the letter was announced at the banquet, the patriotic Queenslanders present almost split their windpipes with cheering. And in the next issue of the *Telegraph* the hon. gentleman is reported to have said at the time, "A most noble and patriotic Queenslander had that evening placed in his hands the following letter, to which he invited their attention."

Then the hon. gentleman went on to [8 p.m.] read the letter—which is contained in the correspondence—enclosing a cheque for £750; and then there was great cheering. The report went on to say that Mr. F. Hannington—whoever Mr. F. Hannington might be—called for three groans for Mr. Dawson, and that a considerable portion of the company responded. Then the Premier said he would say no more, as any words of his would only spoil the splendid epilogue—evidently referring to the groans which had just been given.

The HOME SECRETARY: No; the cheering.

Mr. LESINA: The whole thing showed the crass ignorance and blundering on the part of the Government from start to finish. They blundered in sending the troops in the first instance; they blundered over the fodder; they blundered again over the rifles; and they entirely ignored any advice given by members on the Opposition side. There was only one vice which members on the other side did not take kindly to and that was advice when it came from his side of the Chamber. Let hon. members compare the Premier at that banquet standing up and raising his arms and calling for three cheers for this honourable and patriotic Queenslander—let them compare what he said then with his speech to-night denouncing Mr. De Winton as a dishonourable and scandalous man—and all within the space of three or four days. Had the leader of the Opposition got up that night when they were giving three cheers for the man who offered this cheque for £750—which was afterwards dishonoured—had he got up and attempted to speak he would have

been groaned down. To-night they had the spectacle of the Premier trying to retrieve his miserable shattered reputation by speaking as he had done of Mr. De Winton, a man who had no opportunity of replying to the hon. gentleman on the floor of this Chamber. If this was the way the hon. gentleman was going to carry on the Government, what shred of reputation they had left would soon be gone, and they would stand naked and ashamed before the public. He could understand, under the circumstances, that there was a good deal of spirit behind the Premier's call. Some men were never in good spirits unless the good spirits were in them, and it seemed that all present were in excellent spirits. He did not attend the banquet for obvious reasons, but he entered into the spirit of the thing, and he could imagine the spirit in which the remark about members loafing on the Opposition benches at £6 a week was made; he could understand the spirit in which the explanation about the farmers growing pumpkins at £1 a week was received; and he could understand how cheap cheers were got by the Premier for the patriotic gentleman who sent that cheque, and who was now denounced by the hon. gentleman. It showed to what depths of degradation gentlemen occupying positions of dignity might drag their positions by lending themselves to jingoism, and it ought to be a lesson to future Premiers—the present Premier was too old to learn—to dissociate themselves from such things. He trusted that to-night would settle the fate of this fodder question, and that this wretched chapter in our military and political history would be allowed to die. If it did not die soon, it would kill the Ministry and all connected with them.

Mr. GROOM (*Drayton and Toowoomba*): As one of the members who had been requested to make inquiries into the fodder question, he expressed his extreme gratification at the frank and candid explanation given by the Premier.

Mr. LESINA: It was a long time coming.

Mr. GROOM: "Better late than never." He had read the correspondence from beginning to end, and it enabled him to understand the false position in which the Premier had been placed when he said that neither he nor the Brigade Office knew anything about this 100 tons of fodder, while the evidence disclosed the fact that there had been communication between a brigade officer and a mercantile firm unknown to the Commandant and the Chief Secretary. Anyone who knew anything about business matters would see at once that the Premier was placed in a false position, and that another gentleman, who was now absent—he did not wish to say anything against a man who was absent—but it was clear from the correspondence that the Premier was deceived, and that unintentionally he deceived the House and the country. It was said by one of the most distinguished Premiers England ever had, when taxed with changing his opinions on the Corn Law question, that no disgrace attached to the frank admission of an unintentional wrong; and when the Premier came forward in the manly way he had done—he used the word "manly" advisedly—and said he was misled by his officers, and that he had unintentionally misled the House, and expressed his regret for doing so, hon. members were in all honour bound to accept it, and he for one accepted it, and was perfectly satisfied with the explanation. He would also say that he did not think any language any hon. member could employ was sufficiently strong to denounce the infamous trick played upon the hon. gentleman by Mr. De Winton—a thing that had not been equalled in the history of political life in Queensland if in Australia. When the hon. member for Clermont had been

in Parliament as long as he (Mr. Groom) had been, he would learn by political experience how public men were liable to be misled at times, and he would be able to appreciate better how an hon. gentleman placed in the high position of Premier of the colony might be easily deceived by a designing man. It was quite clear to him that there was someone behind Mr. De Winton who prompted his action.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GROOM: And that was the only justification which Mr. De Winton could have for being a party to such a discreditable action. Now, when the cheque was returned marked "Refer to drawer," everyone knew what that meant. It did not mean that the cheque had been stopped by the drawer, but it was quite clear that when the cheque was drawn for £750 there was not 750 pence in the bank to meet it. That was as clear as noonday, and a gentleman—really he did not think he would be justified in referring to the person as a gentleman who performed that action; but the person who deliberately set himself forward to write a letter to the Premier on such an occasion, when the citizens of Brisbane were tendering a public banquet to the patriotic men who had offered their services to the Empire, enclosing a cheque for £750, apparently as an act of loyalty and patriotism on the part of some colonist, knowing at the time that there was nothing in the bank to meet that cheque, was guilty of one of the most discreditable transactions that had ever occurred in the history of Queensland.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. GROOM: So far from thinking that blame should be attached to the Premier, he thought the hon. gentleman was to be sympathised with. He had not the pleasure of Mr. De Winton's acquaintance, and he only judged of the transaction by the correspondence. When a supposed patriotic gentleman came forward with that cheque for £750, it was quite a natural inference for the Premier to draw that it was a positive gift to the people of Queensland in commemoration of the great event that was then being celebrated, and for that reason he could not see that the hon. gentleman could be held in any way blamable. He somewhat differed from the tone in which the hon. member for Clermont referred to the matter. He and the hon. gentleman took an entirely different view of the matter. He contended that the Premier had come forward in a manly way, making a frank, free, and open explanation of the whole concern. He had told the House frankly that he was deceived, that the colony was deceived by a discreditable trick on the part of a citizen of Brisbane, who ought by this time to be heartily ashamed of his conduct. So far from the Hon. the Premier deserving blame, he at all events, on behalf of himself and his constituents, thanked him for his manly explanation, and considered that he was entitled to the thanks of the community for the frank manner in which he had put the whole question before hon. members.

Mr. LESINA did not sympathise with Mr. De Winton in the least. That gentleman, however, might have been acting on behalf of some syndicate who might not have come up to the scratch with the money, and the money to meet the cheque which he wrote might not have been forthcoming. His contention was that the Premier had tried to shelter himself behind Mr. De Winton. The hon. gentleman accused the Opposition party of bringing forward the matter of the fodder for party purposes, and when he found that that would not hold water for long, he said that De Winton was responsible for the whole matter. The drawer of that cheque for £750 had undoubtedly been pulling the Premier's

leg, and how a gentleman of his years and experience and ability allowed himself to be committed in the way he was, was past all understanding. How it came about that a shoddy, sordid speculator in fodder should trip the hon. gentleman up in such a manner he did not know. But when such a thing did happen, he asked himself, was such a gentleman fit to run the country and carry the burdens of administering the affairs of Queensland? The hon. gentleman sheltered himself behind De Winton, after having first tried to put the blame on the party opposite to him.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): When the leader of the Opposition offered that if the Premier would give a full and fair explanation of the matter he would let it drop so far as he was concerned, he thought that was a very fair stand to take. He admitted at once that the Premier had given a full explanation, and he was only sorry that they had not got it earlier. The hon. gentleman had admitted that he had been made a sort of cat's paw of by a gentleman in the Brigade Office and by Mr. De Winton, and it was no light admission for him to have to make. As the hon. gentleman said, the chief offender was not now in the colony, and under the circumstances it would have been very awkward if the Premier had taken steps to remove him. As the leader of the Opposition said, the best thing they could now do was to go on with the further business, and let this unpleasant matter drop. With a view to doing that, he would ask the hon. gentleman a question on the vote. He saw that there was an increase of £21,000 on loan account and £10,400 on the Estimates, making a total of £31,400 for this year. Would the hon. gentleman explain the reason of that large increase?

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*): He had been pleased to hear the explanation made by the Premier, and the greater part of the party sitting on that side were pleased with it. For his own part he was thoroughly satisfied, though he had had a chip in on the fodder question. Of course he still did not agree with that purchase, and thought that the gentleman who had made it had exceeded his duty in going outside the colony for what was required. He contended that whatever the expenditure in connection with the contingent, the benefit should, if possible, be given to our own colonists. Still, he was pleased to know that hon. members on that side of the House were pleased with the remarks which had been made by the Premier, and satisfied with his explanation. He did not believe in dishonouring cheques; and he thought it was a very dirty action on the part of the gentleman who stated he had been a friend for many years of the gentleman who had just left this colony. He had not shown a very honourable way of doing a friend a good turn. On the contrary, he had done the very opposite, and if he (Mr. Keogh) were in the position of the gentleman who had gone away he would take it as a thorough insult. He was glad to see the Premier had come to the rescue and not allowed the colony to sink into insignificance, because the colony would acquire a very bad name if it had gone forth that it was not prepared to take this matter up. With his friend, the hon. member for Croydon, he was very glad that the matter had come to such a successful issue, and he thought it was quite right the money should be paid. With regard to the soldiers who had left these shores, he had no doubt they would make a good name for themselves. They would have plenty of work to do, and he hoped and believed they would show they were Queenslanders. He was very glad to wish them good-bye, and he should also be very pleased to wish them *caed mille faillte*—a hundred thousand welcomes. It had been said that his countrymen were not loyal. He was

not in the House when the matter came up, but he emphatically denied that statement. He was loyal to the British Crown, and as long as that flag floated over his head he should know he was protected.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KEOGH: He should be prepared in his humble way to show the men who had left these shores, whether they were English, Scotch, or Irish, that he wished them well, and, when they came back, to give them a warm reception.

