

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 1899

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 21 NOVEMBER, 1899.

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL REPORTS.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Arthur Morgan, *Warwick*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

PETITION OF HENRY THEODORE BUBECK.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Arthur Morgan, *Warwick*): I have to report that I have received from the Elections Judge the following certificate of the determination of the Elections Tribunal in the matter of the petition of Henry Theodore Bubeck *versus* John Fogarty and William Henry Groom:—

“In the Supreme Court of Queensland.
“Court of the Elections Tribunal for the trial of an election petition for the electoral district of Drayton and Toowoomba, between Henry Theodore Bubeck, petitioner, and John Fogarty and William Henry Groom, respondents.

"To the Honourable the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

"Sir,—The petition of Henry Theodore Bubeck, presented on the ninth day of May last, complaining of the undue election and return of John Fogarty and William Henry Groom, Esquires, as members to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Drayton and Toowoomba, was tried before the Elections Tribunal on the third, fourth, and sixth days of November instant.

"The assessors chosen by the parties were Thomas Dibley, George Jackson, Charles Moffat Jenkinson, John Leahy, Robert Harrison Smith, and William Bligh Henry O'Connell, Esquires, Members of the Legislative Assembly. Charles Moffat Jenkinson, Esquire, was absent on Saturday, the fourth day of November instant; and, save as aforesaid, all the assessors were present throughout the whole trial.

"The assessors unanimously decided that the petitioner had failed to prove the statements contained in the petition.

"The tribunal determined that the petition should be dismissed, and that John Fogarty and William Henry Groom, Esquires, had been duly elected and returned for the electoral district of Drayton and Toowoomba.

"The tribunal ordered and directed that the sum of one hundred pounds paid into court with the petition should be paid to the respondents for their costs, and that their costs should be fixed at and limited to the said sum.

"All which I hereby certify.

"A copy of the evidence given at the trial accompanies this certificate.

"There was not any corrupt practice proved to have been committed by or with the knowledge or consent of any candidate at the election to which the petition relates, and there is no reason to believe that corrupt practices have extensively prevailed at the said election.

"Dated this eighteenth day of November, 1899.

"PATRICK REAL, J.,
Elections Judge for 1899."

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER (Hon. J. R. Dickson, *Bulimba*): I move that the certificate of the Elections Judge intimating the dismissal of the petition of Henry Theodore Bubeck, and declaring that John Fogarty and William Henry Groom had been duly elected for the electoral district of Drayton and Toowoomba be entered in the journals of the House; and that the evidence taken in the case be printed.

Question put and passed.

PETITION OF DAVID BOWMAN.

The SPEAKER: I have also to report that I have received from the Elections Judge the following certificate of the determination of the Elections Tribunal in the matter of the petition of David Bowman *versus* William Walter Hood:—

"In the Supreme Court of Queensland.

"Court of Elections Tribunal for the trial of an election petition for the electoral district of Warrego, between David Bowman, petitioner, and William Walter Hood, respondent.

"To the Honourable the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

"Sir,—The petition of David Bowman, presented on the nineteenth day of May last, complaining of the undue election and return of William Walter Hood, Esquire, as a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Warrego, was tried before the Elections Tribunal on the twenty-third, twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth, and thirtieth days of October last.

"The assessors chosen by the parties were Albert James Callan, Thomas Dibley, Denis Thomas Keogh, John Leahy, Thomas Plunkett, and Robert Harrison Smith, Esquires, members of the Legislative Assembly. Denis Thomas Keogh and Thomas Plunkett, Esquires, were absent on Saturday, the twenty-eighth day of October, and Robert Harrison Smith, Esquire, was absent for one or two hours on the thirtieth day of October; and, save as aforesaid, all the assessors were present throughout the whole trial.

"The tribunal determined that the election of the said William Walter Hood, Esquire, was void.

"The tribunal made no order as to costs.

"All which I hereby certify.

"A copy of the evidence given at the trial accompanies this certificate.

"Dated this eighteenth day of November, 1899.

"PATRICK REAL, J.,
Elections Judge for 1899."

The PREMIER: I beg to move that the certificate of the Elections Judge declaring void the election of William Walter Hood, for the electoral district of Warrego, be entered in the journals of the House, and that Mr. Speaker do issue his Writ for the election of a member to serve in this House for the said electoral district.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move that the evidence in the case David Bowman *versus* William Walter Hood be printed.

Question put and passed.

CRIMINAL CODE BILL.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council, intimating that they had agreed to this Bill without amendment.

QUESTIONS.

RESUMPTIONS OF LAND FOR DEFENCE PURPOSES.

Mr. JENKINSON (*Wide Bay*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

1. Have the resumptions of land intended for defence purposes, as notified in the *Government Gazette* of 29th July, 1899, been made?
2. If so, on what date?
3. Who were the owners of the areas, and what were the respective amounts paid to each?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. D. H. Dalrymple, *Mackay*) replied—

1. The resumption of land at Lytton intended for defence purposes have not yet been completed.
- 2 and 3. I am not aware what payments have so far been made by the Defence authorities; but I shall lay on the table of the House a return showing the names of the owners whose lands have been resumed, the areas resumed, the amount of compensation recommended for payment, and the dates on which payment was authorised.

NATIVE TRACKERS.

Mr. MOORE (*Murilla*) asked the Home Secretary—

1. What was the number of native trackers in the Police Force on the 30th June last?
2. What amount out of the vote last year was expended?
3. How is the vote of £4,000 for rations to native trackers administered?

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

1. 126.
2. The whole.

3. By the Commissioner of Police, in providing trackers and their wives and children with rations.

PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table, was ordered to be printed:—

Return showing land resumed for defence purposes in the parish of Tingalpa, town of Lytton.

PASTORAL LEASES BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. D. H. Dalrymple, *Mackay*) said: In rising on the present occasion to move the second reading of this Bill, I may say that I proposed when the second reading came on to provide hon. members with a map showing on a smaller scale the information now given in the maps on the table of the House. The lithographs, however, have not been completed so far, although I am led to believe they will be completed this afternoon; but I trust that for the purpose of illustrating the country which is to be specifically dealt with the maps on the table will be sufficient. The genesis of the movement which has resulted in the introduction of this Bill took place some two years ago. The pastoralists of the extreme West of the colony—hon. members will observe the area on the map; it runs from Hatton's Corner northwards—were very hard pushed by bad seasons, distant markets, the incursion of rabbits, and various other causes; so much so that it seemed probable that they would not be able to carry on their business any longer unless some relief was afforded them. The result was that a meeting was held, and Mr. Field, a pastoralist of long standing in that part of the country, was deputed to represent the views of the pastoralists in the district to the Minister. Mr. Field came to Brisbane, and saw the Minister, then the Hon. Mr. Foxton, and the matter was referred to the Land Court to appoint some officer or officers who should inspect this country, and verify the statements made by the pastoral tenants. Mr. Hume and Mr. Woodbine—both officers of large experience—were instructed by the Land Court to inspect this country. They made an inspection—Mr. Woodbine had been over the country before in his official capacity—they inspected the country and communicated to Mr. Foxton. The proposals which are now before the House as to rental and in regard to the other provisions of the Bill are generally the same as those in the Bill which was introduced last year. In August, last year, Mr. Foxton, who was then Secretary for Lands, promised that a Bill would be introduced for the purpose of granting these pastoralists some relief in the public interests. The Bill was introduced in November, but from various causes did not get further than its first reading. The main difference between that Bill and the present, and which probably may cause some comment on the part of hon. members, is that there is an alteration in the schedules. If hon. members will look at the map, they will find that four runs have been included in this Bill—Palpariba, Currawilla, Haldon Downs, and Morney Plains. The division which was proposed in the Bill brought forward last year was that the boundary line to the east should be the 141st meridian of longitude. Hon. members will find, if they look at the map, that there is now an extension towards the east. The reason for that extension is that Mr. Field, acting as representative for the pastoralists in that portion of the colony, pointed out that there were certain runs in which the conditions were practically the same as those which obtained in the runs set out in the first schedule, and that it was therefore desirable to include those runs. The difficulty which would confront anyone in drafting such a Bill, and who has to include additional country, is to know where to draw the line. The first line was a meridian of longitude. That, of course, could not be an absolutely straight line, as it would bisect a good many runs, and therefore the original division ran generally north and south, but following the boundaries of runs. I submitted the matter

to Mr. Field, who had inspected the whole of the country, and he said it was true that those other runs conformed very closely to the conditions which existed in regard to the runs already included in the schedule, and it was advisable to extend the schedules to that extent. The line which was then substituted for the 141st meridian of longitude was the old boundary of the schedule in the Land Act of 1884. The only difference, then, between the present schedules and the area included in the schedules of the Bill introduced last year is the inclusion of those four runs, and the present boundary is a perfectly definite boundary. It is a boundary which will enable the Minister, or members of Parliament, who may be appealed to as to why A, B, or C's run on the east of the boundary has not been included in the schedule to give the reason—namely, that they have now got a definite line which has been recognised by a number of Acts of Parliament. Although more country has been included, it must be borne in mind that the country which has been so included has been already dealt with under the Land Act of 1884, and divided and appraised.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: That is what makes the map so puzzling. There is nothing to show what runs come under the operations of the 1884 Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In reply to the hon. member's interjection, I may as well explain the map to hon. members. The line on the right-hand side which is coloured dark red is the old schedule of the Land Act of 1884. The colourless portion of the map is the country which will now come within these schedules—that is to say, those under lease, and which will be affected by this Bill if it passes into law.

The country which is marked blue [4 p.m.] is country which has been forfeited.—which is unoccupied—and the country which is marked white, and is, at the same time, enclosed by green lines, is country which, although it is within the boundary of the schedule, will not be affected by the Act, as it has been already dealt with and appraised. If hon. members will observe this map they will see what a very large extent of country—more than 28,000 square miles—has been thrown up and abandoned. That will show more conclusively, probably, than anything else that the allegation of the Crown tenants in those districts is not devoid of foundation.

Mr. JACKSON: They are getting the use of it all the time. They are getting the use of it now.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Go and look about the Roma district, the Longreach district, the Hughenden district, or the Winton district, and you will not find huge areas abandoned. The fact that huge areas are abandoned prove two things. It proves, in the first place, that there is no practical risk of people taking them up—that if the conditions of the country were better, no person or pastoral tenant would venture to throw up such large areas. Consequently it is only in the extreme West that you will find such a large portion as one-third or one-fourth of the whole country, which was at one time under pastoral occupation, has been abandoned. That is really the best possible evidence we can have that the pastoral industry in that portion of the country is being carried on under very great difficulties indeed, or the country would not be thrown up. The principal object or reason for bringing in this Bill, apart from any feeling of sympathy which may possibly exist towards the men who have been out there probably twenty years or more, who went there with the idea that they would make a profit by taking up the country which at the time was unoccupied, and stocking it, and who in most cases have

been ruined—apart from any feeling of sympathy which we may have with these men, who have been fighting against the hostile influences of nature—against droughts, against possible rabbits, against heavy advances, against bad markets, against bad prices—apart from that we have to consider whether it is a good thing or a bad thing for a huge extent of country, which would make a European kingdom, to be left unoccupied, or whether it would be better for the State to consent to take a smaller rental and secure that this country was more or less under occupation. It is quite evident that if it is not under occupation it will become the breeding place of the rabbit because the greater part of it towards Birdsville is admirably suited for the needs of that particular animal. There are sandhills and flats; it would be a sort of rabbits' paradise. It is quite obvious also that if the rabbits overrun this country, if no one is in occupation it will make it more easy for the rabbits to attack the inside country. I think that if by reducing the rentals to some extent and by making the condition—which is one of the provisions of this Act—that anyone who is desirous of bringing himself within the provisions of this Bill shall be compelled to add to his holding all that country which was at one time portion of it, and has been since forfeited, we can secure that that country will be no longer no man's land, it will be decidedly profitable to the whole of the colony. It is alleged by those who are in occupation that it is really almost a toss up as to whether they will be able to continue their operations at all. A very large amount of the country has been already thrown up. To continue their operations in the face of the very bad seasons, a great many will require more improvements. They will require to sink wells. They will require to get more capital; and it is believed by themselves—and they, I presume, are the best judges—that if the Government shows itself a more liberal landlord, and will make some concession in the way of rent and give them a tenure of twenty-one years, then they will be able to get the necessary accommodation, and will be able to continue to hold the country. With regard to the rentals which are set out in the schedule, they have been arrived at by a man than whom, I venture to say, there are no persons who have had greater experience. They are exactly what have been recommended to the Minister by Mr. Hume and Mr. Woodbine. Taking into consideration the fact that, whatever the rentals have been, they have been too high for a great many years or the country would not have been abandoned. If we take into consideration also the fact that practically the average rental over the border is 2s. 6d. per mile, and the term of lease forty-two years, I think you will see that, apparently, the proposals which are made in this Bill with regard to the minimum rental, and with regard to the term of lease, are not excessively liberal. The Bill is not brought in at all in the light of a Bill to give any particular sop to one class of persons. It is a Bill which is founded on business principles as to whether we had better accept a price for the Crown lands which are unoccupied, and I take it that the desire of the majority of the people of the colony is to see the Crown lands occupied in some way or other. Business principles, apart from sympathy, will lead anyone who is responsible for the occupation of the Crown lands of the colony to reduce the rentals and improve a tenancy where we find that a very large portion of the land belonging to the State remains not only unprofitably occupied, but worse, is not being occupied at all. If hon. members will look at the Bill they will see that it has been framed with a view of making such concessions towards pastoral tenants in

these very far remote districts as will induce them to continue to carry on their business, and will induce them also to take up and endeavour to reoccupy those very large areas which they have abandoned. Clause 3 allows tenants twelve months to elect whether they will come under this Bill or not, and in this respect it follows the example of the Act of 1884 and preceding Acts, under which if tenants choose to take advantage of the provision made for them by Parliament they can do so, and if not their tenures will continue to exist under the same conditions as they now exist. Clause 6 deals with the conditions of the lease, and that of course is a very important provision. It is not only that we make a bargain that those conditions shall not be unfair to those who may desire to take advantage of them, but also that they should be reasonable as far as the State is concerned. Clause 5 is a very important one. It provides that the lease under this Bill shall be for the term of twenty-one years. I may say that those interested in this matter were exceedingly urgent that the lease which should be granted should be the same as that which is granted to pastoral tenants on the west side of our border—namely, forty-two years—but it has been thought desirable to retain in this Bill the term of twenty-one years. The rent to begin with is set forth in the 5th schedule, and is determined according to the particular division out of the seven in which the property is situated, the rent varying in proportion to the capabilities of the country as estimated by the Land Court at the present time. It is further provided that at the end of every seven years the rent shall be re-appraised, and that has this advantage to the Crown, that if from any cause, which may or may not be foreseen—if from the opening of railways, or an increase in the price of stock—the land becomes more valuable, the Land Court will not be limited, as they are under the Act of 1884, to charging not more than 50 per cent. in addition to the previous rent, but they will be competent, as they are under the Act of 1897, to charge whatever additional rent they may deem fair and reasonable.

Mr. LEAHY: Which means a seven years' lease.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It means a twenty one years' tenure, but on the condition that the rent paid is the rent which the Land Court deems to be the value of the land, or, I presume, which the Supreme Court deems to be the value, if an appeal is carried that far.

Mr. LEAHY: There is no appeal under this Bill to the Supreme Court, nor under the Act of 1897, except on a question of law.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is another part of the Bill which some hon. members may probably consider most important, and that is clause 10, which deals with resumptions.

Mr. JACKSON: A very important clause.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That probably will be the most contentious clause in the Bill. It is provided here that resumptions may be made for railway purposes, and that if a railway is constructed, or approved by Parliament for construction, the Government may at any time during the currency of the lease resume any lands within twenty-five miles on each side of the line of railway, without any compensation for such resumption except for improvements. Now, as I have pointed out, if the construction of a railway enhances the value of land held under this Bill, the Crown will secure the advantage of that increased value,

because the Land Court, in re-appraising the rent, is not limited to an increase of 50 per cent. on the previous rent, but can assess the tenant at whatever additional value has been given to the holding by the construction of the railway; and the Crown will also have this further advantage, that it will secure a considerable area of country which may be utilised by small selectors. Then, again, in the matter of reserves, subsection 2 of clause 10 provides that from any holding there may be resumed for this purpose an area of 2,500 acres.

Mr. KERR: That is too small.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is all a matter of detail. Of course it is necessary in the west and in other portions of the colony, as population increases, to resume areas of land, and conditions may obtain in this particular country by-and-by, which will render resumptions necessary, and this provision is inserted to provide the means of securing those resumptions. Whether the area is sufficiently large or not, it is for the House to consider, and I merely draw attention to the provision now to show that the fact that reserves of some sort or another are very likely to be required is a necessity which has been foreseen. Again, with regard to roads it is provided in subsection 3, that any land required for roads may be resumed from a holding without any compensation, except for improvements. The precise amount of land which should be available for resumption is a matter which the House will be able to deal with, and will undoubtedly deal with. The main object of the Bill is really to provide, if possible, for the occupation of country which seems to threaten to go out of occupation altogether. It is felt that the pastoral tenants of that part of the country have deserved well of the State, and as it appears that they are paying a great deal more rent for their land than their neighbours on the other side of the border are paying, as the country is being forfeited, and as the matter was brought before the House last year and only failed to go through probably from pressure of business, it is felt by the Government that it is a proper thing to bring this Bill forward again; and it is hoped that it will receive fair consideration from the House. I believe, in fact I know, that some hon. members on the other side of the House take a considerable interest in the tenants whose cause, as well as the cause of the State, I am now advocating. The hon. member for Gregory represents that country, and I have had several interviews with him, and also with other members of the Labour party, and I sincerely hope hon. members will come to the consideration of this Bill without any reference to the persons who have brought it in, and will look upon it as a measure which has a distinct bearing on the welfare of the country at large. I may express my regret that I was not able to get the smaller maps published to-day in sufficient time to attach them to the Bills with which hon. members have been furnished. I hope the matter will get fair consideration. I may say that the provisions with respect to rents and so on have not in the least been fixed by myself. They have been fixed practically by the Land Board, and the opinions of the board upon this point are the opinions I have expressed. The hon. member for Gregory will be able to tell you something from personal knowledge of that portion of the colony; for myself, I can not, nor do I presume could my colleague the Home Secretary, who introduced the Bill before. I have, however, got the opinions of Mr. Hume and Mr. Woodbine, who have drawn up their report, and whose report I am now practically attempting to carry into effect. I have had an opportunity

also of seeing Mr. Harrison, who has just returned from that part of the country, and who entirely confirms all that has been said of the serious position of affairs there from drought and also with regard to the difficulties which those tenants of the Crown occupying that country have to contend with in the way of drought and distance from their own market—about 1,000 miles. It is pointed out that they may get odd showers there, and the rainfall is stated at 12 inches annually, but in a portion of the country they have had only 2½ inches of rain in two years. The rivers may come down through these blocks once in every two or three years, and they may occasionally get a little rain, but I am given to understand that in the last two or three years it has really been very seldom, and that even if they do get a little rain to enable them to get some of their stock fat they are really quite unable to get them to market unless somebody 500 miles away on the road to market has also had rain. They may get their stock into good condition, and even then it frequently happens that the road to market is so dry that they are unable to convert their stock into money. I am quite sure those who know the district best will be of the opinion that the pastoral tenants in that Western country have had an extremely hard fight of it; they are useful to society at large, and are fairly entitled to whatever reasonable consideration this House can give them by way of legislation or otherwise. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. DAWSON: I move that the debate be now adjourned.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I would like to say, in answer to the expressed wish of the leader of the Opposition, if it is the desire of hon. members that the debate should be adjourned, I shall not interpose any objection, though I should have liked to have had it go on, because it is rather important to those interested. But as the maps I promised hon. members have not been furnished I feel that the request of hon. gentlemen is one that ought to be concurred in.