HON. E. B. FORREST (*Brisbane North*): A great deal had been heard about this fodder question, but he was inclined to think, notwithstanding all that they had heard, that there was something more behind—something more than they should hear. He was sorry to say that he was not in possession of any facts beyond what had been stated to-night, or what was given in the correspondence, or had appeared in the Press; but he felt sure that there must be something more to come out. Speaking of Mr. De Winton, he had known him for twenty-five or thirty years, and he had never known him to do a dishonourable act; and he believed now—and he said it deliberately—that he was incapable of doing such an act.

Mr. KEOGH: In face of the cheque?

HON. E. B. FORREST: Even in face of that. He was inclined to think the matter could be explained. He was not there to explain it, because he did not know the facts; but he could not persuade himself to believe that it could not be explained in some way. There was some reason to believe that a syndicate was formed to take over the fodder. He was asked to take a £100 share, as it would be a good "spec." to send it to the Transvaal, but he did not touch it. He thought a syndicate must have been formed, and that Mr. De Winton was selected as the medium through whom the transaction should be completed. Perhaps there was a syndicate of seven, and each one was to put in £100. This money was to be put into the bank, and Mr. De Winton was to give his cheque. Say six of them paid in their £100, and Mr. De Winton gave his cheque for £750, thinking the seventh would pay in his share, but he did not. Say the other man's cheque did not get to the bank in time, Mr. De Winton's cheque would naturally be endorsed, "Refer to drawer." He said this in the interest of a gentleman he had known for twenty-five or thirty years, and a gentleman whom he believed to be incapable of a dishonest act; and he asked the House to suspend judgment. Mr. De Winton was not there to answer for himself, and he (Mr. Forrest) was not there to answer for him; but he asked the House to give him the opportunity of explaining, if he could. On the correspondence it looked bad. His letter was one he did not like. Still, knowing him—he was not particularly intimate with him, but he had known him in business circles and in social circles—he believed, notwithstanding all that had been said in the last half-hour, he was incapable of doing the act he had been charged with. He should make it his business to inquire into the matter, and if anything came out of it he should not hesitate to tell the House, and take the first opportunity of doing so; and if it was as bad as had been represented to-night, he should be the first to condemn Mr. De Winton, and probably in stronger language than anyone had used that evening.

Mr. GLASSEY (*Bundaberg*) was very pleased to hear the remarks which had been made by the hon. member for Brisbane North, Mr. Forrest. He really thought Mr. De Winton must have

been misled, and that he would not have misled the Premier in the manner he had done if he had not been misled himself. He thought that was a very fair explanation. He did not know the gentleman; he did not know that he had ever heard his name until it was used in connection with this unfortunate matter. He thought, however, that the man who had suffered most was Colonel Ricardo, because it was evident that Mr. De Winton acted in the name of the number of persons, and endeavoured to defend Colonel Ricardo, who undoubtedly had got into a rather unfortunately tight place, and to some extent merited the severe censure which had been passed by the Premier. Colonel Ricardo suffered very much, inasmuch as Mr. De Winton claimed Colonel Ricardo as a friend for twenty years. He (Mr. Glassey) was not there to say a word against Colonel Ricardo. Much had been said, and much, he thought, that was unjustifiable. He had had, in times gone by, criticised most severely Colonel Ricardo and some of the gentlemen associated with him. Many reports had been circulated about Colonel

Ricardo that could not be substantiated by facts. It had been said that there was widespread discontent at his being appointed to the command of the contingent, and persons had approached him (Mr. Glassey) with a view of getting him to suggest in the House that Colonel Ricardo was not a proper person for the appointment. But on investigating the matter at the camp, where there were at least twenty or thirty personal friends of his own, he did not find a single man who did not speak in the highest terms of Colonel Ricardo, and say that he was the right man for the command of the contingent.

Mr. FISHER: You have been singularly fortunate.

Mr. GLASSEY: That was the result of his investigations, and he spent three days in the camp from time to time; and having heard that, he would not be true to himself, or just to an absent man, if he allowed those disparaging remarks to be widely circulated without saying something on the other side. It had also been freely circulated that Colonel Ricardo passed his examination in consequence of his father-in-law being the medical officer, and that had been said in the House. He believed that in order to put his wife in a reasonable position in the event of anything happening to himself while he was away, Colonel Ricardo had, prior to his departure, undergone a rigid examination in one of the large insurance offices in the city, and had passed as a first-class life. But even supposing he had never passed that examination, he (Mr. Glassey) had too high a regard for the integrity of Dr. Thomson to believe that he would be guilty of an act which meant imposing on the persons who would be under the command of Colonel Ricardo, and on the community generally. Whatever hon. members did, they ought to be just in their dealings with, and criticisms of other persons from whom they might differ in a variety of ways, even though they disapproved altogether of the sending of the contingent to South Africa. It had been further circulated in the city, and in that Chamber, that strained relations existed between the Commandant and Colonel Ricardo. There was not an atom of truth in that story.

Mr. FISHER: Are you speaking officially?

Mr. GLASSEY: He was speaking after having investigated the matter, and after having gone to the persons who could give information on the subject.

Mr. DAWSON: It is said that there were strained relations between the Treasurer and Colonel Ricardo.

Mr. GLASSEY: He was pleased to say that whatever little differences had existed between those gentlemen were adjusted, and they parted as friends.

Mr. DAWSON: Did not the Treasurer threaten to punch him on the nose?

Mr. GLASSEY: The three statements which had been circulated in the city, and even in that Chamber—that discontent prevailed in the camp over the appointment of Colonel Ricardo to the command of the contingent; that Colonel Ricardo only passed the medical examination because it was conducted by his father-in-law; and that there existed strained relations between the Commandant and Colonel Ricardo—had not, so far as his investigations went, an atom of truth in them.

The PREMIER did not want to reopen the fodder question, but he must say something in reply to the hon. member for North Brisbane. He was quite certain that the hon. member conscientiously believed in Mr. De Winton's rectitude, but he (the Premier) could not reconcile the high opinion the hon. member had expressed of that gentleman with Mr. De Winton's letter, No. 33 in the correspondence. If Mr. De Winton did not wish him to understand that he was making a gift to the troops, why did he entrust that cheque to a prominent citizen to present to him (the Premier) as chairman of the banquet? He was not there to do business. Letter No. 33 in the correspondence was false, for he had an explicit statement from the Under Secretary, who said, "I distinctly told Mr. De Winton that instructions had been wired that no fodder was to be shipped on board of the 'Cornwall,' and that if those instructions had been departed from the fodder would be taken out of the ship." Mr. De Winton, in his letter—which he could characterise as nothing else than an ignominious attempt to wriggle out of the transaction—had used language which was distinctly untrue. If he had made a mistake, why did he not come to the Treasury and explain the circumstances to him? As to the moonshine talked of, the imaginary syndicate—he did not make those remarks with a view to throw discredit on the hypothesis of the hon. member for Brisbane North—but if that imaginary syndicate had not all contributed their cheques before 3 o'clock, every business man knew it was an easy matter to telephone to the banker asking him to protect the cheque upon the representation that those gentlemen—who he supposed were all men of means—would hand in their cheques the following morning. He could not reconcile that hypothesis with Mr. De Winton's letter, which really was the climax of the disingenuousness of Mr. De Winton in the transaction. Possibly he spoke warmly because he felt indignant at the trick practised upon the Premier of the colony, and he had every right to express his utter contempt for a man who would be so insensible to what was due to those who occupied prominent positions in the country, and who also at that time had to discharge a very important function, surrounded by the leading men of the community, and who represented to them what was a distinct lie, and which the man who sent that letter must know was a lie, although it might be accepted as a genuine contribution to the Public Service of the country, in connection with the contingent which had now departed.

Mr. LESINA: How do you know it was a lie?

The PREMIER: While the letter might be open to explanation it would require a great deal fuller explanation than had been given in any of the correspondence. There had been ample time for an explanation to be furnished. The last letter was dated 30th October, and this was the 3rd of November. There had been no

attempt to put the matter before the public in such a light as would relieve Mr. De Winton of the imputation of having performed a very despicable act.

Mr. DAWSON heartily congratulated the Premier upon his vigorous repudiation of Mr. De Winton. The hon. gentleman had just grounds for his indignation, but at the same time he could not help taking notice of the very unparliamentary language in which the hon. gentleman had expressed his indignation. Had that kind of language been used by himself it would have been reported in the *Courier* and *Telegraph*, and sent along the wires, and he would have been execrated, hooted, and groaned, the same as he had been at the Exhibition Building.

The PREMIER: It is only unparliamentary when addressed to an hon. member.

The HOME SECRETARY: The question is whether it was deserved.

Mr. DAWSON: Even that was a question of opinion.

The HOME SECRETARY: Public opinion is against you.