Mr. COWLEY: I would ask the hon. gentleman if he will see that these maps are circulated to hon. members before the debate is resumed?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is what I propose doing.

Mr. DAWSON: That was the understanding.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes; that was the understanding.

Question put and passed; and the resumption of the debate made an order for to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES AND SHOPS.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G.

Foxton, *Carnarvon*) moved that [4.30 p.m.] £1,870 be granted for the Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops. There was a net increase in this vote of £466—an increase of £482 on certain items, and a decrease of £16 for contingencies. The increase of £482 was made up of an increase of £30 to the Chief Inspector, Mr. McLay, which was the most he could get under the Public Service Act. It would be merely keeping faith with him to have given him a larger increase, because when he was first appointed it was agreed that he should receive a larger increase, but the statutory increase was £30. There were other small increases: four receiving increases of £10 and one £12. Provision was also made for an additional inspector at £150, and for the appointment of an inspector of land boilers at £250, making a total increase of £482. With regard to the decrease of £16 in the contingencies, it was not thought necessary to ask for more than was asked for in the present vote.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*) did not think there would be any objection to any of the proposed increases for the officers of this department, and he was very glad to see that an inspector of land boilers was to be appointed, because both the reports of the Chief Inspector showed the unsatisfactory manner in which the inspection of land boilers had been conducted. He thought the appointment of another inspector was absolutely necessary, considering that at the present time the number of persons who were employed in factories was about 15,000, and the number of employees in factories and shops who came under the Act was nearly 22,000. His opinion had been for a long time—and it had been the opinion of others—that there were not nearly enough inspectors under the Act, even in the metropolitan districts. There were only six districts in which the Act was in force—Brisbane, Ipswich, Townsville, Rockhampton, Maryborough, and Bundaberg. He thought, also, that the work of the factories inspector should be carried out not only during the hours the factory hands were at work, but during the hours that they worked after which the Civil servants had completed their work. Those were the hours in which unscrupulous people could evade the provisions of the Act, especially with regard to working overtime. Those were the hours that should be carefully watched—after 5 and 6 in the evening; and considering that the Act affected over 10,000 persons in Brisbane, they had not had a sufficient number of inspectors to see that the Act was worked as he and many others desired it should be worked. He did not reflect for a moment on the present staff in the department. They had a good staff who were desirous of doing their best as far as was possible. But he had come to the conclusion that there was a great want of firmness and determination in the department, and anyone who read through the two reports of the Chief Inspector could only come to that conclusion. Employers had been coaxed and appealed to in every way to induce them to work under the provisions of the Act—to carry out the law. In fact, he came to the conclusion that the Government and the Minister in charge of the department were not in sympathy with the proper working of the Act.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are making a great mistake.

Mr. McDONNELL: He was not making any mistake. If the hon. gentleman was in sympathy with the Act, what had been revealed in the reports should never have taken place; and, at all events, he should take some action to compel employers to observe the law, which he (Mr. McDonnell) would show had not been done before he sat down. Undoubtedly a large number of people were interested in this Act; it applied to over 21,000 persons, including those who were employed in shops and factories, and as it was calculated that on the average two persons were dependent on every one of these people, indirectly there were at least 60,000 people in the colony of Queensland who were interested in the working of the Act at the present time. The report of the inspector showed that there had been cases of open defiance of the Act, and he could not understand how the Minister who was entrusted with the responsibility of the working of this department had not taken action to compel these people to observe the provisions of the Act, particularly as it affected a great many females and youths. He was anxious to know from the hon. gentleman at the head of the department whether he proposed to amend the Act as he had promised, and when he asked the hon. gentleman that question he replied, "If time permits." He contended that there was no question which deserved more consideration at

the hands of the House than this under discussion. For two years the inspector had recommended that the Act should be amended, and yet the hon. member said he would bring down a Bill to amend the Act if time permitted. Time had been found to bring down the Railway Works Bill, which had been discussed for two days, and the Pastoral Leases Bill, and the University Bill, which, in his opinion, were not half so important as a Bill to amend the Factories Act.

The HOME SECRETARY: But we have got this Act.

Mr. McDONNELL: That was so; but the reports proved that an amendment of the Factories Act would be of much more benefit to the community than either of the Bills he had mentioned. He admitted that the University Bill would be of considerable benefit to a certain class. The last two reports of the Chief Inspector pointed out the absolute necessity that existed for an amendment of the Act in certain respects, and at this late stage of the session the chances are ninety-nine to one against an amending Bill being brought down. If every hon. member of the Chamber were of the same mind as himself on the matter, there would be very little business got through until that amending Bill was introduced. It would be necessary for him to refer to the report in some detail, because that was the best opportunity they would have to criticise the administration of the Act, and to throw light upon the present state of things in their factories. In his report for 1897, the Chief Inspector made the following recommendations, amongst others:—

That the working of overtime by youths under sixteen years and females on consecutive days should be limited, and an extension allowed at the discretion of the Minister.

That overtime worked by youths and females should be defined as (a) all time worked outside the limits of time set down by the occupier as the working day, or (b) that a limit per day should be fixed by statute.

That youths and females should not be allowed to work any overtime without a permit from the Minister, and that a limit should be set to the duration and number of such permits in each year.

That females should be precluded from working on the night shifts.

That an extra rate of pay be allowed for overtime worked by youths under sixteen years of age and females, and that tea money be allowed if working after a certain hour in the evening.

That statutory authority should be given to the rule stopping the practice of females and youths taking home materials to be prepared at home, after having worked a full day in the factory, except under the Minister's authority; and that all persons taking home such work be entered as outside workers and full details given as in the case of ordinary outside workers.

That the employment of youths and females should be prohibited on Sundays, except on the authority of the Minister.

That a limit should be fixed for the working hours of employees in some of the classes of shops embraced within the schedule of the Act.

That a certificate of fitness should be provided by all persons under sixteen years of age engaged in all dangerous trades, or where any machine driven by hand is used.

That a limit should be fixed on the number of consecutive days upon which overtime may be worked, and that no overtime should be worked upon the day on which eleven and a-half hours may be worked.

That extra pay and tea money should be given for overtime, as recommended in the case of factories; and

That a minimum wage of 2s. 6d. per week should be fixed for female labour.

Another recommendation submitted by the Chief Inspector, and supported by the district inspectors, was that the provisions of the Act should be extended to places outside the districts that were then proclaimed under it. Yet not one of the recommendations submitted twelve months

ago had been carried out by the Minister. It was quite within the power of the Governor in Council—which meant the Minister—to extend the provisions of the Act as recommended, yet nothing of the kind had been done. On the 17th of last June he waited on the Minister and requested that he would extend the provisions of the Act to the different places recommended by the Chief Inspector in his report for 1897, and also reminded him that at the end of the previous session he had brought the matter before the House, when the hon. gentleman promised to favourably consider it. The Home Secretary said he would refer the matter to the Chief Inspector for his report. What the Chief Inspector's report was he had no means of knowing, but he assumed that he could not logically oppose his own recommendation, which was that the provisions of the Act should be extended in the first place to the Millaquin Sugar Refinery, the Lake's Creek Meat Works, the Ross River Meat Works, and similar establishments immediately outside the districts where the Act was at present in operation. Nothing of the kind had been done. In the present report the inspector at Rockhampton reported that boys under thirteen years of age, who could not under the provisions of the Act be employed at Rockhampton, readily found employment at the Lake's Creek Meat Works. In other words, a number of boys were employed at Lake's Creek Meat Works, working very long hours and receiving very little wages; and, according to information supplied to him, the sanitary and other arrangements there were in a deplorable and discreditable state. The provisions of the Act certainly needed to be extended to meat works and sugar refineries where so many persons were employed; and also to shearers' huts, which no doubt hon. members representing pastoral districts would refer to. He had, as he said, come to the conclusion, and he thought with sufficient reason, that the Government, and particularly the hon. gentleman administering the Act, had very little sympathy with its provisions. Let them compare the action of the Home Secretary with that of the Chief Secretary of Victoria. Mr. Peacock went into all the hovels and places where sweating was carried on, in disguise, saw the facts for himself, and was able to give them at first hand to the Victorian Parliament. Mr. Peacock, in doing that, had shown a most humane feeling—a feeling which the hon. gentleman who was administering the Queensland Act appeared to be altogether devoid of. If the hon. gentleman had that spirit of humanity in him the present condition of things would not exist, seeing that he had the power in his hands to alter it.

The HOME SECRETARY: To whom are you referring?

Mr. McDONNELL: He was referring to the Home Secretary, and comparing his action with that of the Chief Secretary of Victoria, who went round the sweating dens to find out for himself the actual condition of affairs. He went round in disguise and saw the condition of things in Melbourne and other parts of Victoria, and was able to come to Parliament and give the facts.

The HOME SECRETARY: Was that not before the Act was passed?

Mr. McDONNELL: Before the Amended Act was passed. They had a better Act in force before than this colony had at the present time, but the present Act in force in Victoria was considered to be the most liberal and advanced Factories Act in the world. Now the hon. gentleman had a great responsibility upon him considering the existing state of things.

The HOME SECRETARY: What state of things?

Mr. McDONNELL: The state of things under which men were allowed to openly defy the Act without being brought to justice.

The HOME SECRETARY: Where?

Mr. McDONNELL: He would be able to show it by the inspector's report. The Act provided in the first place that a certain amount of overtime should be allowed.

The HOME SECRETARY: Remember that that was last year.

Mr. McDONNELL: He remembered that it took place during the hon. gentleman's occupancy of the office of Home Secretary.

The HOME SECRETARY: No, only for a very short time.

Mr. McDONNELL: The report was dated 18th July, 1899.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes; but it only refers to last year.

Mr. McDONNELL: It was supposed to be a report up to the latter end of 1898.

The HOME SECRETARY: Quite so.

Mr. McDONNELL: The hon. gentleman was Home Secretary at that date.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, but I only had been for a very short time.

Mr. McDONNELL: The hon. gentleman had been at the head of the Home Secretary's Office since October, 1898. They must remember that under the Act overtime was allowed for fifty-two days a year, three hours a day. That was practically one day a week, and overtime was a very big question indeed. It was an important question for these persons employed in factories, and it had been shown in the inspector's report that for the great bulk of the overtime worked the employees received no pay for it. Miss Smith, the female inspector, stated—

The overtime was most excessive in laundries, where, among the regular employees, over seventy in number, the average amount of overtime was 130 hours for each female, one-fourth of the whole number had worked over 200 hours overtime each, and one woman had worked 400 hours. In one of the laundries some of the women worked on Sunday on three occasions during the early part of the year. In one biscuit factory a large amount of overtime was worked, five of the regular hands working an average of 179 hours overtime each in less than six months.

Now, that was a clear case, and there were several others that he would mention before sitting down where, although proprietors of laundries were allowed to work their employees 156 hours, they worked them two and a-half times that amount. In another place an employer worked his employees fifty hours more than he was allowed, and in a biscuit factory five of the regular hands worked twenty-six hours overtime in six months more than they were allowed by the Act to work during the whole year. In the jam factories, he noticed by the report of the inspector that no allowance was made for overtime, so that in the places where the wages were very low the girls were obliged to work overtime to the fullest extent, and received not one penny compensation for it. The inspector gave the factories in which overtime was paid for, and showed that in the jam factories none was paid. Speaking of the boot factories, she said—

In the boot factories the amount of overtime was considerable, especially in two of the largest, where over 100 females worked on an average ninety hours overtime each. One of these firms had a large number of females working overtime on three and sometimes four nights a week, only allowing them ten or fifteen minutes for tea-time, and working them three and a-half hours each night, many of the girls being under eighteen years of age.

There was a notable evasion of the Factories Act. She went on to say—

After I had visited the factory, and pointed out the breaches that were being committed, the employer applied for permission to work girls under eighteen years of age at night. This permission, I am glad to say, was not accorded. In the same factory, it was necessary to prohibit several employees from working any overtime after July, they having by that time exceeded the overtime allowed for one year.

Now listen to this—

In the dressmaking trade fully half of the 800 employees have worked overtime during the year. Few of these girls are paid for overtime, and in some cases the girls have to provide their own tea when they work late, and also to pay their own fare home, unless they prefer to walk at a late hour and when tired from a long day's work.

That was another case of an open violation of the Act—

In the earlier part of the year much vigilance was needed to ensure conformity with the provisions of section 38, which section was not clearly understood by employers, as evinced by the fact that thirty-eight factory occupiers employed over 200 girls under eighteen years of age after 7 p.m. without having obtained permission to do so. Of this number, four occupiers repeated the breach after having been cautioned.

In the first place they kept 200 girls under eighteen years of age after 7 p.m., and having been cautioned, they defied the department and continued to break the Act. Now he would ask where was the fairness of the department in working the Act? There was an Act passed for the express purpose of protecting the weaker class of employees, and yet the selfish and unscrupulous persons who broke the law were not brought to the bar of justice. He thought there was good reason to complain of the inaction of the Home Secretary's Department in not administering the Act. There was good reason to complain that it was not administered either in the letter or the spirit. The report went on to say—

Eighteen employers have, during the year, employed over 150 females for more than three hours' overtime in one day.

Twelve employers have been keeping the girls at work for long periods without any interval for a meal; sometimes from 1.30 or 2 p.m. until 8 or 8.30 p.m. In all, over 170 girls were, to my knowledge, so treated.

Nearly 2,000 females worked overtime during the year, of whom about 80 per cent. were over eighteen years of age.

I much regret that the number of days upon which overtime may be worked in any one week is not limited. I am frequently asked by the girls if I cannot interfere when they are worked several nights in succession. In some instances, overtime has been worked on four nights a week for eight successive weeks.

That was in eight weeks employers were allowed to work their employees 100 hours overtime, and

[5 p.m.] extent they were only allowed 156 hours in twelve months. He admitted that, as the Act was at present, a coach and four could be driven through the overtime clause, and one of the reasons why he said the Home Secretary had shown little sympathy with the Act was that he had not brought down an amending Bill early in the session to alter the present state of things.

I am strongly of the opinion that were it compulsory to pay for all overtime at the rate of time and a-half and also to allow tea-money, the amount of overtime worked would be much smaller than it now is. He thought the same. There was a good number of decent employers in Brisbane and other parts of the colony where the Act was in operation who paid for overtime, and allowed tea-money, and provided good conditions for their employees, but in a great many cases the men who were desirous of doing what was fair had to compete with men who took every possible advantage and screwed the last penny out of their

employees by compelling them to work far more than the law gave permission. Miss Smith also said—

The hours worked by females in restaurants, confectioners, and shops of a similar character, are still about the same as when last reported, ranging from sixty to eighty hours weekly. In many cases the girls work part or all day on Sunday.

Mr. Crowther stated—

It is evident that in those classes of factories where employers claim exemptions, employees specially need the protection of the Act.

The liberality of our exemption clauses increases the difficulty of working the Act impartially.

That was another unfortunate provision. Our Act in respect to overtime was the most liberal in Australia. In Victoria they allow about one-fifth of the amount of overtime allowed here under the Act; yet some of the employers here were not satisfied to work their hands during the first six months to the full limit of the overtime allowed for the twelve months, but they also tried to work the same thing for the second six months in regard to overtime. He agreed that the recommendations of the Chief Inspector and Miss Smith and the other inspectors would go a long way to regulate and largely do away with this overtime, because if employers had to pay for overtime and allow tea-money there would be a very small amount of overtime work done. Mr. Crowther went on to say—

Among those who have taken advantage of the overtime exemptions are master printers, who find it inconvenient at times to comply with the time limitations prescribed by the Act for boys under sixteen years. Some of these do not pay their boys overtime.

It seems illogical that the Act should provide for the employer in this matter without empowering the department to make him compensate his employees for the strain upon their strength and the loss of their leisure. A day of twelve working hours is over much for these young boys.

He thought it was over much too and he was inclined to think from information received that the provisions of the Act could with great advantage be extended to many places where it did not apply at present, and where boys were working in newspaper offices very long hours. This, he understood, applied particularly to some Northern towns. Then Mr. Crowther made the following recommendations:—

That the notice of working hours should show the working hours of males under sixteen and females.

That, except to meet unforeseen press of work, no overtime whatever shall be worked by these employees without a permit, which should be affixed in the factory. The times when overtime may be worked as an emergency, and also the numbers and duration of the permits, to be limited.

That overtime be defined as all work done outside the limits stated on the "Notice of Working Hours."

That overtime be paid for at the rate of time and a-half, and if extending after 6 p.m. that 6d. tea-money be allowed.

That overtime cannot be worked on more than two consecutive days.

That the total worked per week, inclusive of overtime, shall not exceed fifty-six hours, and shall not extend beyond 9.30 p.m., and no work to be done on Sundays.

That except upon the permission of the Minister in writing no overtime shall be worked by these employees after 2 p.m. on Saturday.

No person employed in a factory to be allowed to take work home except upon the written permission of the Minister.

That employees be allowed full pay for the following holidays:—Good Friday, Easter Monday, Queen's Birthday, Christmas and New Year's Day.

He noticed that those recommendations fitted in very largely with the provisions dealing with overtime in New Zealand, Victoria, and he thought New South Wales, because in all those colonies overtime had to be paid for, and he would like before the Estimate went through to get an assurance from the Home Secretary that he intended to bring in an amending Bill this

session—and he hoped early—based on the recommendations of the Chief Inspector. If this was the first year those recommendations were made there would perhaps be some excuse for the hon. gentleman not taking action at present, but they were made last year and emphasised again this year, and he thought the condition of things with regard to overtime was worse in this year's report than before.

The HOME SECRETARY: It won't appear as bad in the report for this year.

Mr. McDONNELL said there was room for great improvement.

The HOME SECRETARY: There was, but you are speaking of the past all the time. It was in the year 1898 that all this occurred.

Mr. McDONNELL: Yes. The report also showed that, so far as reports and returns were concerned, a great many of the factory employers and shopkeepers appeared to look upon the Act as a huge joke.

The HOME SECRETARY: They don't now.

Mr. McDONNELL: Mr. McLay, in his report, said—

The trouble given by many shopkeepers at the beginning of last year in failing to furnish the records of employees required by section 12 of the Act, led to the publication in the *Government Gazette* of an additional regulation, dated 25th October last, requiring all shopkeepers to forward their records to the department within seven days after 1st January in each year.

I regret to say this regulation has not had the effect anticipated, and the trouble in collecting these records has been as great this year as last. The forbearance of the department in not prosecuting occupiers for breaches of this nature has been much imposed upon, and I am reluctantly forced to the conclusion that it will be absolutely necessary—if the law is to be complied with in this respect—to recommend stronger measures in future to obtain the necessary returns.

The hon. gentleman might say that that would not occur again, and the late Home Secretary was very strongly of opinion that the Act should be worked with great caution, and that employers should be allowed a reasonable time to get a thorough knowledge of the provisions of the Act. The Act had now been in force practically for three years, and they still found the same condition of things existing to-day which existed eighteen months ago.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not to-day.

Mr. McDONNELL: Well, according to this report, it existed up to the end of last year, and all they could discuss was the administration up to the end of last year. He did not desire to see any vindictive prosecutions, or to see people dragged before the court for infringements of the provisions of the Act, still, with all due respect to the department, he believed that too much consideration had been shown to the people who had been breaking the Act in a very flagrant manner. Dealing with shops, Mr. Crichton said—

A large number of children from twelve to fourteen years of age are employed in the smaller shops, where, although the work is generally of a light description, the hours are in many cases excessive.

As usually only one child is employed, it is very hard to remedy this, there being few children who will complain, knowing that discharge is the result, so that although the notice of hours shows fifty-two as the usual working hours, an inspector is morally certain that fifty-five to sixty-five would be nearer the mark, with the result that the child is worked excessive hours, and no record of overtime can be obtained. I should like to see the limit of age of child employees raised to the level prescribed for factories, or the compulsory clauses of the Education Act enforced.

He submitted that to the hon. gentleman as one reason why an effort should be made this year to prevent such a state of things by law. Coming to the question of wages, they found that the

wages paid last year—particularly in the case of females—were even worse than in the previous year. The Chief Inspector, on page 10, said—

The number of females earning 10s. per week and under last year in the Brisbane district was 1,427 (of whom 372 were over eighteen years of age), as compared with 1,351 the previous year; and of these 172 received no pay whatever, as against 104 the previous year. The great and increasing number of persons working in these trades without pay (the increase is actually 65 per cent. during the year) must be a heavy handicap to the many poor people who find it hard enough to make ends meet, and I have no doubt the provision of a minimum wage would be most beneficial in preventing workrooms being filled with such assistants.

Miss Smith said—

Out of 800 females employed in registered dress-making establishments, 158 were unpaid apprentices. This does not cover the entire number of apprentices, for a number of smaller establishments do not come under the provisions of the Act, and in such places the girls are frequently employed as learners and receive no pay. In two of the largest workrooms in the city, each employing about the same number of hands, one had no unpaid apprentices during the year, the other had thirty-one.

There was reference to a prosecution, but he had no wish to publish in *Hansard* the name of the firm which was prosecuted. The Chief Inspector said that he was satisfied with the result of the prosecution, but, in his opinion, it was by no means satisfactory, as the object of the prosecution was to teach other people that they could not follow in the footsteps of the firm which was prosecuted with impunity.

The HOME SECRETARY: I think it has had that effect.

Mr. McDONNELL: The hon. gentleman must have more information on the point than he had, and he was glad to be informed that the prosecution had had that effect. He next came to one of the most important questions in connection with the Act—the question of outside workers. That had given trouble in every country in the world where they had a Factories Act, because there was greater scope for sweating amongst outside workers than amongst those who were employed in factories. He regretted that the table which was included in Appendix D in last year's report had not been included in the last report, as that table gave them information as to the actual wages paid to outside workers; but on page 10 of the report the Chief Inspector said—

The registration (similarly to other occupiers of factories) of employers of outside workers as defined in section 15 of the Act has satisfied expectations, and I believe there is really very little material issued for this purpose (except, perhaps, to factory hands) without our knowledge.

He was not inclined to agree with the Chief Inspector there, because he had reason to believe that material reached places that even the inspectors were not aware of. Prices even lower than were given in the report were paid. He admitted at once that it was very difficult in many cases to detect this. It needed constant attention and travelling about to trace this work which was given to outside workers. It could be shown from the report that many of the persons who took this outside work were prepared to take every possible opportunity and take all the advantages they could of the people they employed. Then the report went on—

The register shows 100 firms as employers of outside workers, as against seventy-eight the previous year; and within the knowledge of the department there were 523 persons engaged in their own homes assisted by 121 persons, as against 417 assisted by about ninety the previous year. This appears to indicate a great increase in this undesirable form of employment; the increase is, however, compared to that of employees in factories, as 24 per cent. is to 27 per cent. in outside employees.

It is rather a habit with some persons to unqualifiedly condemn this class of work utterly; but while there

are undoubtedly many very objectionable features about it, it must be admitted that it affords many poor persons an opportunity of earning some money who would find it impossible on account of other calls upon their time, to attend at a factory. The chief evil lies in the materials passing through more than one agent before reaching the person who actually does the work, so that, although the first person to issue the material perhaps pays a sufficient price to yield a fair wage if paid direct to the operator, before reaching the latter it is considerably pared down.

This, of course, was the crux of the whole matter and showed that in any amending Act there should be such a provision as would enable an employer to be made responsible for the wages that were paid for work that was sent out.

Storekeepers will buy in the cheapest market, and among merchants competing for their business the successful man is the one who can sell cheapest. Under the influence of this pressure every expense of production is cut down to a minimum; and while presumably all have to pay approximately similar prices for the raw materials, there unfortunately still remains the helpless outworker as the most compressible item of cost.

Different methods have been adopted in different communities to relieve these helpless people of this pressure, and secure for them a reasonable return for their labour, but whether any of these have completely succeeded in their aims I am unable to say; certainly any efforts of the kind here would have to be made with great caution, and only after the most conclusive investigation of the results in other communities.

He was very much surprised at this paragraph emanating from the officer who was administering the department, seeing that in the sister colony of Victoria it has been proved possible to successfully grapple with this evil, and that it had been proved, on the authority of the employees and employers, to have been an unqualified success. He regretted very much to find this paragraph in the report of the Chief Inspector, who took a great interest in the working of the Act, and he should be glad to see him sent to Victoria to see the result of the operations of the provisions dealing with sweating in that colony. If he went to the factories in Victoria, the same as the hon. member for Bundaberg and himself did a few years ago, and heard from the lips of the occupiers of those factories their opinions of the working of the Act, he would be able to come back and recommend the adoption of similar legislation here. It was interesting to refer to the facts stated in the report of Miss Smith, the lady inspector, which showed that the only possible way of dealing with this evil was to have similar legislation to that which had been in existence in Victoria for the past three years, and which, on the evidence of the people who were interested, had been an unqualified success. Miss Smith said in her report—

At the close of the year there were over 500 persons in Brisbane taking out work to be done in their own homes, and almost 25 per cent. of these employed an assistant—

That meant that, so far as ventilation, sanitation, and things of that kind were concerned, the Act was of no effect, and that the only thing the inspector could do was to find out what these people were taking the work for. The State had no other jurisdiction or control over them. Of course when there were more than one or two persons employed at such places they at once became factories—

bringing the total number of outside workers to considerably over 600—mostly women—the majority of whom are engaged in the manufacture of slop-clothing—shirts and trousers chiefly.

Speaking generally, I find little difference in the prices paid at the close of last year and those paid during the previous year, except in the case of two employers who have recently commenced taking work from warehouses, etc., and giving it out again. One is a manufacturer of men's clothing, and the other of women's and children's clothing and underclothing. They employ about fifty women between them, and pay prices below the average.

That meant that they lived on the labour of the people they employed. Miss Smith also said—

In connection with shirt-making, a large proportion of the work given from warehouses is given to one person, employing nearly 100 workers, half of whom are women working in their own homes, and receiving the following prices:—For shirts, single-stitched seams, 1s. 8d. and 1s. 9d. per dozen; mantle seams, 2s. per dozen; double-stitched seams, 3s. per dozen; and double-stitched seams and gusseted, 3s. 6d. per dozen. The shirts are cut out before being given to the worker, and the buttons are sewn on and the button-holes made after the garments are returned. The worker has to supply the cotton.

For very similar work, another firm are paying 1s. 9d. per dozen for boys' shirts, single-stitched; 2s. 3d. per dozen for men's single-stitched; 3s. 9d. and 4s. per dozen for men's double-stitched seams; and 5s. 3d. per dozen for those double-stitched throughout.

He should like the hon. gentleman at the head of the department to take notice of that paragraph. It would show him how unfair was the existing condition of things, not only to the employees, but also to the employers. Here were two employers taking the same class of work, and one was taking it for 1s. to 2s. per dozen less than the other. This showed it was possible to get a fair wage if there was an Act to compel the unfair employer to pay the same wage as the fair employer was prepared to

[5.30 p.m.] pay. Those two paragraphs showed the difference in the rates paid by those two employers.

The HOME SECRETARY: It only makes a difference of 4s. a week.

Mr. McDONNELL: It made a greater difference than that, for if the hon. gentlemen looked further down he would see that a woman who had been working for the first employer earned only from 10s. to 11s. weekly, whereas now she earned from 14s. to 15s.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is only a difference of 4s.

Mr. McDONNELL: Further on in the report it was stated how many shirts a woman could make in a day, showing that the less was about 1s. a day. Miss Smith continued—

Most of the shirts made by outside workers are of the cheap kind, and the women frequently complain that owing to the *economical* cutting out, they have so much joining of pieces to do that their work is materially increased, but the price for making the shirts is not.

A worker making one dozen of these shirts in a day—say ten or eleven hours—would earn about 11s. weekly, or, for a rather better class of work, 14s. or 15s., out of which the cotton, rent of machine, and fares for bringing the work to and from the factory have to be paid; if the worker walks, as many of them do, then so much time is lost.

For slop-tailoring the prices vary very considerably. One firm pays 9s. 6d. per dozen for making mole trousers, another pays 8s. 6d. per dozen.

If the machining only is done inside the factory 4s. per dozen is paid for the finishing, *i.e.*, felling on the band lining, the crutch piece, and the piece to strengthen the pocket, sewing on the buttons and buckle, making the button-holes and felling or herring-boning the bottoms of the trousers.

It takes a woman fully an hour to machine a pair of moles, and much longer to finish them.

The thread costs about 1s. per dozen pair, and has to be paid for by the worker.

For making tweed and serge trousers one firm pays 11s. 6d., 10s. 6d., and 8s. per dozen, according to the quality and size of the work; another 9s. 6d., 9s., and 8s. per dozen, while the middleman referred to in the beginning of this section pays from 5s. 6d. down to 5s. 6d., 5s. 3d., and 5s. per dozen.

That showed that sweating was in full force in the city, and that in order to prevent it it was absolutely necessary that legislation should be passed. Again—

For finishing tweed or serge trousers of the cheaper class, 3s. 9d., 3s. 6d., and 3s. per dozen is paid. This part of the work is frequently taken by poor people to eke out the slender earnings of other members of the family. No machine is needed, and part of the work

can very easily be done by young children. Two or three dozen pairs weekly is a very common amount finished by many of these workers.

That was another reason for closer scrutiny of outside workers, who had to work at such low rates in order to eke out a miserable existence with the aid of their children. He would only read one other paragraph on the question of prices, and it was one which it would be hard to beat in any of the colonies of Australia. Considering that Queensland was such a prosperous place at the present time, it was a serious reflection on Parliament and on the Government that they did not introduce legislation which would prevent the state of things therein described. The paragraph he referred to was as follows:—

For women's and children's clothing and under-clothing the following are some of the prices paid:—For making ladies' waking skirts, lined, 1s. 6d. and 1s. 3d. each; for making ladies' capes, lined, interlined, and trimmed, 1s. 9d. each; unlined and of plainer make, 2d., 3d., and 6d. each; wrappers, 12s., 9s., 8s., and down to 6s. per dozen; nightdresses, 9s., 7s. 6d., 6s., 5s., and 4s. per dozen; chemises, 6s., 4s., 3s., 2s. 6d., and 2s. 3d. per dozen; knickerbockers, 6s., 4s., 2s. 6d., and 2s. per dozen.

* * * * *

A woman taking out shirts at 2s. 3d. per dozen re-issued them to other women at 1s. 10d. per dozen, her part of the work consisting of having the work brought to and from the factory.

A tailor receiving work from a large shop in the city sublet coats to another tailor—also a home worker—paying him 3s. 6d. per coat. The last worker told me that he could not make one coat a day, even with the assistance of his wife.

Now, he would drop the report, as he thought he had read sufficient to show that the present Act very badly needed amending, and that it might be administered with greater firmness. Overtime had been worked by women and children, though the Act provided that they should not be worked overtime, and during the three years the Act had been in force there had been only one solitary miserable prosecution—that of a jam-maker—under its provisions. The Factories Act affected 21,000 people in Queensland, and yet they were asked to believe that employers were working in such perfect unison with the spirit and letter of the law that there was no need to bring any of them before the bench. He refused to believe that, for there was no Factories Act in the world under which there was such a remarkable record. He knew it was not a fact. If the past and present Minister who had the working of the Act in their hands had carried out its spirit, there were many employers who should have stood at the bar of justice to answer for the way in which they had broken the Act and inflicted unfair conditions on their employees whom the Act had been passed to protect. He did not want to drag the discussion off the actual working of the Act, but there were many other things he wished to say, and which if time permitted he would say later on in connection with such an amendment of the Act as he and others on that side had advocated. The question of sweating and the minimum wage, and the minimum wage of 2s. 6d. for apprentices, which undoubtedly had been introduced in Victoria in the way of an experiment, had, in the form of the amendment which he suggested, been such a success in Victoria that they now proposed in the Victorian Parliament to re-enact those provisions in the form of a permanent measure on their statute-book.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member, he thought, occupied something like an hour and a-half in a general dissertation upon the whole question of factories and shops. One would imagine from the length of time the hon. member had occupied in riding his hobby-horse—and the hon. member concluded by saying he

was going to have another canter later on—that they had six months in which to do business instead of one short one.

Mr. LESINA: We are paid to be here.

The HOME SECRETARY: Very well, but hon. members must understand that if the time of the House was to be occupied by long speeches such as the hon. member had delivered—largely consisting of quotations from a document which was already before the public, and which he presumed had been read by everyone interested in it—

Mr. McDONNELL: I hope so.

The HOME SECRETARY: If everyone occupied their time at the same length upon the subject with which he was immediately concerned, they would be sitting next year until it would be time to commence the new session.

Mr. McDONNELL: The time is well spent. We have to do something to try to force you to do what it is your duty to do.

The HOME SECRETARY: If the hon. member wanted to have another canter he would sit down.

Mr. McDONNELL: I am not going to allow you to impute every sort of motive to me.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member made himself too ridiculous altogether when he got on his hobby-horse—

Mr. McDONNELL: Thank you; I am prepared to take all your insolence.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member had been very insulting to him. He had accused him of inhumanity and all sorts of crimes and misdemeanours, cruelty, and a disinclination to administer the Act with any degree of fairness.

Mr. McDONNELL: Quite so.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member because he said he was ridiculous chose to lose his temper.

Mr. McDONNELL: You are always imputing motives to everyone.

The HOME SECRETARY: He was imputing no motives whatever. The hon. member could not understand the English language, or he would know that. What he was saying was that when the hon. member started to ride his hobby-horse he rode it to death. He had been doing that all the afternoon, and three-fourths of his speech had consisted of quotations from a document which had already appeared in most of the daily Press throughout the colony.

Mr. MAXWELL: Are you riding his hobby-horse now?

Mr. McDONNELL: I could not have quoted from a better document.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Hon. members will please keep order.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member had utterly condemned the document from which he had quoted. He was not going to follow the hon. member through the whole of his long disquisition. He had too much respect for the House and for its time to do so; but there were one or two points upon which the hon. member would probably be surprised to hear that he agreed with the hon. member, and was inclined to disagree with the conclusions arrived at by the Chief Inspector, especially in regard to the question of sweating. The hon. gentleman had told the Committee that the present Government, and especially himself, had no sympathy with the Act. He told the hon. member he was mistaken, and the hon. member had the effrontery to tell him that he was saying what was not true.

Mr. McDONNELL: No.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, the hon. member did, and in a very marked way. The hon. member could very seldom apparently speak of himself without saying things which he

thought the hon. member would not be prepared to say outside. The hon. member would perhaps be surprised to hear that his views with respect to future legislation on the subject very largely coincided with his own. The hon. member complained of the answer he had given him the other day, that if time permitted he would be prepared to introduce an amending Bill. That was a perfectly correct answer, and the hon. member surely understood that hon. members desired that the House should rise before Christmas. If Parliament made up its mind to sit on into next year he would be prepared to introduce that Bill. He had it by his side.

Mr. McDONNELL: Why don't you introduce it?