Mr. DAWSON: Not at all. The Premier in his righteous indignation denounced the trick which had been played on him as the Premier of the colony by Mr. De Winton. He sympathised with the hon. gentleman, and condemned Mr. De Winton; but at the same time he also expressed his indignation at the use that the Premier had made of Mr. De Winton's trick to attack him.

The HOME SECRETARY: He merely drew a contrast.

Mr. DAWSON: It was not a question of contrast at all. The hon. gentleman, as chairman of the meeting, called for three cheers for Mr. De Winton, and a Mr. Hannington called for three hoots for him (Mr. Dawson), which were heartily joined in by the Premier.

The PREMIER: No.

The HOME SECRETARY: No; do not say that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If Mr. De Winton had done what he was supposed to have done, he deserved three cheers.

Mr. DAWSON: The Premier was not satisfied with the three hearty groans which had been given for him, but he wanted to emphasise it and rub the salt into the raw and open wound. According to the *Telegraph*, "After the three groans for Mr. Dawson were given, the chairman said that any additional words of his would spoil that splendid epilogue." Earlier in the evening the hon. gentleman had said that he did not hear any groans at all.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. DAWSON: Later on he said that he did hear them, but did not approve of them, but here was the *Telegraph*—the official organ of the Government—(laughter)—saying that the hon. gentleman was so delighted at the sharp contrast drawn by the audience between Mr. De Winton and him (Mr. Dawson) that he was afraid to utter any words. The hon. gentleman must be awfully delighted when he was afraid to utter words.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: So would you have been if you had been there.

Mr. DAWSON: He had been very anxious to go, but he was not prepared to go there to be howled down. He had made an offer to the Premier that if he would use his influence to get him a hearing to tell those men what he thought of their action, he was willing to go and tell them.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: You would have got it without the Premier at all.

Mr. DAWSON: The Premier stated that, if he could not manage it for the Exhibition Building, he would try and arrange that he

should address the troops on the wharf, but he never got the opportunity of doing that either.

The PREMIER: Why did you not come?

Hon. E. B. FORREST: I am sorry you did not address them.

Mr. DAWSON was sorry he was not afforded the opportunity.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: You would have got a good show.

Mr. DAWSON: He doubted it, from what he had heard.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: I know—I was there.

Mr. DAWSON: There was one opportunity he did have. The Charters Towers contingent came to say "Good-bye" to him, and he told them what he thought about it.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: It was the least they could do.

Mr. DAWSON: He would have been only too pleased to have rammed the lie down the throats of political opponents.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: What lie?

Mr. DAWSON: The lie that had been consistently and persistently circulated about his reference to the volunteers.

The HOME SECRETARY: Is not *Hansard* correct?

Mr. DAWSON: *Hansard* was correct—absolutely correct.

The HOME SECRETARY: Anyone need only read that.

The PREMIER: Let us get on with the Estimates.

Mr. DAWSON: He had just risen to remind the hon. gentleman how cheerfully he accepted the groans on Saturday night, and also to say that he had first raised that question because he wanted a full and explicit statement from the Premier as to the real facts about the transaction between Mr. De Winton and the Government. The Premier had given them a full and clear statement, or at any rate one with which he was perfectly satisfied. The indignation the hon. gentleman had shown at Mr. De Winton's action was justifiable, and he supported the hon. gentleman in that. The hon. member for Brisbane North, who had risen in defence of Mr. De Winton, as one who had known him for many years, was not prepared to furnish them with evidence to justify that defence.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: I admit I have not got it, otherwise I would furnish it.

Mr. DAWSON: Until the hon. gentleman had something concrete to bring forward he was not justified in contradicting the contention of the leader of the House.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: I asked for a suspension of judgment. If there is anything left in De Winton he will reply.

Mr. DAWSON: Very well, he had no desire to condemn a man unheard, but on the facts before them Mr. De Winton appeared to have played a very mean and despicable trick upon the leader of the Government. They might as well let the matter rest at that, and suspend judgment as suggested by the hon. member for Brisbane North, and go on with the Estimates as moved by the Premier.

Hon. E. B. FORREST did not know what that discussion had to do with the matter before the Committee, but as the matter had been raised there was no use letting it drop so long as there was anything more to be said. He said deliberately that he did not get up to defend De Winton on the correspondence before them, but he thought there must be something more behind it as he had known the man for so long and did not believe he could be guilty of a dishonourable action. On letter No. 28 he was inclined to think the Premier jumped rather too suddenly to the

conclusion that the fodder was to be made a present of to the Government. Let them read the letter—

Twenty years' acquaintance with Colonel Ricardo must be my excuse for enclosing cheque for £750 to take over the 100 tons of compressed fodder we have heard about *ad nauseam*.

"Take over." Did that mean make a present of it to the Queensland Government?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Go on.

HON. E. B. FORREST:

This fodder cannot be made in Queensland, and as Colonel Ricardo is going in command of 250 of our best men and £30,000 I, for one, am prepared to endorse whatever he may think necessary to do.

What had that got to do with it? Was there anything there to warrant anyone in coming to the conclusion that there was a present being made to the Queensland Government? He saw nothing to justify it. He had been struck with the letter when he had heard it read at the Exhibition Building, and he could not believe that it was to be a present to the Government.

The PREMIER: Why was it sent to me as chairman of the banquet? That was no time or place to carry on such a transaction.

HON. E. B. FORREST did not explain that, because he could not explain it; but as regarded that letter the hon. gentleman jumped to his conclusion too suddenly, as there was nothing whatever in the letter to warrant anybody believing that it was intended to make a present to the Government. Then, again, in that letter, No. 33, there was nothing to show that De Winton knew at the time it was written that his cheque had been dishonoured.

Mr. DAWSON: Read the first two lines of that letter.

HON. E. B. FORREST:

SIR.—Following up my offer of Saturday night to take over the contingent compressed fodder—for the sum of £750—i.e., 100 tons at £7 10s. per ton, I called on the Under Secretary to-day, and was informed that I could not get the delivery order, as legal proceedings were pending as to whom the "fodder" belonged.

The PREMIER: That is untrue.

HON. E. B. FORREST: He did not know. That was what De Winton said. There was nothing to convince him in that letter that De Winton knew at that time that his cheque was dishonoured. That was written on the 30th of October, which was a Monday, and it had been proclaimed a holiday. There had been so many holidays proclaimed over the Transvaal business. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday were proclaimed, and it was a holiday at the banks.

The PREMIER: It was revoked, and the banks were open.

HON. E. B. FORREST: Everyone would not know it. He was still inclined to think that there had been a syndicate—who they were he did not know—and reckoning that the bank was closed on the Monday one of them had not done what he ought to have done. He admitted at once that there were portions of the letters he could not explain, but notwithstanding the letter of the 28th October was addressed to the Premier as the chairman of the banquet, there was nothing in it to justify the Premier in coming to the conclusion he did. It said distinctly "take over the 100 tons," and if the writer was making a present he would surely have used words different to those. However, De Winton would see the discussion that had taken place, and if there was anything left in him he would explain. He could not explain the matter that night, but he hoped De Winton would explain it himself. He would like to say a few words with respect to the Exhibition demonstration. He regretted exceedingly that the leader of the Opposition was

not there, as he did not think the hon. gentleman wanted the Premier, or anybody else, to secure him a good hearing and reception there. He had urged the hon. gentleman himself to go; and if he had gone the meeting would have received him well, and would have given him any opportunity he wanted to explain anything he had said. As to the hooting, he had heard very little hooting of the leader of the Opposition; and he did not hesitate to say that the hon. gentleman would have got as good a reception as anybody else got.

Mr. LESINA: Did the hon. gentleman read [9 p.m.] the letter signed by Mr. De Winton to the public at the banquet?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. LESINA: There was a contradiction between the letter as published in the Press and the letter as printed in the Parliamentary paper. As printed in the *Telegraph* of 30th October it concluded by saying—

I, for one, am prepared to endorse anything necessary, including this fodder.

In the paper before us it says—

I am prepared to endorse whatever you may think necessary to do.

The PREMIER: The document in the hands of hon. members is a correct transcription of the letter.

Mr. DAWSON said it might now be advisable to suspend judgment on Mr. De Winton and get on with the Estimates. On that subject he would merely remark that Mr. De Winton was trying to seize the psychological moment, without running any risk of financial disaster. The troops were supposed to embark on Sunday. When Mr. De Winton drew the cheque the probability was that the bank would be closed on Monday, which had been proclaimed a public holiday. That gave him two clear days wherein he could get the cheers without paying anything for them. He hoped the hon. member for North Brisbane would at some time in the near future be able to lay before them some authoritative statement from Mr. De Winton, giving his view of the transaction.

HON. E. B. FORREST said that was what he intended to do. If Mr. De Winton did not make a personal explanation, he would be the first to condemn him.

Mr. McDONNELL hoped that before they began to discuss the vote the Premier would give some explanation of the immense increase asked for.

The PREMIER said the amount voted on the Estimates-in-Chief last year was £59,639, and on the Supplementary Estimates £5,183, making a total appropriation for the year of £64,822. The amount required for 1899-1900 was £77,423, showing an actual increase over the amount voted last year of £12,601. Hon. members must not be dismayed at the amount voted on the Estimates-in-Chief last year as compared with the amount for which provision was now asked.

Mr. BROWN: But there may be Supplementary Estimates this year, too.

The PREMIER: He would now show the actual appropriation made, as amounts granted as "unforeseen." First of all there was a provision for an officer in charge of military works, Captain T. O. Lewis, at £250 per annum, from the 1st December, 1898. Then there was a probationer in the paymaster's office, Mr. O. E. Meston, at £50 per annum, from 27th February, 1899; staff officer, and officer commanding Northern military district, Lieutenant-Colonel Blaxland, at a salary of £350 per annum, from 15th December, 1898; two adjutants, Captain Webb and Captain Carroll, at £256 per annum, from 15th December, 1898; rifle clubs, for improvements to rifle club ranges, which was

very strongly insisted upon by the Committee last year, £500; a special grant to the Queensland Rifle Association for purchase of rifles, and to cover the expense of training a team and maintaining it for a period in Victoria prior to the federal match, £400; rifle ranges, new targets to replace the iron targets with canvas targets at short range, rendered necessary on account of the greater velocity of the new rifle, £1,000; to cover loss on sale of small-arms ammunition at a cheaper rate, which was specially advocated last year in Committee, £300; camps and classes of instruction, to cover cost of transport of men and horses from Mackay to Townsville, and Rockhampton to Lytton, and increased cost of forage, £350; and difference in pay between fourteen days voted and sixteen days subsequently authorised, £2,000. Those items represented £5,183, which had been expended in addition to the principal vote of last year, the bulk of which had been undertaken on the urgent representations of the Committee when they were last engaged on that work. With regard to the amount required for the present year there was an increase for the permanent staff of £350, of which it was proposed to increase the salary of Lieutenant-Colonel Lyster, the Assistant Adjutant-General, by £50. Considering the large amount of work that officer performed, he did not think the Committee would grudge the very small increase given to him. Then there was an additional staff-lieutenant, Captain P. W. G. Pinnock, at £180, and an additional staff-sergeant instructor at £120. In the subdivision, "head-quarters, civil," there was an additional paymaster's clerk at £60; increases of £10 each to two paymaster's clerks, of £20 to the comptroller of stores, of £50 to the assistant commissary of ordnance, Captain W. A. Peyton, in lieu of allowances; of £10 to the store clerk, and to the sergeant in charge of Sherwood magazine, and an additional store clerk at £60. As against this there was a saving of £165 in an assistant paymaster, whose office was abolished, making the total increase in that subdivision £65. Then for the district staff, there was an increase of £520. The amount last year was £580; it was now £1,100. The staff officer for the Northern military district at Townsville, Lieutenant-Colonel Blaxland, was appointed at £350, less staff allowance paid to adjutant 3rd regiment performing the duty, £50. There was provision made for staff officer for the Central military district at Rockhampton, but it was vacant a present, £150 being put down for an officer wholly employed in the duty. There was a clerk at Townsville with an increase of £10, and there was provision for a probationer at £60. In the regimental instructional staff last year £4,158 was asked for, this year the amount was £4,860, an increase of £702, apportioned thus: two additional adjutants, Captains Webb and Carroll, £256 each; two first class instructors, £120; and three second class instructors, £100 each; less one commanding officer, now provided for under the head of volunteer branch as staff officer, rifle clubs, £350.

Mr. McDONALD: Where are these adjutants located?

The PREMIER understood that Captain Webb was stationed at Maryborough, but he had gone to the Transvaal. Captain Carroll was in the meantime stationed at Brisbane, but he was to itinerate and give instruction. For permanent staff, district staff, and regimental and instructional staff (contingencies), the amount last year was £2,531, and the amount now asked was £2,956, an increase of £415, made up thus: Forage and lodging allowances for additional appointments, £394; and uniform and clothing for new instructors, £21.

Mr. LESINA: How many instructors are there now?

The PREMIER: There were thirty now; there were twenty-five last year. For the Queensland Permanent Artillery—now the Queensland Regiment of Royal Australian Artillery—there was an increase from £10,538 to £12,625, an increase of £2,087, made up thus: One major second in command, Anderson, £300; one gunner, £41; increases of pay to lieutenants, £75—three receiving 12s. and one 10s. per diem, instead of one at 12s. and three at 10s. per diem. In this respect he might point out that a misprint occurred in the 1898-9 Estimates, where there were five lieutenants instead of four. There was a sergeant-instructor, field artillery, increased from £120 to £130. The increase for rations fuel, horses, forage, etc., was £661. Of this amount £200 was for forage for mounted section of the battery, and £461 for increased cost of provisions, etc., and on account of battery being at full strength. Deductions for probable deficiencies not now allowed for, battery being at full strength, £1,000. Then there was the pay. The sum of £20,121 was asked last year, and this year the amount was £21,220, the increase being £1,099. In the artillery the increase was £94; Brisbane company of submarine miners, £108; mounted infantry, £162; infantry, £2,156; medical staff corps, £479; forage allowance for special duty, £100; and probable non-earnings less by £1,000; in all, £1,099. Of course, it would be understood that in the infantry branch, which was now increased by one complete company, each company being increased by six privates, the additions were to provide an additional company in the Wide Bay district, either Childers or Howard; also to provide for a band, second regiment, the present band being drawn from companies; also to raise all companies to a uniform strength of sixty, with ten supernumeraries, so that there was a very considerable increase in the number of men in the infantry—not less than 220 men. In the mounted infantry there was an additional appointment of a veterinary captain, but that was met by the abolition of the adjutant, the increase being £15; regimental sergeant-major, £10 increase; regimental quartermaster-sergeant, £10; two additional staff sergeants, £18; and one additional corporal, £8; and contingencies, £116; making in all the increase of £162, which he had already mentioned. Medical staff corps (now army medical corps), increased from £1,078 to £1,557; increase, £479. Additional appointments—four medical officers, £68; four staff-sergeants, £37; two sergeants, £17; seven corporals, £53; twenty-three privates and buglers, £150; contingencies, £154; total, £479. That was necessary for the efficient working of the service, and converting the present organisation into three companies—viz.: one Brisbane and district; one Wide Bay and Rockhampton; one Northern military district (Kennedy). Forage allowance for special duty, £100, was a new item, and was formerly paid from forage and lodging allowance. Staff officer and inspector of rifle clubs, £350, was a new item, as was also the appointment of Adjutant Catherwood, as adjutant of the teachers' and cadet corps, at £250. Two instructors of rifle clubs and cadets were new appointments, at £240. Contingencies were increased from £200 to £700, a difference of £500. The officers of Queensland Rifles, Queensland Teachers, and Cadets and Rifle Clubs being all separate, each required provision for office expenses (messenger, postage, etc.). The amount also included travelling expenses and forage and lodging allowance. He now came to the largest subdivision of the whole—contingencies, increased from £13,395 to £21,570—an increase of £8,175. Stores and equipment increased

from £1,350 to £2,500—an increase of £1,150. That was to provide absolutely necessary stores, etc. Camp equipage, £1,000, was a new item for renewing tents, etc. Medical and surgical equipment was also a new item, £500, and was required as a nucleus of modern requirements. In rent of office-s, stores, etc., there was an increase from £150 to £250. Wages to storemen, armourers, caretakers, etc., required an increase of £450—that was from £1,450 to £1,900. It was to provide for four additional storemen in the Queensland Defence Force store, Brisbane, and one at Townsville. Travelling expenses and fares required an increase of £200—from £700 to £900—in consequence of establishment of 2nd regiment and increase in force generally. Camps and classes of instruction were increased from £2,200 to £2,500, a difference of £300. That was absolutely necessary on account of the increase in the force. The Central Rifle Association asked for £125, or an increase of £25; the Mackay Rifle Association was increased from £1 to £50. The Western Queensland Rifle Association also received an increase of £25. In the item, "Instruction with Imperial Army," there was an increase of £250 to provide for Lieutenant-Colonel Byron and Captain Sellheim in England, but now serving in the Transvaal. There was also a grant of £50, which was a new item, given to the United Service Institute. Of course he could hardly expect hon. gentlemen to follow that statement and keep it in their minds, but he should be very glad, as they proceeded, to supply any information in his possession. It was satisfactory to be able to state, from information supplied to him by General Gunter, that the force was in a thoroughly efficient condition. The men were enthusiastic and performed their duties satisfactorily, and he had every reason to believe that the money, although it was a large amount, was well expended. If they were to have a Defence Force it was no use having an inefficient one. It would be far better to abolish it altogether than have a lot of soldiers on paper who were not ready for active work.

Mr. J. HAMILTON (*Cook*) noticed that there had been laid on the table some correspondence regarding the testing of rifles in which he, in a letter which he had written, inadvertently called the Martini-Enfield the Martini-Henry. Hon. members would know to what he referred. General Gunter said, in the first place, that no Martini-Henry rifles were now in use in the Queensland Defence Force. They, of course, knew that. He also said that only $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the rifles issued had been reported as defective in sight. That did not prove that only $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. were defective. When a rifleman discovered that the sighting of his rifle was defective he did not go and report it at the office, because that did not do any good. He simply went to a gunmaker and explained how much the rifle shot to the left or right, and paid 5s. to have the sight altered. One gunmaker had told him that he had altered sixty or seventy sights of the Martini-Enfield rifles for our volunteers. The rifles were excellent shooting rifles so long as they were sighted properly, but none of those sixty or seventy which had been altered had been reported at the office. Therefore, the Commandant's statement did not in any way militate against what he (Mr. Hamilton) stated the other day—that a great many of those rifles did not shoot properly. The infantry officer reported that at first there were complaints about the sights, but the complaints disappeared as the men got accustomed to the weapon. Colonel Aytoun was a very good officer, and he wished they had more like him. He had a great respect for that officer's opinion, but he would show how he fell into error. After a time the men found

out the errors in their rifles and allowed for them. He (Mr. Hamilton) had one rifle which, at 600 yards, shot 3 feet to the left. That rifle had won many prizes, because he—knowing the error of the rifle, and knowing that the target was just 6 feet wide—fired at 600 yards at the extreme edge of the target, and that being exactly 3 feet from the centre of the "bull," brought the shot dead into the "bull." But although that rifle was all right when firing at a target, he would be out of it when shooting at an enemy with such a rifle, because it would be more difficult to judge a distance of 3 feet away from a person at 600 yards whom he was shooting at. He was informed by Mr. Powers, the gunmaker, that the general lateral deviation of the sixty or seventy Martini-Enfield rifles he altered was from 3 to 6 feet in 600 yards.