Mr. GLASSEY: I do not want to sit on into next year. I want to rise before Christmas.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was the general consensus of opinion, but it would be quite impossible for them to do so if every hon. member who had a hobby-horse to ride rode it at the length the hon. member for Fortitude Valley had ridden his that afternoon. He would be prepared to introduce the amending Bill to-morrow if he thought there was the slightest possibility of passing it that session, but he was perfectly certain there was not. There were certain measures it was absolutely necessary they should get through this session, measures in which the interests of the whole colony were involved. One of them, in which the hon. member presumably took a great deal of interest, was on the stocks, and had passed its second reading. It was impossible for them to do all they desired to do in the short time at their disposal, and while there might be something in what the hon. member had said if it was a question of the original introduction of a Factories and Shops Bill, it should be remembered that they already had something to go upon under which he ventured to say very good work was being done, though he admitted there was room for improvement. He had an amending Bill by his side, but there was no use in occupying time in introducing it when they knew it could not be passed that session.

Mr. McDONNELL: Surely it is as important as other Bills introduced?

The HOME SECRETARY: No. The subject was just as important probably, but the other Bills affected the colony as a whole, and were connected with matters upon which the legislation proposed was new or introduced new principles, while that was a question of introducing a Bill amending an Act which they had already, and under which they were doing good work.

Mr. McDONNELL: It was called for by the inspector's report.

The HOME SECRETARY: He would be very glad to introduce an amending measure when the opportunity arose which would enable him to carry it through, but there was no possibility of carrying it through this session. The hon. member had given hon. members an idea of the discussion that would take place on such legislation by his speech that afternoon. He had promised that there would be no discussion on the proposed legislation, but he had promised more than he would be able to perform, and there would probably be a good deal of discussion on the more drastic measure the Government proposed to introduce. So much for the non-introduction of the amending Bill. Speaking generally, the hon. member had not done justice either to himself or the Government. With regard to this matter the hon. member said that he had shown no sympathy with the Act, and that he had not shown any firmness in its administration. He had told the hon. member that he was mistaken, but he would not believe it. The hon. member had been quoting from a report on a state of things which terminated on

the 31st December, 1898—ten months ago, and he (Mr. Foxton) had not been in office much more than two months at that time. He was not one of those who could plunge into a new subject and grasp all its details at a moment's notice, because one required to feel his way before putting his foot down in connection with such important legislation as this. One of his first instructions to the Chief Inspector—who would bear him out—was that the law was to be carried out as strictly as possible, and he believed that it had been carried out with much more strictness than previously. He did not say this by way of casting any reflection on the hon. gentleman who preceded him in the administration of the Act, but he thought that the period of caution inaugurated by Sir Horace Tozer at the initiation of this legislation had expired—that it was time that employers had acquired a knowledge of what was required of them by the Act. He was not prepared to express any opinion as to whether too much leniency had been shown in the first instance, for it was all done with the very best intention. It was hoped that by a lenient administration of the Act that employers would cheerfully and gradually realise amongst themselves the obligations thrown upon them by the legislation which had been passed. The inspectors, and the Chief Inspector especially, took immense pains in going round to the different employers, and even filled in forms for them which they should have filled in themselves without any assistance. While this was done with the best intentions, he thought it had rather a tendency to spoil the employers. However, when the time came for a more strict interpretation and a more strict administration of the law, almost all the employers concerned rose to the occasion and fell in with the views of the Chief Inspector, without giving anything like the amount of trouble that had previously been experienced. He hoped that when the report of the Chief Inspector for next year came to be read, that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley would admit that he had done him an injustice by imputing to him an absolute disregard of the administration of the Act, and by saying that he had not administered the provisions of the Act with fairness and firmness.

Mr. McDONNELL: I shall be only too glad to admit it if it is so. There is one matter you might refer to—that is the extension of the provisions of the Act.

The HOME SECRETARY: There were difficulties with regard to that—difficulties as to the selection of the particular localities which should be brought under the provisions of the Act. The matter had been under consideration for some weeks.

Mr. GROOM: Is Toowoomba included?

The HOME SECRETARY: Toowoomba probably would be one.

Mr. GROOM: It is very badly wanted there. The people are asking for it.

The HOME SECRETARY: He knew it was; but he desired to arrive at some basis on which the extensions could be accomplished. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley had very naturally referred to establishments which were in isolated localities, but it was a matter for consideration as to how far the working of the Act could be extended to these establishments, which were not in the immediate vicinity of an inspector. There were several difficulties in the way, but he assured hon. members that he was endeavouring to arrive at some satisfactory basis on which these extensions could be made in the various districts. He admitted that this might have been done earlier, but hon. members must understand that he had to take into consideration

a number of other very important questions from time to time, and every matter had to take its turn.

Mr. McDONNELL: I brought this matter up twelve months ago.

The HOME SECRETARY: Quite so; but he had numerous matters to deal with, one of which had compelled him to take a long trip, and other matters had intervened. He assured hon. members that this matter was now having the fullest consideration, and he had even approached his colleagues with regard to bringing it to a final and definite issue. He would be very glad to see an amending Bill introduced, but until that was the case they would have to be content with the law as it was at present. He was certain that excellent work had been done. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley complained that a certain prosecution he had referred to had not been a lesson to employers, but he thought that that prosecution had had excellent results, and also that employers were much more ready to comply with the provisions of the Act than they were last year. There was a marked improvement in that respect. If the hon. member next year reviewed the work of this year, as he had reviewed the work of the present year, he would be prepared to admit that such was the case.

Mr. FOGARTY (*Drayton and Toowoomba*)
[7 p.m.] said he should be very pleased to see the provisions of the Shops and Factories Act extended to Toowoomba, which was a very important centre, with a population of some 16,000. From personal knowledge he could say that youths of both sexes were compelled to work in places totally unsuitable both as to space and sanitary conditions. Those who employed them were making a considerable amount per annum, and gave, in some cases, nothing in return. There was a case, well known to the medical profession in Toowoomba, where a fine young woman entered a certain factory, and in four months, owing to the conditions under which she laboured, she became a physical wreck, and the chances were that she would never regain the strength she formerly possessed. It was well known that girls engaged in dressmaking work received no remuneration whatever for the first nine months, and the Home Secretary might very well make some regulation whereby the employer should be compelled to pay those girls a small wage during that period. But some employers were so unprincipled and so devoid of the milk of human kindness that at the expiration of the nine months those girls' services were dispensed with and a fresh batch were taken on. That was not a proper state of affairs, and he did not think the Home Secretary would countenance such a thing if there was sufficient machinery at his disposal to remedy it. If not, he trusted it would be provided by Parliament immediately. It was possible there might be some expense entailed by the extension of the provisions of the Act to other centres; but even so, the money would be very well spent. Humane employers would have nothing to fear from the operation of the Act; it was not they whom he had in his mind. He referred more especially to the boot factories—not to individual shoemakers or to retail shops—of which there were two or three, or perhaps more, in Toowoomba employing a large number of hands. He had seen them leaving work night after night, and having known many of them for a long time, he could say that they had not the same healthy appearance they had previous to entering into those factories. He had omitted to say that in the dressmaking establishments, after nine months' service, the girls who showed themselves experts received the princely wage of 2s. 6d. per week. That was in "sunny Queensland." If they were not

experts they did not get even that; their services were dispensed with. It often happened that from some unforeseen circumstance, perhaps the death of the breadwinner, a widow was compelled to send her children to some employment for the purpose of keeping the wolf from the door; and it was the duty of Parliament to protect such people, and such, he believed, was the intention of Parliament when the Act was passed. Now that he had drawn attention to the fact—and not one of his statements was over-coloured—he hoped the Home Secretary would extend the provisions of the Act to Toowoomba. It would be a benefit to the employees concerned and to the people of the district, who would know that employers were compelled by law, whether so disposed or not, to consider their employees as human beings. If the fact of his having drawn attention to these facts in the Chamber was not sufficient to get the Act extended to Toowoomba, he trusted the hon. gentleman would inform him, either publicly or privately, what steps should be taken to get the Act so extended, and he might rely upon it that the application would be made.

Mr. KERR hoped that in the promised amending Bill provision would be made to bring shearing sheds and shearers' huts under the Act. He had drawn attention to this matter on various occasions. When the Governor and Lady Lamington visited Bardsdale Station, Lady Lamington appeared to take a great interest in the accommodation provided for the men. She not only inspected the place where the cooking was carried on, but expressed a strong desire to see the sleeping accommodation, and he did not think that what she saw could have impressed her very favourably. He would like to read an extract from the *Western Champion*, giving an account of one shed—

A short distance from the woolshed and from each other are the shearers' and labourers' huts; these huts, as aforesaid, being iron shells. They are without floors or verandas, but are each provided with roomy, open fireplaces, and are divided into what in Scotland, I believe, would be called a butt and a ben—that is to say, into two apartments, one given over to sleeping accommodation, the other being used as a feeding place—the terms dining or messing being too æsthetic in this connection. The sleeping space is fitted up much after the manner of old-time immigrant ships—that is to say, there are tiers of bunks down the sides, tiers of bunks down the centre, and spare space nowhere. Outside each hut, and distant about ten yards from its door, is a triangular sheep pen, and alongside a gallows of the time-honoured fork and lever type, for dressing carcases upon, the offal from which is buried on the spot, or left unburied at the discretion of whosoever may feel disposed to take action in the matter. Midway between the two huts is a latrine, but description of this detail must be either untruthful or unprintable; suffice it to say that it is grotesquely unsuited to the purpose for which it was constructed.

That was written by the special correspondent of the *Western Champion*, and published in a paper which had a large circulation in the district, and he might say that if it was not a truthful record the manager or owners would have very promptly contradicted it. He had previously drawn attention in the House to the existing conditions at Oakwood station, and it was only last year that some of the men left the shed in consequence of the bad accommodation provided. One young fellow he knew contracted typhoid fever there and died, and there had been many cases of typhoid at that station. In introducing his amended Factories Bill he thought the Home Secretary would do a remarkably good work, which would give general satisfaction to the workers, and to those owners who provided decent accommodation, if he would make the Act applicable to shearing sheds. There were a number of sheds to which it was a perfect pleasure to go, so good was the provision made for the

men, but on the other hand there were stations where the accommodation provided was indescribably bad. He trusted the matter would receive the attention of the Home Secretary.

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*) quite endorsed everything that had been said by the hon. member for Barcoo. He might point out that legislation in the direction asked for had been introduced in New Zealand, and had been promised in New South Wales. When they took into consideration the number of deaths caused through the insanitary condition of shearing sheds throughout the colony, it was time the owners should be compelled to make better provision for their employees.

Mr. KERR: The existing state of things is unfair to those who do provide good accommodation.

Mr. McDONALD: He knew numbers of stations that provided splendid accommodation for the men, but at others the employees were exposed to disease and sickness. There was one little matter in the inspector's report to which he wished to draw attention, because he did not think it had been touched upon by previous speakers. Dealing with Asiatic factories they were told by the inspector that the number of those factories in the metropolis was fourteen, one at Ipswich, one at Rockhampton, and one at Townsville. The Brisbane one employed twenty-six hands, and it appeared that those factories had very little inspection. In fact, the report stated they had had none in 1897, but this year it was seen that it was necessary to take some notice of them, as it might be useful for purposes of future reference. The inspector said—

I believe a good deal of mis-conception exists as to the number of Asiatics engaged in trades here by confounding shop with factory occupiers; moreover, it is a cheap and always sure way to catch applause and popularity by referring in inflated language to this form of competition.

He thought the inspector had gone out of his way in using such language as that in a report; and it was not the first time that complaint had been made of similar conduct on the part of officers at the head of departments. In his opinion too much could not be said concerning those Asiatics; and he thought that the inspector should have given full information instead of merely referring to the subject, as if it was not worthy of notice. The total number of factories in occupation by Asiatics was seventeen, and the number of persons employed was forty-nine. He would like to know what was the nature of the various factories those people were engaged in.

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*), referring to the inspection of land boilers, he did not think £250 a year would be sufficient to obtain the services of a suitable man, because he contended that the very best talent should be secured for such important and responsible work where the lives of so many persons were at stake. He knew that boilers had been sold and resold till they were really not fit to use at all, and he might point out that some time ago—he thought it was in the early part of this year—there was in Cairns a steam merry-go-round which was a standing menace to the safety of the young people who went on it and anyone else who went near it, on account of the condition of the boiler. He thought power should be given to the local authorities in cases of that kind to protect the lives of innocent people by preventing the use of defective boilers. He was pleased to see that there was a sum put down for an inspector of boilers, and he hoped the principle would be extended until by-and-by there would be absolutely no danger to the lives of people as far as the use of defective boilers was concerned.

Mr. GLASSEY (*Bundaberg*) did not think that a first-class boiler inspector could be

obtained for less than £400 a year; but a first-class man ought to be obtained for that important work. A really good boilermaker would get 12s. or 13s. a day, and it was not likely that the services of a really first-class boiler inspector could be procured for £250 a year. He did not wish to take up the time of the Committee, but he would like to urge on the Home Secretary the necessity of extending the provisions of the Factories Act so as to include the larger sugar mills.

The HOME SECRETARY: The matter was under consideration, and a scheme had already been formulated to extend the provisions of the Act. With regard to amount of salary that would have to be paid to get a competent boiler inspector, he had made inquiries and had satisfied himself that a first-class man could be got for £250 a year.

Mr. GLASSEY: I tell the Home Secretary distinctly that he cannot.

The HOME SECRETARY: He had his doubts about it at first, but he had inquired from authorities very much superior to the hon. member in that particular line, and he was quite satisfied that he could get a first-class man for that amount, and not only one, but he could assure the hon. member that they were prepared to tumble over one another in applying for the position. With reference to the

[7:30 p.m.] suggestion of the hon. members for Cairns and Bundaberg to make the inspection of land boilers general throughout the colony, they would require further legislation, because at present they had no power to do so outside the districts in which the Factories and Shops Act was in operation.

Mr. JACKSON: It was promised in the Governor's Speech.

The HOME SECRETARY: There was a good deal promised in the Governor's Speech that he was sorry to say they would be unable to carry out this session.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Are there any travelling expenses?

The HOME SECRETARY: There would be travelling expenses on the scale laid down in the public service.

Mr. McDONNELL: Will he not have the right to inspect boilers wherever the Act is in operation?

The HOME SECRETARY: Probably he would. He did not know whether the merry-go-round, referred to by the hon. member for Cairns, would be a factory. Of course the inspector would inspect all boilers in places where the Act was in operation, as far as possible.

Mr. TURLEY (*Brisbane South*) was glad to see provision made for an inspector. The great difficulty in the past had been that the certificates that were granted were practically valueless, because in many cases the inspection had been carried out by men who were not able to write out their certificates, and further legislation was necessary. For the information of the hon. member for Cairns, he would like to say that there had been a considerable amount of agitation in that Committee for some years for the inspection of land boilers, and the late Premier had promised to introduce a Bill at the first opportunity, making it imperative that all boilers used on shore should be inspected by competent inspectors. The report also mentioned that all persons in charge of boilers should have some knowledge of them, because it was through their want of knowledge that the boilers got into such a condition as to become a menace to public safety. It was the law in New Zealand and Victoria, and the Act had lately been amended in the Imperial Parliament to provide that only competent persons should be in charge of land boilers. He was inclined to think that

the remuneration offered was very fair if the Government would employ the right people, but the Government usually got an engineer to do that work, whereas what was wanted was a good boilermaker. The best boilermakers in Brisbane were getting about 12s. a day in the shops, and £250 would enable the Government to get the best boilermaker available. A boilermaker was far more competent to detect defects in a boiler than an engineer.

Mr. DUNSFORD (*Charters Towers*) had been requested by the Engine-drivers' Association on Charters Towers to state that they thought there should be a more careful inspection of land boilers, and also that all persons driving boilers should be required to hold certificates of competency. The only efficient inspection of boilers that they had was in connection with mining. He would not have touched upon the question at all but that the Chief Inspector said in his report—

The year's experience of boiler inspection further emphasises the opinions expressed in last year's report as to the inefficiency of the provisions of the Act to insure immunity from accident caused by boiler explosion.

He also pointed out that in Victoria and New Zealand they had not only a more efficient system of inspection, but certificates of competency had to be obtained by those who drove engines. They had been promised legislation on the subject this session, and he hoped that whenever legislation was brought forward it would be of a comprehensive character, and deal with all land boilers in the colony, whilst it would also deal with certificates of competency.

Mr. DIBLEY (*Woolloongabba*) hoped the Home Secretary would accept the suggestion of hon. members on the Opposition side, and see that the inspector was a boilermaker and not an engineer. They did not want experts, but practical men. They wanted a man who was not afraid to take off his shirt and go inside a boiler to inspect it. £5 a week was sufficient, and the Minister could get as many boiler inspectors as he liked at that salary—and all competent men.

Mr. JACKSON (*Kennedy*) was not inclined to agree with those hon. members who thought that the inspector should be a boilermaker and not an engineer. A practical engineer was the man for the position, because he understood not only the inside inspection, but he understood the safety-valve, which was a very important matter. He had had some personal experience, having been inside boilers and assisted to clean them, so that he knew what he was talking about. Those who had read the report of the court of inquiry appointed to investigate the causes of the explosion of the two locomotive boilers, would have noticed that the defects arose through longitudinal grooves in the plates. In the one case the groove was above the waterline, and in the other below it. If those boilers had been inspected often, and probably by more capable men, those grooves might have been noticed, although it would require very careful inspection to notice a fine crack, particularly below the waterline, because where hard water was used a kind of cement or sediment formed on the boiler plates. It was in consequence of this that boilers had to be cleaned out, and men might have to be sent inside to chip off this sediment with hammers and chisels. That was the only way of dealing with it. A boilermaker would be useful as far as the inspection of the plates was concerned; but that was not everything. A man who was a practical engineer, although he might not be competent to make a boiler, was often competent to inspect and repair a boiler. He knew many who were competent to fix up the tubes of a boiler, although they were not competent to make a boiler from the beginning. The Home

Secretary would find out, on investigation, that a practical engineer was the best man for this position, because there was a considerable amount of danger from working boilers that had not been attended to—boilers that had been in charge of inexperienced or careless men—and had not had their valves properly attended to. That was where the practical engineer would have an advantage over the boilermaker.

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*): He had some practical knowledge of the matter, and he certainly said that an ordinary engineer was no more competent to inspect a boiler than he was to inspect a house.

The HOME SECRETARY: We will not get an ordinary one.

Mr. FISHER: If the hon. gentleman got a competent boilermaker, he would find he was worth ten engineers. An engineer did not like that kind of work. There was an engineer in his district—one of the most competent mechanical engineers in it—but he would refuse to inspect boilers, because it was an entirely different trade altogether. If the hon. gentleman got a thoroughly competent engineer, who knew the scientific branches of engineering as well as the mechanical, he would want a boilermaker to go inside the boiler and see how it stood; then he would tell them exactly the strength of it. But he was not going to go inside it to scrape it and look at it. What was really wanted was a first-class mechanical boilermaker, who was quite competent to test safety valves. It was not a big effort for any ordinary man to test a safety valve, and see what strain a boiler was fit to stand. Therefore he submitted that what was wanted was an efficient boilermaker or person who had served his time to that trade.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): Some time ago, while at Charters Towers, he assisted to form an association called the Engine-drivers' Association, which now numbered from 130 to 135 members, and was a very prosperous organisation. He had been requested by that body, when the Estimates came on, especially this particular item, to point out that what was needed in Queensland to-day was a system of boiler inspection, and that persons in charge of boilers should possess certificates of competency. He noticed that this view was borne out by the inspector, Mr. McLay, who said—

There can be no doubt that many boilers in Queensland are subjected to severe and unequal stresses on account of the want of knowledge of the persons in charge, and only the large factor of safety provided by makers saves us from many disastrous accidents, our immunity from which has hitherto been very remarkable. We are probably not yet ripe for legislation of this description, but it seems a possible development which should be kept in view.

The inspector agreed that there was necessity for inspection, and there was also a necessity that persons in charge of boilers all over the colony should possess certificates of competency. At the present time in the various centres, especially the mining fields, uncertificated persons were given charge of valuable machinery, which might at any time be thrown out of gear through their lacking knowledge, possibly with the result of loss of life to an alarming extent. The Chief Inspector pointed out that there were three possible solutions of this difficulty. He said—

1st. The appointment of certain qualified gentlemen in each district, whose certificates only would be accepted by the department, and who would be authorised to charge a certain fee fixed by regulation, according to the size and nature of the boiler.

2nd. The appointment of an officer of this department to perform the inspections, and, if necessary, the amendment of the present Act in such a way as to embody the provisions of other approved Land Boiler Inspection Acts; or

3rd. The passing of an entirely new Act dealing with the subject.

He would suggest an entirely new Act dealing specifically with the subject, making all persons in charge of boilers throughout the colony show that they were competent to take charge of them, and obtain certificates of competency, and providing for the regular inspection of those boilers. The inspector pointed out that possibly a charge might be made for inspection, but that was a mere matter of detail, which probably there might not be very much difference of opinion about. The suggestion of the inspector was a wise one, and the Government might take it up this session if it had time, or, if not, in the coming session. In Victoria there was an Act dealing with this matter, and in various other parts of the world it was part and parcel of the legislation. Queensland was ripe for similar legislation, and he would impress on the Government the necessity of taking the matter into consideration.

Mr. McDONALD: He had asked the Home Secretary about an hour ago for some information about Asiatics, and the hon. gentleman had not replied. What he wanted to know was what class of factories did Asiatics own or control, were there any Europeans employed in those factories, or were they run purely by chows or other aliens?

The HOME SECRETARY: He was prepared to give the hon. member such information as he had; but he should like to preface his remarks by referring to the strictures that the hon. member had passed on the Chief Inspector. Apparently it was his desire to exercise a sort of censorship on the free speech of the inspector. He (Mr. Foxton) was quite prepared to uphold the inspector in what he said so long as he said it fearlessly. But the hon. member, because it did not suit his particular view—

Mr. LESINA: It suits yours.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was the truth as far as he knew, and, therefore, it ought to suit everybody. He was sure the inspector was much better informed than the hon. member for Clermont or the hon. member for Flinders.

Mr. LESINA: He is not. He expresses an opinion.

The HOME SECRETARY: He had called attention to what appeared to be, on the face of the figures he gave, perfectly patent—namely, that a great deal more was made out of the cry about Chinese and other aliens engaged in the furniture business and other industries than the facts warranted. The inspector pointed out that in six of the largest centres in Queensland there was the tremendous number of seventeen establishments where those industries were carried on, and that they employed altogether forty-nine Asiatic aliens.

Mr. LESINA: You are wrong; there are thirty-eight in Brisbane, and thirty-eight in Townsville.

The HOME SECRETARY: Then he was sure the Chief Inspector would be very much obliged to the hon. member if he would inform him where they were. The number of factories in the occupation of Asiatics in the metropolitan area was fourteen, and at Ipswich, Rockhampton, and Townsville one each, and the number of Asiatics they employed was forty-nine. It was very much to be deprecated that hon. members should make an attack on an officer who was doing his duty in calling attention to facts. If hon. members were prepared to say that the data on which his remarks were based were not correct, he would be ready to listen to them, and so, he was sure, would the Chief Inspector. But the inspector, with the information he had, was much more likely to be right than the hon. member for Clermont in his haphazard guess in the matter. What he (Mr.

Foxton) was speaking of was factories, and not shops, and the Chief Inspector also drew that distinction.

Mr. McDONALD: No one disputed the facts given by the Chief Inspector.

The HOME SECRETARY: Oh, yes, the hon. member for Clermont does.

Mr. McDONALD: What he objected to was the Chief Inspector making light of the large number of Asiatics who were carrying on those industries. He made so light of it that he did not think it worth his while to refer to the matter in his last report, and this year he said there was no occasion for alarm at all in connection with the number of Asiatics employed in the industries under discussion. As a matter of fact, the inspector mentioned only four, and not six, places where those Asiatic factories existed. At Charters Towers, Maryborough, and a number of other large towns throughout the colony, the Chinese were making a big bid to get hold of the furniture trade. In pretty well all the towns of any importance in the colony, Chinese were carrying on the cabinet-making industry, and doing hundreds of men in that particular line out of work.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is clearly wrong.

Mr. McDONALD: It was not wrong. The Chief Inspector mentioned only four places.

The HOME SECRETARY: There are no factories in the other places, apparently.

Mr. McDONALD: Then the inspector did not know anything at all about the matter. Did the hon. gentleman mean to tell him that there were not a large number of Chinese cabinet-makers at Charters Towers?

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not under the Factories Act.

Mr. McDONALD: He was not referring to that.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is what I referred to, when I said six towns under the Act.

Mr. McDONALD: He knew that every town of any importance in the colony had its Chinese cabinet-makers, and he believed that in many cases where they did not sell their furniture in the ordinary way, they sent it to the auction mart, where it was purchased by the white dealer, who retailed it to others. There were forty shops in occupation by Chinese in Brisbane, as shown by the inspector, and there might be one or two men employed in many of those shops in the particular industry of cabinet-making. He was still of opinion that the inspector had gone out of his way in making the remarks he had in his report, and hoped the thing would not occur again.

The HOME SECRETARY: I hope it will.

Mr. McDONALD: He could quite understand that with the hon. gentleman's love and affection for the chow and other Asiatics he would be very pleased if the inspector referred to them in that way in his report; but the inspector himself, in saying that the competition of the Chinese in this particular trade was not so great here as to occasion any anxiety at the present moment, showed that there was a doubt in his mind as to whether there would not be cause for anxiety very soon if the Asiatic was not watched very closely. He (Mr. McDonald) was prepared to stop the competition in its infancy by compelling the Asiatic to put a brand on his furniture.

The HOME SECRETARY: There was a certain class of politicians and a certain class of agitators who were always only too ready to impute to hon. members on that side that they had a love for the Chinese, and for Asiatic aliens generally, and the hon. member was no exception in that respect. The hon. member had charged him with having a love for the Chinese, but he defied him to point to any action or

speech of his in the whole course of his life which would justify him in making such a statement. The hon. member also said that there were hordes of Chinese in the colony who were engaged in cabinet-making and other industries, to the detriment of hundreds of Europeans. If hundreds of Europeans were to be put out of employment by the work of fifty

[S p.m.] Asiatics in the six towns which were under the Factories and Shops Act it was a very poor lookout for the Caucasian. The fact was the hon. member did not like the observations of the Chief Inspector in calling attention to the small number of those persons actually engaged in those industries, because it cut the ground from under the feet of the hon. member and those like him who were constantly proclaiming to the world that Queensland was nothing better than "Mongrelia," as it was called. Taking six towns of the colony in which the Act was in operation, two had no such factories, the metropolitan area had fourteen, and Ipswich, Rockhampton, and Townsville had one each. He could quite understand that the hon. member did not like those figures to come out in an official report like that, because they were such an answer to the loud-voiced declaration of hon. members like the hon. member for Flinders, who were never tired of imputing a desire to their opponents to see Chinese in the colony—an imputation which for himself and the other members of the Cabinet he hurled back at the hon. member.

Mr. McDONALD: The hon. member had landed himself in about the same position. He did not question the figures, but if the inspector stated that there were only three aliens in Townsville engaged in the manufacture of furniture, he or those under him made a mistake.

The HOME SECRETARY: I would rather take their word for it than yours.

Mr. McDONALD supposed the hon. gentleman would take the chow's word as he had so much affection for him, but he had seen them working; and anyone going along Flinders street in Townsville must have his eyes closed if he could not see more than three or a dozen chows making furniture there. He held to his statement that a large number of white persons were thrown out of employment through the number of Chinese engaged in the making of furniture in the colony. If the hon. gentleman would keep his temper he would understand better what was stated. Charters Towers did not come under the report at all, and anyone visiting the Chinese quarters there would find more than three or a dozen of them engaged in the trade there. The inspector had gone out of his way to say that the number of Chinese engaged in such industries in the colony gave no cause for alarm, but if there were only those fifty stated to be employed in four places referred to in the report, there was still cause for alarm. He hoped the Home Secretary, in spite of his affection for that class of labour, would see the error of his ways, and would bring in some Bill to compel those people to stamp all goods manufactured by them.

Mr. LESINA: He must also enter his protest against the Chief Inspector of Factories expressing his own political views.

The HOME SECRETARY: They are not political. Mr. LESINA: They were. The Inspector of Factories was not paid to express his opinions about the black labour question, but to compile a complete and accurate report consisting of facts and statistics useful to members of that Committee in forming an opinion about factory legislation. The inspector had gone out of his way to express an opinion that certain persons wished to get cheap applause and popularity by referring in inflated language to that form of competition.

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The HOME SECRETARY: Perfectly true.

Mr. LESINA: If the hon. gentleman were on that side, he would take the same exception to that statement, if he had as a plank in his platform—"Queensland for the white man." He did not think it necessary that the inspector should have expressed any such opinion as that at all in drawing up his report. They knew that the coloured alien competition was a danger—the competition of alien cabinet-makers who had constructed the Dickson Cabinet—and Civil servants should not go out of their way to say that those who pointed to the danger did so in inflated language to get temporary applause. According to the inspector's own statement, there were only four towns in Queensland about which he had any information bearing on the subject.

The HOME SECRETARY: Six; and he is confined to certain areas in which the Act is in force.

Mr. LESINA: There were hundreds of towns in Queensland in which the competition was going on, and the inspector could not express an opinion upon something he had no information upon.

The HOME SECRETARY: He has not done so.

Mr. LESINA: Yes, with a wave of his hand he stated that the competition was not dangerous. They knew there were thousands of Chinese engaged in manufacturing furniture and all sorts of goods for public consumption, and there was no reason to think their assumption was not based upon facts when they assumed that in the course of time the furniture industry would drift into the hands of the Chinese, and the white people now engaged in it would have to go in for some other industry or else work for the wages the Chinese were willing to work for. The hon. member said that was of no account, but it vitally affected a very large section of the community. In course of time, Queensland furniture would drift into the hands of these coloured aliens and our white cabinet-makers, their wives and families would have to find some other means of living, or accept the wages these Chinese were willing to offer them. The matter should be impressed on the attention of the public and of the Minister, and he would like to see a more extended application of the Act so that all this alien work could be done away with. It was well known that Japanese boat-builders had a monopoly of the boatbuilding at Thursday Island, and that they were employing numbers of hands. Coloured aliens were also employed at Cairns, Mackay, Charters Towers, and they all came there to make money, and then clear out of the country with it. They came into direct competition with our white brethren, and if the Government did not think it their business to deal with the matter it was the business of the Opposition to see that the white people got a decent show against these coloured aliens who had been brought wholesale into the country with the distinct sanction of the Government. The report of the Chief Inspector was admittedly incomplete, yet it showed that there were fourteen factories in Brisbane carried on by Asiatic aliens, employing twenty-six persons, of whom eleven were white women—eleven of the womanhood of Queensland working for these coloured Asiatic aliens, who appeared to appeal so strongly to the sympathy and instincts of hon. members opposite. He would like to know if the Home Secretary or the Premier would like to have his sisters or daughters working for a Chinaman or any other Asiatic alien. No, it was someone else's sisters or daughters who had to work for them.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member is rather digressing from the vote now under consideration.

Mr. LESINA said the report showed that there were eleven white women working for Asiatic aliens in Brisbane, but hon. members opposite evidently did not feel the pinch of the shoe. They remained silent. He said that it was only a fair thing that this grievous sin should be impressed on the attention of the public. Hon. members on the other side might laugh and sneer and might think it was a matter for them to turn their heads and chuckle over, but it was no laughing matter, and that policy was played out. This matter ought to be settled, as it was a most serious problem. It should be made known to the people of Queensland and of Australia that white women—the white humanity of Queensland—men, women, and children—had to work for these Asiatic aliens. There was another thing, which, as the inspector had not recommended, he would do so: that the work turned out by Chinamen should be broadly marked, so that persons who wished to buy furniture could see the mark, showing that the furniture was built by Chinese. This plan has been adopted in one or two of the other colonies; and he asked, why should it not be adopted here? From the report he found that there were six white women employed by aliens at Ipswich, and three at Rockhampton. These facts could be looked at from many points of view; and no matter what line of politics a man held, he must admit that this was a very dangerous state of things—that the white women of the colony were obliged to work for coloured aliens. And why was it? he asked. It was, as the inspector pointed out, that women were working in their own homes, and were making shirts for 1s. 8d. and 1s. 9d. per dozen, and yet a chow was paid 6d. for washing a shirt. Where was the patriotism of hon. members on the other side? It was a remarkable fact that white women were compelled to go into some Chinese factory in order to earn a little more than they could by making shirts for white Christian philanthropic gentlemen. The report further said that “one firm pays 9s. 6d. per dozen for making mole trousers; another pays 8s. 6d. per dozen” —

For making tweed and serge trousers one firm pays 11s. 6d., 10s. 6d., and 8s. per dozen, according to the quality and size of the work; another 9s. 6d., 9s., and 8s. per dozen, while the middleman referred to in the beginning of this section pays from 8s. 6d. down to 5s. 6d., 5s. 3d., and 5s. per dozen.

These were the prices offered to white women by this God-fearing Government under the operation of their Act. And yet they voted huge sums to bring people from the old country, where they had not to work for such prices. He entered his protest against all that kind of thing. The “Song of the Shirt” should be sung in that House to-night; it was just as applicable now as when it was written by Tom Hood for *London Punch*. Then the report of the inspector also said—

A large number of children from twelve to fourteen years of age are employed in the smaller shops, where, although the work is generally of a light description, the hours are in many cases excessive.

It was outrageous. Hundreds of poor women were compelled to make shirts at 1s. 8d. and 1s. 9d. a dozen, and if they wished to make a little more they worked for Chinese. These facts should be impressed on hon. members and on the public. The inspector had expressed his opinion on matters in a way that he should not have done. There was one other part of the report which he wished to refer to. The inspector said—

The experience of the past two years has shown the literal enforcement of this clause to be extremely harsh in some instances, so much so that I have been com-

strained to recommend several extreme cases of poverty as fit cases in which to relax the provisions of the section.

That fact should also be impressed on the public of the colony. Children under fourteen—under the school age—were obliged to go to work, because of the poverty of their parents. There were men and women in Brisbane who were compelled to send their children to work in factories and shops in order to assist them and their families in getting bread and butter. It showed that there were many families in Brisbane so hard-up that the inspector had to connive at an evasion of some of the clauses of the Act, because, if he did not, those families would be brought face to face with want and absolute poverty. That was a serious circumstance in a young country like this, which had its lying touts abroad showing what happy homes Queensland offered for willing workers. Those were facts which should be known not only to the people of Queensland, but they should be circulated in the southern colonies and in the old land where the aforesaid lying immigration touts were trying to induce people to leave their homes and risk the chances of getting employment here. With regard to the application of the provisions of the Act to shearing sheds, he might mention that he got a petition some time ago from a pastoral district, signed by hundreds of shearers, shed-hands, and permanent station-hands, pointing out the wretched insanitary conditions under which they were compelled to work in building up an industry which provided 56 per cent. of the colony's exports. In New Zealand they had a very stringent Act. All the old sheds were pulled down, and although the employers were not compelled to build palatial mansions for the shearers, they were compelled to put up good buildings with a proper system of drainage, and proper sanitary and other surroundings about the sheds. That was an amendment of the Act which they might very well adopt here. If it was not done it would show that the Government had no desire to ameliorate the bad conditions under which those engaged in the pastoral industry, especially in the far-away districts, had to carry out their work.

Mr. GIVENS said he was surprised that the Home Secretary had not given some explanation of the charge brought against the Inspector of Factories of having converted a departmental report into a political document. That officer was paid by the people of Queensland to administer an Act which took no cognisance of political opinions, yet in the portion of the report dealing with the Asiatic question the inspector indulged in a cheap sneer at those who objected to the presence of such a large number of Asiatics in their midst. It was not the duty of a public officer to indulge in cheap sneers against any section of the community. It was his duty to look after his business, and on the face of the report he had not looked after his business. The Chief Inspector said—

The number of factories in occupation by Asiatics was not taken cognisance of in the report of the year 1897.