This proved the statement which he [9.30 p.m.] (Mr. Hamilton) made the other day—that the rifles were incorrectly sighted. The Infantry Staff Officer stated, and very properly stated—

Owing to the small size of the bullet, it is difficult to see where a shot which misses the target strikes, and the man is at a loss to know how to alter the sighting.

That bore out exactly what he stated—that if these men had been sent out into the field it would have been impossible for them to have discovered the errors of their rifles when they fired at men. The bullet would strike the grass, and they would have no opportunity of discovering that error. They might have been shooting wrong week after week, unless they had an opportunity of firing at a target, because even on a canvas target there was a disc, and the marker marked the exact part where the bullet passed over. Then a man was able to correct the error. Say he was firing at 600 yards distance, and he found the deviation was 6 feet, he took it to the gunmaker and said, "This is 6 feet out at 600 yards," and got the sight altered. He did not complain to the officer, because if he got another rifle it might be just as bad, and he knew the tool was a good one if only sighted properly. Then the infantry officer reported—

No rifle that has passed through my hands has been rejected for defective sighting.

That did not alter the fact that a lot had been rejected, because he saw them at the armoury to-day. A great many had been rejected. The Secretary for Agriculture told him yesterday. "I met a volunteer of one of the Mackay rifle clubs yesterday, and he exactly bears out what you said. I asked him how his rifle shot, and he said, 'Nearly every one of them sent to the club wants alteration; nearly every one is improperly sighted.'" Another statement in the report by Colonel Gunter was—

All rifles issued to corps are in charge of the corps, and are not the property of the individual member. Upon transfer to another corps, under no circumstances is a member allowed to take his rifle with him. There was, in my opinion, no necessity for deviating from this practice.

That was the only reason given for refusing to allow men to take to Africa rifles which they had thoroughly proved, and for placing in their hands instead rifles which they had never fired out of, and which it was evident the Commandant didn't intend at the time he issued them he should test first, judging by his statement to him (Mr. Hamilton). When he asked Colonel Gunter, in the presence of the Premier, on Tuesday, "Will the volunteers, when they go ashore, have a chance of testing these rifles?" he replied, "No, they cannot be altered; each man will have to find out for himself how the rifle shoots."

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Good luck for the Boers.

Mr. J. HAMILTON : He said—

4. A member of the Defence Force is not allowed to alter the sight of his rifle; any necessary alteration must be made by the armourer; but it is possible that alterations may have been made by members of rifle clubs.

He knew that numbers of the Defence Force had got their rifles altered. They had found it absolutely necessary to do so. Then he said—

I do not consider that the safety of the men is in any way involved by the issue to them of new rifles.

Members were as well able to form an opinion on the evidence submitted if the safety of the men would have been involved by taking rifles from the men which they knew and replacing with others without a chance of testing them. He also said in his report—

The rifles issued to the contingent have been tested and sighted by experts in the Royal Arsenal.

He was very much surprised at a Commandant in Her Majesty's service making such a statement. When he stated they were tested at the Royal Arsenal he meant they were tested for shooting. They were only tested there with a bursting charge to prove their strength; but the sighting was not tested there.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: What does the Commandant know?

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Moreover most of those rifles had never been in the Royal Arsenal. If anyone looked at them he would see that most of them had the Enfield works brand, and the Royal Arsenal was at Woolwich. Then some of them had B.S.A. branded on them, which stood for British Small Arms Company. Not one of the rifles branded B.S.A. had ever been tested at any arsenal. To show the difference between the rifles served to our volunteers, one of the gentlemen who was not allowed to take his rifle, with which he had won many prizes, had to leave it. He (Mr. Hamilton) took it to a gunmaker to-day. Directly he saw it he said to him (Mr. Hamilton), "This is the best rifle of any I have seen." Hethen showed him that the sight and the block it was fixed on was one piece of steel. He said, "You see that barley-corn is portion of this block on which it rests." This foresight was machined out of the block. He said, "Now look at these other rifles, which are also from the Government stores. These barleycorns have been cut off because they shot badly and cut into the bar in the barleycorn," showing that they had been manipulated in some way before being sent to Queensland. Colonel Gunter also informed them—

During the voyage there will be opportunities for ball practice, and after landing in South Africa from ten to twenty days will be available for the same purpose.

It was true they would have an opportunity of practice, but they would have no possible opportunity of testing the rifles on board ship, because the vibration on board a steamer was so great that it was impossible to make accurate shooting, sufficiently accurate shooting to test the exact variation of rifle and shift the sight to the right or left to the exact distance required. He was very sorry he had to express himself in this way. He had nothing personal against Colonel Gunter. He thought he was a most estimable gentleman in private life. But he felt a great regard for the volunteers defence force. Most of them were personal friends of his. He was very glad the Premier had acted on his suggestion, put his foot down, and said, "I intend to have the rifles tested," in spite of Colonel Gunter's report, with the result that instructions had been sent to Colonel Gunter, and they are going to be tested when they got to Africa. He thought that justified his action. Then they were told by Colonel Gunter—

It is probable that on arrival in South Africa the General Officer Commanding may direct that the con-

tingent be re-armed with the Lee-Enfield magazine rifle. In any case there will be opportunities for practice.

Colonel Gunter did not suppose it was considered probable a week ago, because if he had been it was absurd that the volunteers should have had their own rifles taken out of their hands and brand new rifles given them, if it was thought probable they would be taken out of their hands again directly they landed in Africa.

The PREMIER quite appreciated the interest the hon. member for Cook had taken in this matter, and he had on the 2nd of this month instructed the Commandant as follows :—

Brisbane, 2nd November, 1899.

SIR,—Referring to your minute of yesterday's date on the subject of the testing of the rifles issued to members of the Queensland contingent for the Transvaal, I am instructed by the Chief Secretary to request that you will be good enough to direct the officer commanding the contingent that unless the contingent are supplied by the Imperial authorities with properly sighted Lee-Enfield rifles he must, immediately upon arrival in South Africa, and before taking the field, take the necessary action with a view to having the rifles now in the possession of his men thoroughly tested, and any alterations made in the sights which may be found necessary.

He hoped that would meet the views of the hon. member. It was quite right that they should endeavour as far as possible to protect the lives of those patriotic men who had gone forth to fight the battles of the Empire, and that it would be a disgrace to the colony if they furnished them with arms which were not the most perfect and efficient of the kind that could be obtained. Since the correspondence on this subject had been published he had received the following letter from the Commandant, which he would lay on the table, namely :—

Minute for the information of the Honourable the Chief Secretary with reference to letter No. 994,920 (Rifles).

A telegram has been sent to the officer commanding Queensland contingent, embodying the directions of the Government, regarding the testing of the rifles.

There appears to be an impression that there is a considerable difference in the accuracy of the sighting of the Martini-Enfield and of the Lee-Enfield or Lee-Enfield rifles respectively. There is no authentic foundation for this statement, though the magazine rifles may have finer sights than the single loaders.

When the Lee-Enfield rifle was issued to the regiments in India, there was at first considerable difficulty in getting accurate results, and especially was this the case with the best shots. As they became better acquainted with the new rifle, there were no more complaints, and no alteration to the sights was found to be necessary, except as regards the usual percentage of defective rifles.

A number of the Martini-Enfield rifles were tested by Lieutenant-Colonel Aytoun, I.S.O., and Major Byron, A.S.O., shortly after the issue of the new rifle, in consequence of complaints being received from some members of rifle clubs to the effect that the rifles carried too much to the left. These tests were carried out by the authorised regulation method of firing from the shoulder, with the aid of a sandbag-rest. The report has been mislaid, but, according to the recollection of Lieutenant-Colonel Aytoun, no rifles were condemned as not being up to the standard of accuracy required. This is mentioned more to show that the question of the sighting of the rifles has received attention, than offered as evidence of their reliability, which may be accepted from the general good results of the musketry practice throughout the Defence Force.

In short, the rifles are reliable, but each must find out by practice the minor peculiarities of his own rifle, whether it is a Lee-Enfield or a Martini-Enfield, and this practice the men of the contingent will have a sufficient opportunity of carrying out.

HOWEL GUNTER, Major-General,
Commandant, Q.D.F.

He did not read that communication to controvert the very important phase of the question which had been pressed upon their attention by the hon. member for Cook, but he thought it only right that hon. members should be placed in possession of the explanation made by Major-General Gunter.

Mr. J. HAMILTON must say, with all due respect to Major-General Gunter, that gentleman did not understand the question. Major-General Gunter stated that—

All rifles issued to the contingent have been tested and sighted by experts in the Royal Arsenal.

As a matter of fact, that statement was incorrect. They did not test and sight the rifles at the Royal Arsenal except for bursting charges. Mr. Power, the gunmaker, told him the other day that some sixty or seventy men—in fact, nearly all the best shots in Brisbane—had gone to him to have the sights of their rifles shifted, and that, in some cases, the deviation was so great that he could not correct it with the front sight alone, but he had to shift the back sight as well. Would those sixty or seventy men have paid from 5s. to 7s. 6d. to have the sights of their rifles altered if it was not necessary? When he went down to see the contingent off, many of the men shook hands with him, and warmly thanked him for having spoken as he did in this matter, and said they were very much annoyed at not being allowed to take their own rifles. One man, an officer, and a gentleman who was going with the contingent as a private, told him that before he got the rifle he last shot with, and which he was not allowed to take with him, he tried four rifles from the Government Stores, and that one of them shot 10 feet to the left at 600 yards, another 5 feet to the right at 600 yards, and another 4 feet to the right at 600 yards. Jeffrey, one of the best rifle-makers in the world, stated that even with the Enfield the sights of a large number were wrong, and that eight out of ten were badly sighted, which showed that they were not tested and sighted in the Royal Arsenal. Every shooting man knew that it was necessary that the sighting should be tested, and if Major-General Gunter were a shooting man—and it was not his fault that he was not—he also would know that it was necessary.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*) thought the hon. member for Cook had justified the position he had taken up with regard to the action of the Commandant in that matter. All that had been said amply justified the contention put forward by members on that side of the House a few years ago—that Major-General Gunter was not fit for the office he was then holding. But at that time the hon. member for Cook was a very strong defender of Major-General Gunter. Major-General Gunter's professional knowledge was very defective, and he had shown that he was not fit for his position when he allowed such a serious state of things to exist as had been exposed by the hon. member for Cook. The vote under discussion had been increasing year after year. In 1895-6 it was £40,760, and this year it amounted to £77,423. The Premier in explaining the vote had stated that there was an unauthorised expenditure last year of over £5,000. If that had only occurred last year the increase this year would not look so large, but that unauthorised expenditure occurred every year. Ministers had complained time and again that they had a great deal of trouble to keep the military within bounds. The late Home Secretary, Sir H. race Tozer, stated in that Committee that one of the most difficult tasks he had was to keep them from exceeding the vote. The increase for both land and marine forces amounted to £20,000, and for the land force alone to £17,774—an increase which was not justified by results. The strength of the force last year was 181 officers and 2,448 non-commissioned officers and men. Up to 30th June, 1899, the strength of officers was 223, and non-commissioned officers and men 2,941—an increase of twenty-nine officers and 393 men, or one officer to every fourteen men. Such an

increase did not justify an increase in the vote of nearly £18,000, and the Committee would be perfectly justified in trying to effect some reduction. Undoubtedly there were a number of new officers. On the headquarters staff there was an additional officer; in the permanent force there was an increase of one officer, and there were a number of adjutants and five additional instructors. He would not object to an increase in the number of instructors if there were sufficient men for them to instruct; but the increase in the number of non-commissioned officers and men was not at all in proportion to the increase in the number of instructors. In the volunteer branch, instead of an increase there was actually a decrease this year.

The PREMIER: There are four more cadet corps.

Mr. McDONNELL did not object to the appointment of an adjutant for the teachers' corps and cadets. That was a move in the right direction. The cadets deserved all possible recognition, and the appointment of Captain Catherwood to the position of adjutant was a very worthy appointment, and one which would give satisfaction. But there were several other appointments of which the same could not be said. For instance, there was an extra lieutenant-colonel. He believed there was an extra infantry company, but the bulk of the increase was due to the increase in the number of officers on the headquarters staff, and in the permanent force and the regimental instruction staff. He took particular objection to the remarkable increase in contingencies, because, unfortunately, they did not know how the money was spent. For instance, there was a vote of £900 for travelling expenses (including fares); stores and equipment, £2,500; and the contingencies for the volunteer branch were increased from £200 to £700. The hon. gentleman had given them no explanation of those increases. He thought the hon. gentleman had explained that a number of officers had to be provided with separate accommodation, and that might account for some increase. He did not take so much objection to the increase in the volunteer branch, because in the past that branch had been starved, but right through the vote there was an increase in contingencies. He believed there was a large amount of that money being squandered, and it would be interesting to get a detailed account of how the large amount was spent by the officers of the headquarters staff. He was very pleased that the Premier had faithfully fulfilled the promises he had made last session that on the return of the Commandant from the North he would consult with him on the various matters which were brought under his notice. He hoped that if they got any promises from the Premier in another direction, he would as faithfully carry out those promises.

The PREMIER: I shall endeavour to do so.

Mr. McDONNELL: Speaking of the whole vote, the increase of 350 men was [10 p.m.] very small as a justification of the very large increase in the vote. With respect to the large increase for contingencies, there was extra assistance afforded to rifle clubs, with which he entirely agreed. Rifle clubs deserved every possible encouragement, and if they had more rifle clubs and more assistance given to the volunteer branch and less spent on the headquarters staff and permanent force they would have a larger, a better, and a more effective force than they had at the present time. In the supplementary report furnished by the Commandant to the Premier last year there was

one matter mentioned which had been referred to last session and the session before. One paragraph in that report read as follows:—

3. Should there be any wish expressed to re-form the battalion of Irish Rifles I shall be glad to recommend that such be carried out on an independent basis—unconnected with the Queensland Rifles—and with a volunteer commanding officer and separate instructional staff; but special provision would have to be made for this on a supplementary estimate, as the whole of the vote for the volunteer corps is already absorbed by the existing organisation. Its cost would be about £1,800. I strongly recommend that special drill halls with quarters for sergeant instructors and officers should be provided for battalions of volunteers.

After that report was submitted to the Premier, ex-Captain Stephens, of the Irish corps, wrote to the Commandant, requesting an interview for himself and another ex-officer of the corps, to discuss between themselves the advisability of the reorganisation of the Irish corps. The correspondence on the subject was not very long, and perhaps it was better that he should read it. The first letter was as follows:—

Private.] Brisbane, 22nd Nov., '98.
Major-General Howell Gunter,
Commandant Q.D.F.

SIR.—I have the honour to inform you that Mr. O'Malley and myself are desirous of interviewing you in connection with the supplementary report furnished by you to the Chief Secretary, in so far as it refers to the reorganisation of the late Irish Corps. We should be glad if you would kindly arrange an appointment that would be convenient to yourself, but venture to suggest that some evening other than Saturday would suit us better than during business hours.

I have, etc.,
P. J. STEPHENS.

The Commandant replied to that letter on the 23rd November, as follows:—

DEAR SIR,—I am directed by the Commandant to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated 22nd instant, and in reply to inform you that the method of offering services for formation of a volunteer corps is provided for in the regulations. The Commandant is unable to discuss the matter privately.

Yours faithfully,
J. SANDERSON LYSTER.

P. J. Stephens, Esq.

After that he went to the Premier, as the hon. gentleman would remember, and the Premier agreed to give Mr. Stephens and another gentleman an interview. The interview took place in the month of December, and after the matter had been discussed the Premier asked ex-Captain Stephens to submit his proposals to him in writing. That was done in a letter in this form—

Brisbane, 19th December, 1898.

SIR,—I have the honour to enclose herewith for your information copies of certain correspondence between the Commandant, Q.D.F., and myself in connection with his supplementary report on the Defence Force.

My letter to the Commandant requesting an interview was written on behalf of a large number of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the late Irish Volunteer Corps, who recognised that there was now—vide paragraph 3 in report referred to—a disposition on the part of the authorities to re-establish the Irish Corps.

It was, however, considered advisable, before taking any steps in the matter of reorganisation, to ascertain the full extent of the Commandant's goodwill towards the movement and the promoters, in order to prevent any ultimate misunderstandings that might otherwise arise.

I regret exceedingly that the Major-General refused to see us, as we are anxious to show him we appreciate his present attitude, and were willing to assist him in giving practical effect to his wishes, but as there is now no other possible course open to us, we are perforce compelled to refer the matter to your kindly consideration.

I would respectfully submit that, as the regulation referred to in the Commandant's reply only applies to the offer of service of *new* corps, it has no bearing on the subject, as I take it that if an Irish corps is again established it will practically be the resuscitation of the old corps, by the formal cancelling of all general orders and *Gazette* notices in reference to the disbandment of companies or resignation of members of same.

Incidentally I might mention that had the Commandant seen us, and after listening to our views being unable or not agreeable to restore the old order of volunteer matters, we were prepared to suggest an alternative which we thought he might accept—viz., the offering of our services as a regiment in the militia branch of the Defence Force.

We shall esteem it a favour if you will kindly represent our views, as already submitted to you, to the Commandant.

Thanking you sincerely for the courtesy extended to us, and for the favourable interest you have taken in the matter.

I have, etc.,
P. J. STEPHENS.

The Hon. J. R. Dickson, C.M.G., Chief Secretary, Treasury Buildings.

The Premier, on the 13th February, 1899, replied—

SIR,—With further reference to your letter of the 19th December last regarding the reorganisation of the Irish Corps, I have the honour, by direction, to inform you that the Chief Secretary, having considered the report of the Commandant on the subject and ascertained that no funds are available for the re-formation of the corps in question, has decided that no further action can be taken in the matter until the necessary funds are provided on the Estimates for the next financial year.