Why was it not? If it was his duty to take cognisance of them, and he had not done so, the report was a lying report, and not worth the paper it was written on. Then the inspector went on to say there had not been, “to his knowledge,” any marked increase in these during the past year. What were they paying the inspector for if he did not know, by absolute certainty, what increase or decrease there had been? Could it be called a truthful report? In his opinion the inspector had been guilty of a gross dereliction of duty. They were not paying him to go in for guesswork, but for the

collection of absolutely correct statistics. They found that in the districts of Brisbane, Ipswich, Rockhampton, and Townsville there were seventeen factories conducted by Asiatics, according to the report; but it was the inspector's duty to inform them whether the number was less or greater than it was the year before. And, as pointed out by the hon. member for Clermont, there were no less than twenty European females working in Chinese factories. That was a very serious and damaging statement to be made—that young women of their own race, country, and creed should be subjected to the degrading influence which, beyond all doubt, was exercised over them by the Chinese who employed them. He happened to represent an electorate in which there were a large number of Chinese, and he had never yet known a woman who had any contact with Chinese who did not become a most degraded and demoralised character. The report only took cognisance of those four districts. They did not know the number of Asiatic factories in such towns as Mackay, Charters Towers, Cairns, Cooktown, and other places; but it was well known that the evil was greater in the Northern towns than in the South. Yet the inspector tried to minimise the evil, and blinding the people to the danger that existed from that source was a serious offence on his part. The danger existed, notwithstanding that it did not come within his cognisance. In his own electorate the crowded and filthy Chinese slums were a constant menace to the welfare of the town; and with regard to the number of Chinese factories they wanted a report that was worthy of credence, not guesswork, but accurate statistics that would give hon. members a solid basis to found their arguments upon. He objected

[8.30 p.m.] treating such an important question, and he most decidedly objected to any gentleman occupying such a position casting cheap sneers in his reports against a large and important and patriotic section of the community.

The HOME SECRETARY could not allow the speech of the hon. member to go without protest against the personal attack he had made on an officer doing a public duty. It was a most unmanly thing to do.

Mr. GIVENS: Are we to let it go without criticism?

The HOME SECRETARY: No, but the hon. member had indulged in references to that particular officer and his relatives which were unworthy of any member of the House.

Mr. GIVENS: I did not indulge in references to his relatives.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member did. He allowed his tongue to run away with him. He had indulged in a sort of criticism which ought to be deprecated by every member. The hon. member had wasted a great deal of breath over a very little matter. He blamed that officer for not having given in regard to the previous year the information he had given regarding last year. The hon. member evidently spoke in absolute ignorance of the fact that 1897 was the first year during which the Act was in operation, otherwise he would not talk about past years in the plural. As a matter of fact, it took some time to organise such a department, and during 1897 there was so much else to do with regard to ordinary European factories that it was scarcely possible to obtain full data with regard to the small number of factories run by Asiatics. Surely the hon. member would see that in his heat he had been very unjust to the inspector! As for the expression of opinion given by the officer being twisted into a political deliverance, he denied it absolutely. He might, with as much justification, take the whole of that to him-

self as criticism, as well as hon. members opposite might. Did the hon. members for Cairns and Clermont suppose that they were the only members holding strong opinions with regard to Asiatic aliens?

Mr. LESINA: This party does—distinctively so.

The HOME SECRETARY: He was talking of those who talked most loudly on the subject. He would say that it was somewhat of a pleasing shock to him to find that there were so few Asiatic aliens engaged in factories. If he had been asked he would have said that in the six towns mentioned there were between 200 or 300 of them employed in factories, and in that respect the remarks of the inspector were just as much a reflection on himself and the erroneous ideas he held as they could be on hon. members opposite. But he did not fly into a passion about it.

Mr. ANNEAR: You restricted the Chinese, at all events.

The HOME SECRETARY: Well, he assisted to do so. He did not yield one iota to hon. members opposite in his dislike of the presence of Chinese, and he might just as well take that statement of the inspector to himself; but what touched hon. members was that they endeavoured to show constantly that members on his side favoured the presence of Chinese; that the fact of their being on that side was one way of accounting for the presence of Chinese in the colony, and they did not like it to be shown that the evil was less grave than they thought. There was not a word in the report about there being no danger from the presence of Asiatic aliens, but it simply pointed out that the figures indicated that the evil was less than most people anticipated.

Mr. McDONNELL: It is bad enough.

The HOME SECRETARY: He agreed with the hon. member, but he did not raise a political cry about it. It was because hon. members opposite found that the facts and figures did not support their contentions that they were a little bit hurt about it.

Mr. STEWART (*Rockhampton North*): It appeared to him that the discussion was resolving itself into a duel between the hon. gentleman in charge of the Estimate and one or two members on that side.

Mr. ANNEAR: Their employment is gone.

Mr. STEWART: He wanted to say something on the question, and with regard to the Inspector of Factories he would say that he was afraid he was going to find himself in trouble with both sides of the House if he did not take care. If the inspector took his cue from the debate that evening, the next report with which they would be furnished would be an entirely colourless document. It would not be of a bit of value. There would be no opinions or suggestions or hints gathered from his experience in it. Though he might not agree with the sentiments expressed by the inspector with regard to aliens, yet he thought a gentleman in his position ought to be allowed a little latitude, and when he turned over the pages of the report he found that he expressed himself very freely in other directions.

The HOME SECRETARY: All honour to him.

Mr. STEWART: All honour to him certainly. So far as he was concerned he did not want to muzzle any public official. He was quite prepared to take his utterances and strike an average. In fairness to the official he would quote one or two of his utterances. If hon. members would look at page 8 of the report they would find nine recommendations. One was that overtime be paid for at the rate of time and a-half. What earthly business had the factory inspector to try and fix the rate of overtime? Might not hon. gentlemen opposite just as reasonably grumble at that as hon. members

on his side grumble at the light way in which he spoke of the Asiatic aliens. Then he recommended that, if overtime was worked after 6 p.m., 6d. tea money be allowed. What business was it of his whether the employer allowed tea money or not? He also recommended "That, except upon the permission of the Minister in writing, no overtime should be worked by employees after 2 p.m. on Saturday," and "that no person employed in a factory be allowed to take work home except upon written permission of the Minister. That employees be allowed full pay for the following holidays:—Good Friday, Easter Monday, Queen's Birthday, Christmas and New Year's day."

Mr. LESINA: He points out that they slyly take the work when they take it home.

Mr. STEWART: What he wanted to point out was that if they muzzled the inspector, probably next year the report would be entirely colourless, and therefore valueless. Perhaps that official was indiscreet in the allusion he made to aliens, but taking the report from beginning to end it was a most valuable document, and they ought to think twice before they passed adverse judgment on an official who spoke his mind fearlessly and straight. He agreed in a great measure with a great many of the remarks made by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. McDonnell, on the manner in which the Act was administered, but instead of the inspector getting so much criticism he ought to get more assistance from the Government. The Act was by no means perfect, and the hon. gentleman might as well have brought in an amending Bill during the present session. They had dealt with Bills of much less importance this session, and this was a measure that affected the health and well-being of the young people and old people of the colony, and there was nothing that was of so much importance to a community as the physical and consequently the mental condition of its population, and whatever could be done to improve their physical and mental condition ought to take precedence of everything else. With regard to the Rockhampton report he found that it was to the effect that the sanitary conditions there were disgraceful, and he regretted to be compelled to admit that that was the honest downright truth. The last time he was up there he went into a shop in one of the principal streets, and was taken to the back where there was a water-tank from which a number of people took their drinking water. That tank was situated in the middle of a number of closets, and there was not earth used in a single one of them. That was a condition of affairs which was simply barbarous, and he did not think they would find such a filthy state of affairs even in the much-maligned Transvaal. He regretted that the inspector did not seem to have any power to remedy it, but he trusted that the amending Bill would give the power. He found that in Rockhampton, as well as in Brisbane, the inspector had a great deal of trouble in regard to filling up and sending in the returns; and he thought it would be a good thing to make an example of one or two of the offenders—haul them up before the court and have them fined if they did not choose to comply with the law. Why should the administration of this particular Act be so lax? The hon. member for Fortitude Valley also referred to the fact that in his two reports Mr. Hammond, the inspector at Rockhampton, recommended that the Lake's Creek works should be brought under the operation of the Act. He recommended that also. He represented that district, and he could assure the Committee that what the inspector said was absolutely true. A considerable number of the boys working there were under age. Whenever they could not get work in Rockhampton, they

went to Lake's Creek, and were put on at once, and he was sorry to say the parents were compelled by the low wages they earned to permit their children to go to the works to earn something. With regard to accidents, Mr. Hammond said—

The number of accidents in factories reported up to 31st December was seven.

These accidents, with the exception of one, were of a trivial nature, and all owing to pure accident—carelessness on the part of the employees.

He did not tell what any of the accidents were, and he thought it was desirable for the Committee to know whether the inspector had investigated all the cases, because his statement was a decided reflection on the employees. There was just one other matter, and that was the period covered by the report. He did not see why it could not be brought down at least to the end of the financial year—the 30th June.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not done in the case of any report.

Mr. GIVENS: It was pleasing to find that the Inspector of Factories had such champions as the Home Secretary and the hon. member for Rockhampton North, but while they were championing that official he thought they should not indulge in misrepresentations. The hon. member for Rockhampton North said that members on this side objected to the inspector expressing an opinion or making a recommendation. They did not do anything of the kind. He hoped the inspector would always make recommendations as might seem fit and proper in view of the facts of which he was cognizant.

The HOME SECRETARY: As long as they coincide with yours.

Mr. GIVENS: He also gave him the fullest liberty to express opinions, but he wished to deprive him of the right to indulge in cheap sneers against any section of the community, or against any political party.

The HOME SECRETARY: You want to muzzle him.

Mr. GIVENS had no wish to muzzle him. He would read the paragraph in full to show what he took exception to—

I believe a good deal of misconception exists as to the number of Asiatics engaged in trade here by confounding shop with factory occupiers.

That was a perfectly permissible thing for the inspector to point out, and to make recommendations about, but he went on to indulge in a cheap sneer—

Moreover, it is a cheap and always sure way to catch applause and popularity by referring in inflated language to this form of competition.

The HOME SECRETARY: Perfectly correct.

Mr. GIVENS: It might be perfectly correct, but the inspector was not paid for criticising politicians.

The HOME SECRETARY: He is not necessarily talking about politicians.

Mr. GIVENS: It was not part of his duty to sneer at any section of the community, if it was absolutely true, which he denied, because it was not always the most pleasant thing in the world to differ with others. It was a gross piece of misrepresentation for the Home Secretary to say that he had abused the inspector and his family. He credited the inspector with being possessed of sufficient feeling not to like to see his children or his female relatives employed in Chinese factories. The report disclosed the fact that the female relatives of some people were employed in those factories; and the poorest man in the country was deserving of the same consideration being paid to his feelings and those of his female relatives as the highest citizen in the land. The hon. gentleman pointed out that the factory inspector could not give them a comparison

between the figures in connection with factories owned by Asiatics for the years 1897 and 1898, because the system was only inaugurated in 1897; and the inspector had no perfect knowledge of how many people were engaged in those factories during 1897.

Mr. McDONNELL: He was not correct there, though.

Mr. GIVENS: The fact was that in the report for last year the factory inspector was able to give them a comparative statement of the number of employees in European factories for the years 1897 and 1898, and he should therefore have been able to make a similar comparison with regard to the Asiatic factories. It was gross misrepresentation for the Home Secretary to say that that could not be done, because if it could be done in the one case, it could be done in the other. A mistake might be forgiven, but when it was attempted to gloss over a mistake by misrepresentation it was unpardonable.

The HOME SECRETARY: Then, if that is parliamentary, you are misrepresenting me absolutely.

Mr. GIVENS defied the hon. gentleman to show where he had misrepresented him. It would be a wise thing if they adopted the system followed in the British Isles and Victoria, and insisted on all articles manufactured by Asiatics bearing a brand to that effect. Those brands would be discredited throughout the country, and no storekeeper would dare to stock his shop with them. In that way they would free white artisans from the great evil of Asiatic competition. Anybody who had been through the towns of North Queensland must be impressed with the importance of compelling the keepers of shops and factories there to live under sanitary conditions, because not only were they unfairly competing with white people on account of their avoiding charges for rent and other things through their herding together, but they were a danger to health, and he hoped that the inspector would turn his attention to that great and crying evil instead of sneering at any section of the community.

The HOME SECRETARY: Possibly the hon. member had not paid much attention, but he had fully explained that owing to 1897 being the first year in which the Act was in force, there was very much to be done in the way of inaugurating the administration of the Act, and so much time was occupied in getting the very information which the hon. member pointed to as existing in the report for comparative purposes that the information obtainable with regard to Chinese factories was not of a reliable character, and therefore no report was made.

Mr. McDONNELL: You are not quite correct there.

The HOME SECRETARY: He was stating what was told him, because he had [9 p.m.] nothing to do with the administration of the Act in 1897 and for ten months of 1898. He had been told that the information was not of a sufficiently reliable character—that the inspector had not been able to devote sufficient time to collecting it, that it could not be given in the report for 1897.

Mr. GIVENS: We have information of all the other factories.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes. The officers of the department devoted their time to them.

Mr. GIVENS: The Chinese factories were not worth going to.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was not so. In inaugurating the Act there was a great deal of hard work to be done. Hon. members opposite had pointed out that there was a great deal of unnecessarily hard work because employers would not assist, and he (Mr. Foxton) knew that that was so. He could understand that the first

report was defective in many respects; but that was certainly no reason for blaming the Chief Secretary, who at the time was Home Secretary.

Mr. McDONNELL: He had interjected that the Home Secretary's information was not quite correct. The hon. gentleman stated twice that members had no data showing the number of Asiatics in the colony previous to this report.

The HOME SECRETARY: I said it was not in the 1897 report.

Mr. McDONNELL: The Home Secretary was quite correct in that; but there was an important difference here, because, on the 17th of August, 1898, he, in the course of the debate on the Address in Reply, made some statements with regard to Asiatic factories in the colony. The present Premier—who was then Home Secretary—said his information was not quite correct, and corrected or rather contradicted it. He read the following figures, supplied by the Factories Department—

ASIATIC.			
District.	Factories.	Employees.	
Brisbane	10	40	
Ipswich	Nil	Nil	
Maryborough	Nil	Nil	
Bundaberg	Nil	Nil	
Rockhampton	Nil	Nil	
Townsville	2	10	

At that date there were twelve Asiatic factories, employing fifty Asiatics, in the colony. He might say that Mr. McLay, in supplying the figures to the then Home Secretary, made the following memorandum with regard to the figures he (Mr. McDonnell) had previously read—

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

On this matter the only thing he regretted was that the Chief Inspector had seen fit to make the few remarks he did in the report. He did not doubt his figures for a moment. They showed that the Asiatic factories in the colony had in the last twelve months increased by five; but the number of Asiatics employed had decreased by one. There were seventeen factories, and forty-nine employees. The figures were—

District.	Registered Factories.	Total Employed.
Metropolitan	14	37
Ipswich	1	6
Rockhampton	1	3
Townsville	1	3

The difficulty about these Chinese factories was this: It was well known that a number of shops which appeared to be only fruit or drink shops to the ordinary passer-by were partitioned off at the back, and behind the Chinese carried on the business of cabinet-makers. It should be remembered that under the Act a Chinaman's premises, if he employed only one or two hands, came under the definition of a factory. On this matter there was good reason to complain. There was a good argument, too, in favour of such places as Cairns, Charters Towers, Port Douglas, Burseldine, and Longreach, where there are more Chinese carrying on the trade of cabinet-makers, etc., than in places where the Act was in operation, being brought within the operation of the Act. There was this unfortunate thing about this—that in a great many places furniture made by Chinese was sold as European. He believed that there were not more than three respectable firms in Brisbane that did not sell it for European-made furniture. He believed that the great bulk of the furniture, or a large amount of it, sold by Brisbane shopkeepers was of Chinese manufacture. The Home Secretary had taunted him with riding his hobby-horse. He accepted those remarks because any person who took a particular interest in any special reform

was charged with riding his hobby-horse by those who were opposed to that reform. He was undoubtedly particularly interested in that question, and he was very glad that the hon. gentleman had expressed his sympathy with the Act, and had promised that he would see that it was administered in a firmer manner in future than it had been for some time past, and also that he recognised that an amendment of the Act was necessary. Remembering the remarks which the hon. gentleman had made on a similar subject—the Shops Early Closing Act—he had come to the conclusion, from reading the report of the inspector, that the hon. gentleman was very much to blame. On the 19th of August, 1897, the hon. gentleman, speaking on the Early Closing Bill, said—

He believed in the protection of young people, but in regard to those who were old enough to protect themselves, this was a free country, and every individual should be at liberty to make any contracts he liked in reference to his labour.

And further on the hon. gentleman said—

In fact the whole Bill was a piece of grandmotherly legislation, to which he generally objected.

Remembering the hon. gentleman's remarks on that measure, he thought he might hold exactly the same views on the sister measure of the Factories Act, but he hoped he should find that he was mistaken.

The HOME SECRETARY wished to correct a remark of the hon. member who had just spoken. The figures the hon. member gave as relating to 1897 referred to 1898. The hon. member said that he (Mr. Foxton) had stated that there was no intimation about the number of factories carried on by Asiatics in 1897, and then quoted certain figures from *Hansard* of last year to show that information had been supplied for 1897. These figures, however, referred to 1898, and were the latest figures which could be obtained up to August, 1898.

Question put and passed.

POLICE.

On the motion of the HOME SECRETARY, the consideration of the Estimates for the Police Department were further postponed till after the consideration of the Auditor-General's Estimates.

SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. Murray, *Normanby*) moved that the sum of £12,091 be granted for the Department of Public Works, professional branch, etc. As he had promised last year, a report had been submitted by the department showing the work done during the past year, and that report would furnish hon. members with information which could not be put into their hands in any other way. During the past twelve months some charges were made by a subordinate officer against the Under Secretary, which led to an inquiry being held by the Public Service Board. The report of that inquiry was in the hands of hon. members, and from it they would be able to come to a conclusion regarding the whole merits of the case. There were a few increases in the vote, which he thought hon. members would agree were fully warranted. The first was an increase of £50 in the salary of the Under Secretary, Mr. Robertson, who had been in the service of the Government for thirty-three years.

Mr. McDONNELL: I don't care if he has been forty; he doesn't merit it.