I have, etc.,
HENRY S. DUTTON,
Under Secretary.

P. J. Stephens, Esq., Brisbane.

That was the correspondence that had taken place in connection with the matter, and he wished to ask the Premier at that stage whether he was prepared to favourably consider the proposals submitted to him by ex-Captain Stephens and others for a re-formation of the Irish corps, either as a branch of the Volunteer Force, or as a branch of the militia force connected with the Defence Force?

THE PREMIER: The delay in the matter, as the hon. member had correctly stated, arose from a want of funds supplied by the House. He had sent a letter to the Commandant to the effect that he was desirous of learning if there were sufficient funds in the volunteer vote for the immediate formation of an Irish battalion of the Queensland Volunteer Rifles. To that he had received the reply—

Provision was made for only 740 of all ranks. Though the strength of the existing corps is not now up to the establishment, they will be filled up before the end of the year. To raise a battalion of four companies would require an addition of £400, exclusive of the permanent instructor that might be deemed necessary.

Owing to that, and because there were a great number of other matters which required immediate attention and additional expenditure—which he had already enumerated, it was not deemed desirable to make provision for the corps on the Estimates. He must do the Commandant the justice to say that he made a recommendation for a very large provision for volunteers, which he (the Premier) had to ruthlessly cut down. He was prepared to tell the hon. member that he would consult with the Commandant to see what could be done with regard to the formation of an Irish battalion, and if a reasonable expenditure would effect it he had no hesitation in saying that it would be favourably received.

Mr. J. HAMILTON said that with regard to the subject to which he had previously referred, he would like to read to the Committee portions of a letter contributed to the *Field* of 15th July, 1899, by W. J. Jeffrey and Co., one of the first gun and rifle makers in the world. Referring to the Lee-Enfield and Lee-Metford rifles, with which our forces were armed, they wrote—

As regards the shooting of the '303 military rifle, we have found that only about two or three rifles out of ten are capable of hitting a man 200 or 300 yards off if aimed straight to the object. We have tested hundreds of these rifles, and find that they show from 4 inches to 6 inches right at 100 yards, and that at 300 yards

from 12 inches to 15 inches. With rifles like these our soldiers would stand a very poor chance in skirmishing against continental troops, whose rifles are usually correctly sighted. Just for the sake of saving 6d. or 1s. on each rifle our Government do not take any steps to test the accuracy of the weapons turned out by them. It is true that they fire a few shots from a fixed rest from a certain proportion of the rifles that they manufacture, but they do not trouble whether the bullets hit the mark aimed at so long as they group closely on the target.

Mr. McDONNELL said he did not want to see any extra amount placed on the Supplementary Estimates for the re-formation of the Irish battalion, nor would any be needed if so large a part of the money voted was not swallowed up in the salaries of the extra number of officers who had been appointed. Although he had spoken against the increase in the Estimate, he would not object if the vote for the Volunteer Force had been twice as large. He did not think there would be any difficulty in re-forming the corps if the Commandant was prepared to meet the representative men of the corps; but they were not going to beg to be allowed to come in again and join the Defence Force, which they had left on principle. He hoped the Premier would bear his promise in mind. He would also refer to the dates for holding camp. For the last two years camp had been held at a very awkward time for the volunteers in particular. According to the Commandant's report only 35 per cent. of the Volunteer Force attended camp, but that was because it was at a time of year when the men could not get away from their business. Previous to 1897 camp used to be held at Easter.

The PREMIER: Unfortunately, at Easter the weather is generally broken. That was the only reason the date for holding camp was altered.

Mr. McDONNELL: Another reason given was that the officers of the headquarters staff had to journey to Melbourne and Sydney to attend camp there. It might be beneficial to the officers to attend the southern camps, but it would be much more beneficial to the men if they stayed here and held camp at the time most convenient for the men, many of whom, especially the volunteers, could only get away from business during the holidays. And it should be remembered that the Volunteer Force received no pay while in camp. The Commandant would not accept the recommendation, because he considered that a volunteer corps should be purely voluntary. There was some reason in that, but the men who had to lose their wages by going to camp, as they had to do now, ought to receive some pay to compensate them for their loss. The camp was held at a time when it was most inconvenient for the men to attend, and he hoped that consideration would be given to the matter, because a number of men in the Volunteer Force, and also in the Defence Force, were unable to become efficient on account of not being able to attend camp.

The PREMIER said this matter was thrashed out last year on the 20th October, when he said, in reply to the hon. member—

The statement of the hon. member that the camps last year were held to suit the convenience of the officers, and not to suit the convenience of the men, was one which ought to be denied. The Easter camp was abandoned primarily on account of the atmospheric conditions usually prevailing at that time of the year, the wet weather being found to affect very prejudicially the health of the troops. As a matter of fact, the last camp, held in June, was excellent so far as attendance was concerned, the percentage being 88.67. The previous camp, also held in June, was actually the best ever held. The Northern encampment had never been held at any other time than the month of June. That disposed of the charge that the time of the year at which the encampment was held was chosen solely for the convenience of the officers, and not for the convenience of the men.

He still thought the weather was too hot or too wet at Easter, and the men with whom he had conversed on the subject seemed to recognise that June was a much more favourable time for the manoeuvres.

Mr. McDONNELL: Is that the opinion of the officers or the men?

The PREMIER: He had discussed the matter with some of the men; but it was a matter for the military authorities to consider, and he would confer with the Commandant about it again. With regard to the volunteers, he believed a number thought they should be paid for the time they were in camp, and that was the thin end of the wedge in the direction of a militia force.

Mr. McDONNELL: I say the camp should be held at a time when the men can attend, or else the men should be paid for their loss of time.

The PREMIER: He could assure the hon. member that this debate would not be lost sight of. He could not make any promise in the matter, but he would submit it to the military authorities, and it would be considered whether Easter would be more convenient. He thought that time would be more convenient, generally speaking, but for the climatic conditions prevailing at that season of the year.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW (*Maryborough*) explained that the workmen in the town he represented were unable to get away to camp except at Easter.

* Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*) said the increase in the vote this year was so large that the Committee should pause before agreeing to it. Year after year this increase was going on, until now the cost of our military system was about 7s. 6d. per head of the population. The sum asked for on account of the Defence Force on the Estimates-in-Chief this year was about £80,000.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: That is not 7s. 6d. per head.

Mr. GLASSEY: About 3s. 6d. a head.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: That's about it.

Mr. LESINA: There was nearly £80,000 wanted for the force, and one-sixth of the amount was for paid military officers. At a Commandant's inspection or at a special function a regular "whip" had to be made to ensure a good return in the annual report, and it was becoming noticeable that the physique of the ranks was becoming far below the standard. It was well known that when men were wanted to go to South Africa they could not be got from the Defence Force, and a lot of men had to be got from outside. There was an increase of £8,000 this year in the amount asked for "contingencies," which were of a most elastic character. They ought to know how that money was spent.

The PREMIER: I gave all the information.

Mr. LESINA: He would like to know how much per head the Commandant and his staff drew for travelling expenses.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: You ought to have a Royal Commission.

Mr. LESINA: They wanted a Royal Commission. He believed the whole of [10.30 p.m.] those Estimates should be remitted to a committee of the House for careful consideration, or else that a Royal Commission should consider them and the system generally. It badly wanted it. Here was a case in point: A hundred and sixty-one men served in "A" Battery, and only eighty-one were Australians; during the year thirteen were struck off the roll as time expired, four were dismissed for misconduct, three were sent away because they could not learn the goose-step, and twelve took French leave. He would like to know whether any of those "permanent" youths had been arrested. The military forces of the colony

were as corrupt as the police, which had been exposed to such an extent by a Royal Commission. Some further consideration should be given to the administration of the department before voting such a large annual amount. There was a matter raised by the hon. member for Cook which showed the incapacity of the military head of the force. Correspondence has been produced to show that men had been sent away in the most cold-blooded way to fight abroad with defective rifles. The Commandant stated that the rifles had been tested. The member for Cook denied it and produced conclusive evidence that they had not been tested sufficiently, and in such a way as to prove them an effective weapon. Fancy expecting a man to take such an unnecessary risk. It was risk at any time to enter the battlefield but to enter it with an arm that would not shoot was inviting slaughter. The relatives of every man of the contingent who happened to be shot by a Boer would have a claim on the military authorities and the Government for supinely neglecting their duty. Not a word and nothing done to prevent that huge mistake of sending men out to fight with useless weapons.

THE PREMIER: Nobody is paying the slightest attention to you.

MR. LESINA: Whether they were or not he should certainly talk to the country. The Premier was simply indurated to criticism. It took no effect upon him. He was like the hippopotamus being pelted through a pea-shooter by a small boy. There was no question at all that the military forces were exercising too much influence and control over the affairs of the colony. They were taking possession of the country and dictating the Government policy, and the reason was not far to see when there was a major in the Ministry whose interest it was to shove ahead his military brethren, and to bring down every year a larger vote, which was expended chiefly in increasing salaries. If that sort of thing was allowed to go on the result would be that next year the Government would come down with a vote for £100,000 or £120,000, and by-and-by the people would have to pay as much per head of the population for military purposes as they paid in the old country—namely, £1 a head. He strongly protested against it, and if any hon. member proposed a reduction he should certainly vote for it. He thought the money might be better expended in educating the children of the country, in improving roads and bridges, and carrying out necessary works, instead of being wasted on military persons, who were drawing large salaries and very heavy daily expenses—persons who had never faced any powder except violet powder. The country was overrun with military persons, but he undertook to say that the ordinary Charters Towers or Gympie miner had fired more shots than a major. It was time the country understood how the money of the taxpayers was being dissipated upon military display. He had no doubt it was useless to make a protest, but he made it all the same. They had to congratulate the Treasurer this year upon bringing forward an excellent Financial Statement, and then they gripped hold of the prosperity, and passed it along in huge junks, by engaging all sorts of officers, at big salaries, to swagger about the country and dictate to Parliament and influence the Ministry, and play at being dictators. He strongly protested against that kind of thing, and trusted the country would condemn it. He believed there was no other country in the world where huge military expenditure of that kind went through Parliament with such an amount of apathy—hardly a country in the world with a Parliament largely composed of

self-respecting democrats who allowed enormous sums of money to be squandered without protest upon military splendour. It was scandalous. From every point of view it was objectionable, and he entered his protest against it.