The SECRETARY FOR WORKS: When the Estimates were before the Committee last year a great number of hon. members drew attention to the fact that Mr. Robertson had had no increase for the past nine or ten years, and it was pointed out that comparing him with

under secretaries he had not been fairly treated. Even with the small proposed increase his salary would still be considerably below what was paid to other under secretaries. The next small increase was in the salary of the accountant, Mr. Bell, who was a diligent and painstaking officer, and he thought hon. members would agree that that increase was deserved. There were also a few small increases to clerks, amounting altogether to £40, an increase to the messenger, and an increase of £10 to the typewriter, all of which were fully warranted. In the professional branch there was a small increase to Mr. Brady, the Government Architect and Engineer for Bridges. Mr. Brady was an efficient officer, and his services as such had been recognised by the colony and in that House on many occasions, and he was very deserving of an increase. There was also an increase of £20 each to the first assistant architect, the second assistant architect, and the senior draftsman. There was an increase in the number of draftsmen from three to seven, so that the vote for those officers was £1,420 instead of £540. That increase was attributable to the additional business the department had to do; a great deal of work was done last year, and there were still many works to be carried out, so that the department would be fully employed, even with the four additional draftsmen. The other increases were of a minor nature. Hon. members would notice that two additional inspectors of works were provided for, due to a rearrangement of the districts over which they exercised supervision. There were now seven instead of five districts, as the districts had been found too large to enable the inspectors to carry out their work efficiently. There were no other increases in the vote worthy of special mention, and it would be found that the vote for postages, travelling, and incidentals was the same as last year.

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*): The hon. gentleman in his short address had said that a large amount of public works had been carried out by that department last year. He wished to draw attention to the fact that last year the very first item passed on the Loan Estimates was a vote of £5,000 for a new courthouse at Gympie, which was very badly wanted, but so far practically nothing had been done in that matter. He wished the Minister to openly explain now why that work had not been gone on with.

Mr. ANNEAR: I know the Government bought a beautiful site for the building.

Mr. FISHER: That was what the Secretary for Works did not know. The hon. member seemed to know more than the Minister. The promise to build the courthouse had been made to his predecessors, and for that reason he did not care to interfere until the end of the financial year. He had then interviewed the Premier and the Secretary for Works on the matter, and he found that nothing had been done, but that negotiations were being carried on for the purchase of a site, for which a reasonable price was asked. The answer which Mr. Ryland and himself received from the Premier was that the building would be gone on with without delay. That was early in July, and now they were near the end of November, and nothing had been done. The result was that the public bodies on Gympie were beginning to move, and talked of sending a deputation to find out the cause of the delay. He was there now to ask the Secretary for Works to state publicly the reason for the delay, that they might know how the matter stood.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS regretted the delay, but it was in a measure caused by the difficulty in procuring a suitable site. At present the department had made an

offer for the purchase of a site, and as soon as they got an answer to that, the work would be proceeded with immediately.

Mr. FISHER was very pleased to hear that. He was of the opinion that there was an Executive minute saying that the work was not to be gone on with. If the hon. gentleman assured him that there was no such Executive minute, he would accept the denial.

The TREASURER: Certainly not.

Mr. ANNEAR (*Maryborough*): He might say he was informed on Gympie that a piece of land had been purchased for the new courthouse. He did not get the information from the Minister. He could only say that if the piece of land was purchased which he understood had been purchased, the Government would save thousands of pounds in the foundations of the building, because the rock was showing on the footpath, and it would cost much less to erect the building there than in a lower part where, he believed, it had been intended to erect it. That was the first vote, and on it he wished to offer a few remarks for the benefit of the Secretary for Works, the officers of his department, and members of the Committee. A building was to be erected for the Lands and Survey Department which, he saw in the newspapers, was to cost something like £100,000. No doubt a building for the Lands and Survey Department was very much required, but he did think there was an objection to go on with that building.

The CHAIRMAN: I remind the hon. member that that is in the next vote.

Mr. McDONALD: We take the general discussion on the first vote.

Mr. ANNEAR: He submitted to the Chairman's opinion, but during the six sessions he had occupied the chair as Chairman of Committees, the general discussion on every department had been taken on the first vote. He would say now all he intended to say, if he was permitted, and he thought the Chairman would save time by following that rule.

The CHAIRMAN: I admit that it is usual to take the discussion with reference to the department on the first vote, but where there is a special vote for "buildings," I think I am right in calling the hon. member's attention to the fact. If it is the wish of the Committee that the discussion on the whole of the Estimate should be taken on the first vote, I am willing to yield; but according to the Standing Orders and the usage of Parliament I am correct in calling the hon. member's attention to this matter.

Mr. ANNEAR: Then he understood he had the consent of the Committee to go on. He wished to bring under notice the principle adopted in New South Wales. They had on their Estimates a vote of £97,000 for the erection of buildings in Phillip and Young streets for Government departments, but before proceeding with the work a board of three leading architects of Sydney was appointed to go through the whole of the plans and specifications. They were to bring up a report to the public works committee, who reported to Parliament before the work was gone on with. In this case £100,000 was to be spent; and while he was not saying one word against the officers of the Works Department, he would point out that the plans of the building had been drawn up by the Colonial Architect and the officers of his department and submitted to the officers of the Lands Department, but no professional men had been called in from outside to report upon them. In one case in New South Wales, where £80,000 or £90,000 was to be spent, the board of expert architects reported that on going through the building they found there was sufficient accommodation for the officers of the depart-

ments for ten years to come, with the result that the extra building proposed was not erected.

He therefore trusted that the [9:30 p.m.] Minister would call in three of the leading architects of the city to go through these plans and specifications before the work was entered upon. He would also draw attention to the material that had been used in various public buildings in Brisbane. He referred, first of all, to the first portion of the Treasury Buildings, which had been erected many years ago. Hon. members would know that the sandstone steps in the Queen-street entrance to that building had become so worn that they had to be replaced with slate imported from the old country. The hon. members for Moreton and Toombul would bear out his statement that there was within seven or eight miles of Brisbane granite not to be excelled in any other part of the world.

Messrs. CAMPBELL and PETRIE: Hear, hear!

Mr. ANNEAR: And why was this granite not used instead of sandstone, which had to be replaced every few years? It was thirty-four years since the Brisbane Town Hall had been erected, and as any hon. member could see the front steps of that building, which were of Enoggera granite, were as good now as they were when it was first erected. There was splendid granite at Enoggera, and why was it not used? Moreover they had masons in Brisbane who could work that granite quite as cheaply as some of the stone that was being used in the new Central Railway Station. He believed in a uniform colour for buildings, and that was why he believed in the Enoggera granite. The whole of the curbing in connection with the wood-paving in Brisbane was of the same material, and there was nothing to beat it. He had seen immense blocks of it shipped to Rockhampton by Mr. Willcocks for the bridge there, and it had also been used by the contractor for the new Victoria Bridge, Mr. Midson. He trusted the Minister would consult the Colonial Architect with regard to the stone to be used in the new Land and Survey building, and he also trusted that the whole of the steps and base courses would be Enoggera granite, which was as good as any in the world.

Mr. KERR: What about Aberdeen granite?

Mr. ANNEAR: The Enoggera granite was quite as good as the Aberdeen stone. He knew something about the matter, as he had seen millions of tons of granite shipped in the old country. With regard to some of the increases referred to by the Minister, he wished to be candid. He sympathised with the officer the Minister had particularly referred to; but since reading the report and taking into consideration the conduct of two gentlemen, he thought justice had been meted out to that official. The Under Secretary had had a great deal to do with the central sugar mills, and he was justly entitled to the increase, because that work had entailed a good deal of labour, and he thought that gentleman always performed his work faithfully. The Colonial Architect was also fully entitled to the increase of £50 put down on this vote, and if it came to a division he would vote for these increases. The Colonial Architect, Mr. Brady, was fully entitled to the amount put down for him on the Estimate, because he was a very competent officer, and he faithfully performed his duties, and at all times did his work in the interests of the people of the colony.

Mr. JENKINSON (*Wide Bay*) asked the Minister if all the increases had been recommended by the Civil Service Board?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes.

Mr. JENKINSON: He noticed from the Auditor-General's report that there was a sum of £11,700 unauthorised expenditure for public

works, and he thought it was absolutely necessary in the interests of pure political life, that the Minister should give hon. members some idea of how that amount was to be expended.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That will come under the head of buildings.

Mr. JENKINSON: There was an increase first of all of £25 for the draftsman, and then there was £325 for temporary professional assistance under this item. He would like the Minister to explain that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The unforeseen expenditure referred to by the hon member was rendered necessary on account of increased work in the department; a number of temporary assistants had to be employed.

Mr. JENKINSON: Was the increased work sprung suddenly on the department?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Increased work was sprung upon the department nearly every day.

Mr. CAMPBELL (*Moreton*) regretted that he could not see his way to follow the lead of the hon. member, Mr. Annear, with regard to the proposed increase to the salary of the Under Secretary for Public Works; and the Minister himself had given no reason to justify it. In his opinion the Government Architect and the accountant were perfectly able to carry out the duties of the Under Secretary without any trouble to themselves.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You might make a similar remark in connection with every other department.

Mr. CAMPBELL: In New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia the under secretaries were professional men, who knew all about the work they were supposed to supervise. In those colonies the Under Secretary for Works must be a man perfectly qualified by his professional training to advise the Minister. In the report of the Public Service Board attached to the inquiry referred to by the Minister, both Mr. Robertson and Mr. Brady testified to the ability and zeal of those under them. He doubted the correctness of that, because the inquiry, *Jack v. Robertson*, was a proof that there was considerable dissatisfaction amongst the officers of the department. He might say, before proceeding further, that a considerable section of the public outside were interested in, and exercised over, the inquiry; and those who had spoken to him were of the opinion that justice had not been done in the decision arrived at.

Mr. KERR: You cannot have read the evidence.

Mr. CAMPBELL: He had read the evidence very carefully. Probably hon. members were unaware of the processes of an inquiry of that kind. Witnesses were sworn, and gave their evidence in the usual way. The evidence was taken down by a shorthand writer, but the witness never saw his evidence until it appeared in the document presented to Parliament. He had it from the solicitor who conducted the case for Mr. Jack that the evidence was very much altered from the evidence as it was given.

Mr. KERR: Do you mean to say the shorthand writer altered the evidence? That is a serious charge.

Mr. CAMPBELL said he knew the serious nature of the charge, and he asserted that the Public Service Board did not conduct their inquiries as they should do. In courts of law a witness was permitted to hear his evidence read, and to correct any errors he may have fallen into. Nobody was infallible. The shorthand writer was not infallible, and it was possible he had made serious mistakes.

Mr. GROOM: Is not a copy of his evidence sent to every witness for revision?

Mr. CAMPBELL: Not in inquiries before the Public Service Board.

Mr. GROOM: If it is not, it ought to be.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Certainly; that was the only fair course. How could they judge on evidence produced in a document of that kind if it was not correct. He would now refer to the report and evidence. The first thing to note was this minute by the Minister—

Refer this, together with evidence taken, to the Attorney-General.

Nothing was evidently done in that direction, as there was nothing to show what the Attorney-General's opinion was with regard to it. In question 27 Mr. Jack was made to say—

I am the practical head of my department, and Mr. Brady would not presume to advise me.

He was told by Mr. Jack's solicitor that that was entirely wrong; that he could not possibly have said so, because Mr. Brady was the practical head of his department. That was only a small matter, but it went to show how trustworthy the evidence was. Then they came to question 90—

You were reprimanded, you say? Yes; I went to Mr. Robertson about it.

Mr. Price said that Mr. Jack never said anything of the kind, and that he never was reprimanded. In question 129, Mr. Murray was asked by Captain Townley—

Do you recollect receiving that letter? No.

That referred to a letter Mr. Jack alleged he had sent by a messenger to the Minister. Mr. Murray had no recollection of receiving it. His information was that the letter was absolutely delivered on the Minister's table by the messenger, and it was incomprehensible that they could not get to the bottom as to where the letter was.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why did he not keep a copy?

Mr. CAMPBELL: He did not know. He was not responsible for that. At question 232 a matter concerning cement was dealt with, and this question was asked—

At the time this cement was mentioned was Cryle inspector? Yes.

Mr. Robertson: I know of no communication between Cryle and myself with regard to cement. It would be likely to be between the Government Architect and Mr. Cryle. I have not the slightest recollection of writing to Mr. Cryle on the subject of cement.

It seemed that the answer was that Mr. Robertson did eventually remember writing something to Mr. Cryle about the cement; but there was not a single syllable about that in the evidence. Then following question 245 there was the following note:—

[Mr. Price here handed a letter to Mr. Robertson for perusal, the original having been torn in half by Mr. Jack, and destroyed.]

That was not the case. It was Mr. Robertson who destroyed the letter, and he would admit it. Yet Mr. Jack was given credit for destroying it. It was a very important matter; a very queer business that that serious mistake should be made, considering the nature of the inquiry, and it made a wonderful difference in the evidence. Then question 739 was asked—

Mr. O'Malley: Did Jack say anything more at the time? No; Jack went out of my room by the side door, and Mr. Robertson came into my room and collected 2s.

What date was this? This was on the 22nd October, 1896. I put it down in pencil before it was collected, to see if Mr. Jack's words would come true.

Captain Townley: And that was the only time that that sort of thing was said to you? I have heard something about it before. I thought it looked as if the officer followed him or came up the street with him.

The evidence given by Mr. Bell was that he made a note of the date because it was such a glaring case. That was with reference to some

cab fares. Mr. Price, the solicitor, declared that the words "glaring case" were used, but those words had been taken out. He contended that when shorthand notes were taken of evidence the actual words used should be recorded. The evidence should be given word for word in the printed report as it was given before the board of inquiry, and when such omissions as that were discovered there was certainly room for very grave suspicion.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you suspect anyone?

Mr. CAMPBELL: He was not a detective, and was not trying to find out how the alterations came to be made. He considered he did quite enough in drawing public attention to the matter, and if possible getting a further inquiry held, so that the light of day might be thrown upon the whole matter. As he said at the commencement of his remarks, if it was possible for such serious mistakes to occur, the whole inquiry was an absolute farce. At question 939, Mr. Robertson was asked—

Captain Townley: Referring to the letter which you received from Mr. Jack and tore up. Do you consider it was insulting? Yes.

Did you not consider it your duty to suspend him, and report him to the Minister? Yes.

Why didn't you?—Because it was done on the spur of the moment. I wrote the memo. to Jack requesting the immediate withdrawal of the letter or serious consequences might ensue. I then saw the memo. from Jack, and the matter was settled a few days after.

After you had seen Mr. Jack and spoken to him on the occasion that you tore up the letter, did he make an apology for having written that letter? He simply withdrew it. I considered that if he withdrew the letter there was an end to it.

Did you consider that sufficient? Yes, I considered that sufficient.

Would you consider that a serious charge to make against you, collecting cab fares that you never expended? Yes. Perhaps if I had taken more time to think of it I would have acted differently. But I wrote on the spur of the moment after receiving it.

Now the absolute evidence tendered in that case was this—

Captain Townley: Mr. Robertson, when you received that letter from Mr. Jack making those serious charges against you, if they were incorrect, did you not consider it your duty to suspend that officer?

Mr. Robertson: Yes, I did, but I was rather busy at the time.

Captain Townley: But you had that letter for some time before Mr. Jack gained the interview which he asked for in the letter (two days); during that time did you not consider it your duty to show that letter to your Minister or the Public Service Board, if the charges were incorrect?

Mr. Robertson: Yes, I did, but as I said before, gentlemen, I was rather busy at the time.

Now let hon. members compare that with the evidence printed with the report, and see the serious difference there was between the two. Mr. Price correctly looked upon that as the crux of the whole position.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why should we assume that the printed evidence is less correct than the evidence you are quoting?

Mr. CAMPBELL: At all events, he laid the matter fairly and squarely before the public, and if it was gone into further they could easily discover who was correct. Captain Townley further asked—

Did Mr. Jack apologise for having sent you that letter?

Mr. Robertson: No.

Mr. Price: Mr. Robertson, how do you account for the stoppage in the petty cash-book from the date of Mr. Jack's letter to you?

Mr. Robertson: I do not know.

Mr. Price: Now own up. Did you not take a little of Jack's advice, and try to become honest?

There was not one word of that in the official evidence. The whole thing had been omitted.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Are you convinced that all that is correct?

Mr. CAMPBELL: He was. He would not have taken up the case unless he was perfectly satisfied. He had not taken it up without serious thought and consideration, and he hoped as the result of his action that it would be reopened and justice be done. It was with that object he had brought the matter forward. He had a lot of people at his back outside who had urged him to bring it forward. His firm had business connection with the Department of Works, and it was very distasteful to him to have to go into such an affair; but he thought in common justice the whole question should be reopened and gone into fully. In justification for the position he had taken up that there was no real necessity for an under secretary for that department, he had already referred to the practice in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia. In none of those colonies was there any such officer. The officer who did the secretarial work should be a man of professional training. He took it that Mr. Brady had sufficient knowledge of secretarial work to enable him to undertake that in addition to his professional duties; and if the Government wanted to save money and be economical, he pointed out to them that there was an absolute waste of money in retaining the services of an Under Secretary for Works. Mr. Robertson, of course, would have to be provided for in some other way, but he did not hesitate to say that he was not required in that office. His business experience taught him that the department could be run by Mr. Brady and Mr. Bell, the accountant.

Mr. JENKINSON: Is Mr. Brady not often away from Brisbane?

Mr. CAMPBELL: Not very often, and when Mr. Robertson had been absent there was no difficulty in keeping his work up to date. He

[10 p.m.] knew there was deep-rooted disaffection in the department, and he

believed it would be better to have an absolutely independent inquiry to enable the whole matter to be cleared up. He noticed it was proposed to give an increase to Mr. Brady. He had nothing to say against Mr. Brady, who was a competent man, but he knew the men below him were very competent, and he did not think they had been treated as they should have been. He was glad they were now receiving attention, but he was disgusted with the measure of attention they had received. They were devoting the best years of their lives to their work, and hon. members could well imagine the immense amount of money that might be lost to the colony by the assistant architect or the chief draftsman if there was a feeling that they were badly treated. Carelessly drawn specifications or plans might lose the colony a great deal of money; so the labourer was worthy of his hire, and when competent men came into the service thinking their efforts would be recognised it was a crying shame that their claims should not be justly recognised.

THE PREMIER: It rests with the Public Service Board.

Mr. CAMPBELL looked upon the Public Service Board as a mere buffer. He took it that if they had done their duty, and had conducted that inquiry as they ought, there would have been no necessity to refer to it to-night. He did not believe that the public service had confidence in the board.

Mr. JENKINSON: They are only marionettes.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Mr. Jack was disgraced by the board to the extent of £10 per annum. The members of the board heard the evidence given, and they knew more about the matter than the Minister could possibly do, yet the Minister first made a minute approving of the Civil Service Board's recommendation, but after-

wards made a minute to the effect that having read the evidence—the printed evidence to which he had already referred—he was now of opinion that Mr. Jack had been too leniently dealt with by the board, and he then interfered with the decision of the board by knocking another £20 off Mr. Jack's salary.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What did the board say about him in addition to recommending the reduction of £10?