MR. GIVENS (Cairns) did not want to occupy any time worth speaking of in discussing this particular vote. He thought the country generally and the Committee were heartily sick of the great fodder question. Colonel Ricardo had been criticised to death, and they might as well give him a rest. What he wanted to call the attention of the Committee to was that the vote for the land forces disclosed a very large increase, while the vote for the marine force disclosed no corresponding increase. He objected to that altogether, because he was fully convinced that it was much more important for the colony to have an efficient marine force than a land force. If ever it was attacked it would be by an enemy from outside, and in order to combat and repel that enemy it would be absolutely necessary to have the marine force in the greatest possible state of efficiency. As the vote for the marine force was not under discussion now, he would not occupy the time of the Committee, but he would point out that the vote for the land force was £77,423, showing an increase, according to figures here given, of £17,784, while the total vote for the marine force was only £17,389, showing an increase of only £1,728. That was altogether disproportionate to the enormous increase set down for the land force, which was £20,500 irrespective of £10,400 from the loan fund. The Committee should weigh carefully whether it should spend so much on the land force and practically starve the marine force. The marine force would be the vanguard of defence, the first line of defence, which this country and Australia would have against a foreign aggressor. That must be the case; and that being so, it was the bounden duty of the Government to see that it was kept in as efficient a state as possible. At present he should have to enter his protest against such an enormous increase being given to the land force without any corresponding increase being given to the marine force.

MR. KIDSTON would have liked to have said something in a general way about the Defence Force; but at this late hour he should make his remarks very brief. In the first place he should like to point out the way in which the Defence Force vote of the colony was increasing. According to the statement given by the Treasurer at the end of his Financial Statement, the defence expenditure last year was £88,739. He believed that was rather an underestimate—about £20,000 or so.

THE TREASURER: It is the exact amount.

MR. KIDSTON: He thought not. He thought he could show it was not. However, it was not material to his argument whether it was a fact or not. He found that the amount the Committee was asked to vote this year would amount to about £184,000. That was a very large increase. For the Defence Force proper there was £152,000. That was £14,000 for the naval squadron, £2,700 for the federal garrison, £77,000 for the land forces, £17,000 for the marine force, £26,000 of loan money, £5,000 for buildings, and interest on loan expenditure on defence—amounting, he supposed, to about £219,000—about £9,000. In addition to that, members had been informed that there would be a vote of probably something like £32,000 for the war in South Africa. So the war expenditure of Queensland this year was likely to be something like £184,000, which was far and away beyond anything it had ever been yet. He did not think that this was an excessive

amount for Queensland to be paying for defence purposes. To tell the truth, he thought it was a ridiculous sum after the patriotic talk, the tall talk, he had listened to from the other side of the House for the last fortnight about helping the mother country, and taking up their share of the burden of Empire. The burden of Empire to the people of the mother country, which they were proposing to help, amounted to about £1,000,000 for every 500,000 people in the old country. Why, in Queensland, with their 500,000 people they thought £184,000 an enormous amount. In the old country last year the Estimates for war purposes—past, present, and future—amounted to £78,000,000, or nearly £2 per head of the population. In spite of the very large proposed expenditure in Queensland, there was no man who believed that the present Defence Force was adequate to the defence of the colony. He could not help thinking, when he was listening to all the talk he had had to listen to in the House recently, that if Queensland had been just in this matter of defence before she pretended to be generous in helping the mother country in South Africa, it would have been a great deal more honest on her part. He would not grudge £184,000 for defence purposes if they were getting an efficient defence for it, because, whatever it cost, he thought it was the first duty of a people that had the right of self-government to undertake the duty of their own defence; and Queensland had not undertaken her own defence. It was manifestly depending upon the mother country for it. At the same time, while he did not complain of the large amount of the defence vote *per se*, while he did not think it was more than Queensland might rightly spend on the matter, he thought it was quite legitimate for them to consider whether they were getting value for the money they expended. He thought it was extremely doubtful if they were getting value. He found that in 1891 the total appropriation was £62,500, and that the actual strength of the Defence Force on the 30th of June of that year was 6,500 men. On the 30th of June this year, when the appropriation was some £75,000, and they spent, according to the Treasurer, £88,000, they had only 5,233 men. For £13,000 more they had 1,000 men less. The Commandant, in the last page of his report, proposed to raise the total number of men in the Defence Force of the colony to 6,324 and the appropriation asked for was £94,800. As shown by that report there was a great deal of difference between the paper establishment and the actual strength of the Defence Force. In 1891 they had an actual strength of 6,498 men for 50 per cent. less than was asked for the same number of men this year.

The TREASURER: There were a lot of volunteers then.

Mr. KIDSTON: There were a lot of volunteers then, and one of the faults a great many volunteers had to find with the Brigade Office was that they discouraged the volunteer movement. They discouraged the Scottish volunteers out of existence, and from what he could hear they had done very much the same thing with the Irish volunteers. They did not like men who could be citizens as well as soldiers, but whether that was so or not, it was absolutely true that the discontent created by the Brigade Office went a very long way to destroy the very promising volunteer force they had a few years ago. In 1891 they had 1,000 volunteers, and this year they had only 666. He was aware that it might be said that the appropriation asked for in 1891 was largely supplemented by unauthorised expenditure. As a matter of fact the unauthorised expenditure that year was £14,000, and last year,

when they had a very much larger appropriation, the unauthorised expenditure was nearly £6,000.

The TREASURER: It was only £2,500.

Mr. KIDSTON: The Premier gave the figures as something over £5,000.

The TREASURER: £5,000 was authorised, but only £2,500 of that amount was spent.

Mr. KIDSTON: The Premier undoubtedly gave the Committee to understand that the unauthorised expenditure was over £5,000. But what he wished particularly to point out in connection with that matter was that no matter what the amount of the appropriation might be, the same thing held good, so that that did not at all interfere with his argument that the cost of the Defence Force was growing by leaps and bounds, but that the strength of the Defence Force was receding. There was just one other matter that he should like to notice, and that was the relation which the cost of the headquarters staff bore to the cost of the whole force. The total number of men on the headquarters staff was given as sixty-five, and the payments to those men amounted to £13,662. In the infantry branch of the Defence Force the total number of officers and men was 1,560, and the total wages paid to those men was £14,000, which was only a few pounds more than the cost of the headquarters staff. The actual pay for the whole of the Defence Force, excluding the headquarters staff, was £24,000, and the pay for the headquarters staff was £13,600, so that more than one-third of the whole pay for the Defence Force was swallowed up by the headquarters staff. Here was a particular instance. A sum of £300 per annum was put down for a staff-officer for the Central district. There were just about 150 men all told in the Central district, so that the staff officer would receive £2 per head to look after the men in that district.

The TREASURER: It is very cheap at that.

Mr. KIDSTON would have nothing to say against the appointment of such an

[11 p.m.] officer, if there was a defence force of sufficient strength to justify the appointment.

The PREMIER: Why, last year you wanted a naval brigade established there.

Mr. KIDSTON wanted a great deal more than a naval brigade. He told the Committee two years ago that the whole defence of the Central district was about 150 men, armed with Martini-Henry or Martini-Enfield rifles, and that for all practical purposes there was no defence force there at all. There were a few small bits of companies. The officers had not enough men to drill to instruct them in their own duties, and for the sake of the officers it was absolutely necessary that there should be at least two other companies of infantry there, that there should be a company of artillery, along with a company of mounted infantry. That was the minimum of the Defence Force there should be in the Central district. If they had that there would be some sense in having a staff officer at £300. When the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was speaking, the hon. member for Brisbane North interjected that they wanted a Royal Commission, and he really thought they did want a Royal Commission. He told the Premier a year ago that it was absolutely necessary that an inquiry should be made into the condition and management of the Defence Force, and there was only one thing that prevented him from moving, or getting moved, a very substantial reduction in the vote until they got a promise of an inquiry, and that was that next year the whole question of defence would be handed over to the Federal Parliament, and it was not worth their while making inquiry into the Brigade Office now. He

could only hope that the Federal Parliament, when it did take up the question of Australian defence, would do it much more wisely and efficiently than the Queensland Parliament had ever done. He hoped they would have the heart to vote the money required—which this Parliament had never done—and he hoped they would have the head to spend wisely the money voted—which this Parliament had never done. For many years back they had got nothing like value for the money they had spent on defence.

Question—That £77,423 be granted for Defence—Land Force—put and passed.

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

PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table, was ordered to be printed:—Further correspondence respecting the testing of rifles for the Queensland Transvaal Contingent.

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