MR. CAMPBELL: He was prepared to read that also—

The board consider Mr. Jack's conduct has been most insubordinate and highly censurable, and that his association with Mr. McCulloch in carrying on a system of espionage upon the actions and movements of their superior officer was subversive of discipline and discreditable to all engaged in it. If the board were not under the impression that Mr. Jack believed his charge to be *bonâ fide*, they would have no hesitation in recommending his dismissal, but as they are of that impression, and knowing him to have the reputation of being a capable and zealous officer, who has generally performed his duties to the satisfaction of the department for many years, the board feel inclined to recommend that he be more leniently dealt with, and they think that he should be reprimanded, and that his salary be reduced from £270 to £260 per annum, and they recommend accordingly.

Mr. Jack absolutely denied the espionage, but it was absolutely true that he believed Mr. Robertson to be against him, and if he made an error in that respect it was only an error of judgment on his part. If Mr. Jack was as guilty as the Minister would have anybody believe, he ought to have been dismissed straight out. There was a little more in this report of the board, which he would read—

The Under Secretary cannot be held blameless, for had he, when he received Jack's letter of the 13th January, 1896, accusing him of dishonesty, taken prompt action by suspending him and having his charges thoroughly investigated, it cannot be doubted that all this subsequent trouble would have been avoided.

Mr. Robertson kept the letter a couple of days, and eventually tore it up. The printed evidence said that Mr. Jack tore it up, but the fact was that Mr. Robertson himself tore it up in Mr. Jack's presence. He would now refer again to the serious question of the immense amount of money that might be saved or lost to the country in connection with the drawing of plans; and here he would say that he agreed with the suggestion made by the hon. member for Maryborough, that all important works over, say, £25,000, should be submitted to an independent board of architects. He believed the colony would gain thereby, and it would allay a lot of friction and annoyance that was going on at present. That was the practice followed in the mother colony, and he believed that it was a very good one. It could not do any possible harm, and it was an extension of the idea promulgated in connection with the appointment of a railways committee. He contended that Mr. Jack was the most competent officer at this end of the colony. The following evidence of his training would show how much he could lose or save to the department:—

In the course of my early training, and at considerable expense, I served an apprenticeship in one of the most reputed cabinet-making shops in Scotland (J. Reid and Son, of Ayr) to enable me to grasp the superior class of workmanship in the timber trade. During that time my evenings were spent in the study of architecture and building construction at the branch classes of the South Kensington Science and Art Department, from which I gained excellent certificates in geometry and building construction. On the expiration of my five years' apprenticeship, I joined the employment of Messrs J. Meikle and Sons, the largest and most successful Government building contractors in Scotland, remaining with them until the date of my departure for Queensland, where I continued in the building trade, contracting and otherwise, up to the date of my joining the service in 1888.

That training enabled him to do a great deal of work in connection with the preparing of drawings for furniture and the supervision of that work. Without any reflection on the gentleman who succeeded him—and Mr. Murdock was a very good architect—the colony was losing money in consequence of not having a man with the same practical training to replace Mr. Jack. He would quote the report made by the Public Service Board in regard to Mr. Jack when it inspected the Works Department on 19th September, 1896—

Inspector of Works, Mr. W. T. Jack. Salary, £250. Joined the department in 1888.

The office of inspector of works is a very responsible one, and to properly fill the position it is necessary that the holder should be a practical and experienced man, of undoubted integrity. His duties are to report on all matters pertaining to buildings, to supervise work in progress, to inspect and report on buildings where repairs, alterations, or additions are required, to arrange for the pricing of small works, furniture, etc. He should be able to draft his own specifications, and prepare his own estimates, and to advise and direct contractors, and to impress them with the conviction that he understands his business.

Mr. Jack is reputed to be a good officer, and to be well suited by training and temperament for the office he holds.

He would like to ask the Secretary for Works to authorise an inquiry into the Works Department generally, or to appoint a select committee to inquire into that particular case. In the interests of both men a public inquiry should be held.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS thought the hon. member for Moreton took up rather a strange position. In the first place, he said that the Under Secretary for Works was not required at all—that there was nothing to prevent the Government Architect doing the whole of the work. That went to show that the services of the Government Architect were not required at all in his professional duties. He did not think the hon. member knew a great deal about the office, or he would not speak in that way.

MR. CAMPBELL: I have the other colonies as evidence.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No doubt the inspector of works who had been disgraced was a capable man, but no one who read the evidence could come to any other conclusion than that the conduct of Mr. Jack and Mr. McCulloch in banding together to dog the Under Secretary for months and months was most reprehensible.

MR. KERR: It shows they had not much to do.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It showed that they had not much to do, but they stated that they believed the Under Secretary had some design against them, and that he was standing in the way of their promotion, and they therefore tried to discover something which would place him in their power, and to rake up some charge against him which they might hold as a threat over his head if he stood in the way of their promotion.

MR. JENKINSON: If you believed that, it was your duty to discharge him. You convict yourself.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They failed most completely, as was proved by the evidence, in substantiating a single charge against Mr. Robertson. Their conduct was most contemptible.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Why didn't you sack them?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The proper remedy was to sack them both. The statement of the hon. member for Moreton was the first he had heard of the charge that the evidence had been distorted, but the same objection might be urged against the report from which the hon. member had quoted. The evidence was taken at a public inquiry, and Mr. Jack had every opportunity of bringing all the

evidence at his command; but instead of that he came forward with bald statements. From his letter to Mr. Robertson, and the evidence, it was apparent that Mr. Jack believed the Under Secretary was standing between him and promotion, and he wanted to have some means of coercing Mr. Robertson into recommending his promotion. He believed that the board had not recommended Mr. Jack's instant dismissal because he was a good officer. Although he was represented by a solicitor, he failed completely to prove his charge, and he had no sympathy whatever with him. His version of the evidence was different from that which the Committee had before them.

Mr. CAMPBELL: He never had an opportunity of seeing the report of his evidence.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS:

He understood the witness had an opportunity of hearing his evidence read, but it seemed that in this case it was not done, but that was no fault of the department.

Mr. CAMPBELL: A very big fault on the part of the Civil Service Board.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): With regard to the working of the Works Department, there was no doubt there had been a good deal of dissatisfaction amongst the general public. He did not wish to cast any reflection on the Government Architect or the Under Secretary, both of whom were personal friends of his; but, he thought it was as well that these matters should be brought before the Committee, and that it would be in the interests of those gentlemen if the Government could see their way to order a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole working of the department. It would be for the benefit of the contractors and builders generally, and he knew that within the department itself there had been—and he believed it still existed—very much dissatisfaction. He was not going to refer to Mr. Jack's case, which there was no doubt, from the report, was a very bad one; but if the evidence had been taken in another form there was no saying what the result might have been. The total amount asked for this department was £122,246. In Victoria the total amount asked for the department of buildings was £98,661; but it was true, as the hon. member for Moreton had said, that there was no under secretary in that colony, and that they worked on entirely different lines to what they did in Queensland. They had been in the habit in Queensland for thirty odd years of having an under secretary, and, of course, he should not like a radical change made now unless a commission were appointed to thoroughly inquire into the working of the department. The Secretary for Works had had a good many representations from outside contractors, and had tried, as far as possible, to remedy a good many of the defects and grievances which existed. He gave him credit for that. The Secretaries for Works previous to Mr. Murray had had such a short time that they had not been in touch with the department and had not had the opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the details as they should have. He did not say that the Minister should take up every little paltry matter; but he might take the trouble to make himself a little bit more acquainted with the various branches than they had done. The hon. member for Maryborough had referred to the Treasury Buildings. He did not wish to cast any particular blame on the contractors; but every practical man knew that the stone from Highfields should not have gone into it. The steps should have been put in with good granite. They had any amount of it at Enoggera, Mount Crosby, and in other places around Brisbane. If they went into polishing granite, it would

mean opening up quarries and importing a very large amount of expensive machinery; with the risk, too, that they would not know how the quarries were going to turn out. If they turned out right, they would be able to stock the place in a few months, and then they would have to compete with the outside world. Although he was a protectionist, and believed in getting everything they possibly could in the colony, he did not think that, with the labour conditions which prevailed in the colony, they would be able to compete with the Aberdeen granite if they went into the matter of polished work.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What do we want polished work for?

Mr. PETRIE: They wanted columns. In Sydney the contractors, Messrs. McCreedy Brothers, had to import special machinery to turn the columns there. If he had been informed rightly, it was proposed to have columns in the new Lands Office, and to use colonial granite. He hoped that that would be accomplished, and that they would be able to get the machinery to deal with it. He used a lot of granite, and he was sorry to say he had to import it, because notwithstanding the heavy duty of 25 per cent., he could import it as cheaply, if not cheaper, than the local article. In the building of the new Lands Office they would be spending a large amount of money, and, without intending to cast any reflection on Mr. Brady, he should have liked to have seen him relieved of the responsibility, and the work offered for public competition throughout the world, if necessary, because in the construction of large public buildings, the best possible advice should be got, so that the mistakes made in the Parliament Buildings and other public offices might be remedied. The difference between the salary paid to Mr. Brady and those paid to the first and second assistant architects was too great, and he hoped that next year the Minister would take that matter into his consideration, and [10:30 p.m.] see that justice was meted out to those officers. With regard to Mr. Robertson, if it were shown that he had a great deal more to do he should not object to his receiving the same salary as other under secretaries, but under present conditions he considered that £600 a year was ample, and could not see his way to support the proposed increase of £50.

Mr. ANNEAR: He thoroughly agreed with the hon. member for Moreton that Mr. Jack was a competent man, but surely he was not the only man in Brisbane competent to supervise the erection of buildings. Mr. Morry, who was now in charge of the new Lands Office, was a competent man, and would faithfully perform the work entrusted to him. The hon. member for Toombul stated that he was a protectionist, but at the same time argued that the granite quarried at Enoggera could not be worked as well as the granite obtained from Aberdeen. If the hon. member looked at the mouth of the graving dock at South Brisbane he would see stones of from four to five tons, and every one of those came from Enoggera. He hoped that they would employ granite masons in Brisbane, and at other places in the colony where granite could be obtained, and not bring their stone from Aberdeen or anywhere else. They had good granite at Warwick, Stanthorpe, Charters Towers, and other places in the colony, and he should like to see that used in their public works. With regard to Mr. Jack, he was sorry that he did not take the advice of the Minister, and not force the inquiry which had been held, for had he done so he would not have brought that hornet's nest about his ears. While saying that, he would not utter one word against Mr. Jack,

for he believed that during the time he had been looking after Government work in Brisbane he had done his work honestly.

Mr. PETRIE thought the hon. member for Maryborough misunderstood him. What he said was that the local granite could be used for certain work, but that when it came to polished work, such as was required for monumental and other purposes, it was cheaper to import granite from Aberdeen. He would not import a single stone if he could help it, but it could not be avoided.

Mr. GROOM (*Drayton and Toowoomba*) was not at all satisfied with the extraordinarily arbitrary action of the Minister in overriding the decision of the Public Service Board in regard to Mr. Jack. If that board was worth anything at all—and it was the opinion of a great majority of the public of Queensland that it was of very little service except as a buffer between the Government and the Civil Service—its decision ought to be respected.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is only a recommendation.

Mr. GROOM: The Public Service Board had the witnesses before them, and from their demeanour were able to judge of the facts of the case, uninfluenced by any personal prejudices or party predilections, and they recommended that Mr. Jack should be censured, and that £10 should be deducted from his salary. With all due respect to the Minister, he held that that was sufficient punishment for any offence that Mr. Jack had committed, if he had committed an offence. Scores of people outside sympathised with Mr. Jack, and considered that justice had not been done to him. The precedent set by the hon. gentleman in overriding the decision of the Public Service Board, and deducting £20 more from that officer's salary than they recommended, was a dangerous one, and there was no telling what mischief it might lead to if it were of universal application.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I don't think you can have read the evidence.

Mr. GROOM: The evidence had nothing to do with the matter. The hon. gentleman had set a bad precedent in setting aside the decision of the board—a precedent which in all his experience he had never known to be adopted by any other Minister in this colony, and one which he hoped he would never see followed by any other Minister. At any rate he entered his protest against it, as he considered that the punishment recommended by the Public Service Board was quite sufficient for the alleged offence. If the officer were incompetent, and the hon. gentleman had information that he had acted as a spy on Mr. Robertson's action for the purpose of taking some proceeding against him, then he should have been dismissed the public service. But the Public Service Board did not recommend that, and he hoped the Minister would never take such a vicious course again as that which he had adopted in this instance, by deliberately setting aside the recommendation of the board.

Mr. STORY (*Balonne*): He had read the evidence in this case and did not agree at all with the hon. member for Toowoomba. He thought the Minister had made a very proper departure and had shown the Public Service Board that he was head of the department, and as master in that department he would put down with a strong hand any such action as Mr. Jack had been guilty of.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (*Lockyer*) was astonished to hear the hon. member for Toowoomba say that in the whole course of his parliamentary experience he could not point to a similar case of a Minister overriding the Public Service Board. In his own short experience of six years he had met numberless instances in which Ministers

had entirely overridden recommendations of that board. If the Minister was to be boss in his own office he had a right to deal with the officers in that office. He had read the whole of the evidence and correspondence in the case, but the issue before them now was entirely apart from that. It was the question raised by the hon. member for Moreton, who said the evidence as printed was cooked.

Mr. KEAR: Cooked.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: As the hon. member said, the charge now made was that the evidence as printed was "cooked." That charge was made by a responsible person, and the Minister should satisfy the Committee in regard to the future action he proposed to take upon that charge. He had no feeling in the matter, but he was sure no member of the Committee would bring a fictitious case before the Chamber, and they had a right to know which was right—the evidence as printed, or the evidence as stated by the hon. member for Moreton—before they went on persevering in a course to which the hon. member objected. He had always held that the Public Service Board was more or less of a nonentity, and was purely and simply a buffer between the Minister and the public. When a grave charge was made that the evidence taken before that tribunal was not correctly reported some inquiry into that charge should be made. He supported the contention of the hon. member for Moreton in that point, and he hoped the Secretary for Works would give the Committee some assurance on the matter.

Mr. McDONNELL: He had moved some time ago that the papers in this case should be printed. At the time he had never spoken to Mr. Jack about the matter, and had met that gentleman only once, when he had brought him down to the Valley Post Office to look into a job which reflected little credit on the officers of the department responsible for the specifications, which provided for the painting of only one side of certain rooms, leaving the other three bare. He had moved for the papers at the request of a large number of persons outside, who were strongly of the opinion that Mr. Jack had been very badly treated. He had read the evidence very carefully, and, judging the case on that evidence, the conclusion he came to was that Mr. Jack had not been too harshly treated after all. But it had been pointed out repeatedly to him that the printed evidence in the case was not a true record of the proceedings at the inquiry, and that had now been openly stated by the hon. member for Moreton.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you endorse that?

Mr. McDONNELL: He did not endorse it; but it was a very serious charge, and he was sure every member of the Committee would be prepared to say that, unless the hon. member for Moreton had sound and valid reasons for making so serious a statement, he would never have made it in that Chamber. He was much influenced in his opinion of the case by the position taken up by that hon. member. They knew that with their own shorthand staff—as good as any to be found in any of the Parliaments of Australia—errors crept in, and points were sometimes omitted that they would like to see included in the reports of their speeches. He did not know who took the notes in that case, but it was likely that the serious points referred to by the hon. member, and which put a different complexion on the whole case, might have been left out by the shorthand writer. He understood that witnesses examined before the Public Service Board did not have an opportunity of revising the proofs of their evidence in the same way as witnesses before a select committee or Royal

Commission, and that was a grave fault in the conduct of proceedings by the Public Service Board. The only satisfaction they could get in the matter now was by acceding to the request of the hon. member for Moreton, and having a select committee to inquire into the matter, so that all the evidence might be properly sifted. He had been rather surprised, in reading the papers in the case, to find that a matter was referred to in which he had himself been indirectly interested—Mr. Marwedel's complaint about the supply of mattresses to the Toowoomba Lunatic Asylum. That had been a cause of some unpleasantness in the department, and it showed the very slipshod way of carrying out contracts adopted by the department—that a man was allowed to tender, and only when another man repeatedly complained about the articles supplied, was an examination made; and then it was found that the articles were not up to the required standard, and that there was a loss to the department of £42. The whole sum and substance of the matter was that there was a lot of rottenness about the Works Department, the same as there was about other departments. What they wanted was a Royal Commission to inquire into the working of the whole Public Service. They had had Royal Commissions appointed to inquire into the working of the Police Department and the Government Printing Office. The work of these commissions had thrown a good deal of light on the workings of those particular departments, and he believed that the efforts of those commissions would beneficially affect those departments in the future. He thought there was very good reason to take exception to the action of the Minister in overriding the recommendation of the Public Service Board. He was not satisfied with reducing Mr. Jack's salary by £10, but he further reduced it by another £20, which would always be a mark of censure against that gentleman in the department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It may be a beneficial lesson to him.

Mr. McDONNELL: He thought it was rather too vindictive on the part of the Minister. If he had accepted the recommendation of the board in the matter, and had acted upon it, that would have been sufficient punishment.

Mr. O'CONNELL (*Musgrave*): was very much surprised at the endorsement of espionage in the department which had been displayed by some hon. members.

Mr. McDONNELL: Nobody endorsed that.

Mr. McDONALD: The only endorsement has been by the Minister.

Mr. O'CONNELL: The Minister had spoken as strongly as possible against that, but the hon. member for Fortitude Valley said that the Minister had been vindictive in the matter.

Mr. McDONNELL: I said it looked like vindictiveness.

Mr. O'CONNELL: The Public Service Board said that had they thought Mr. Jack had not acted *bona fide*, they would have recommended his dismissal, and he believed that the Minister would have been justified in dismissing him, as his conduct was despicable. That officer distinctly stated in evidence the reason why he had been taking notes—to hold them *in terrorem* over the Under Secretary, so that if he did not do what Mr. Jack wanted he would be able to say, "I'll expose you." How, under these circumstances, could anyone say that Mr. Jack had been punished too severely? If he had acted in any way for the public good—to prevent Mr. Robertson from doing some wrong—there might have been some excuse, but his action was mean and despicable, because he (Mr. O'Connell) did not believe in

spies. That was Mr. Jack's action right through the piece, and the Minister would have been justified in dismissing him straightway.

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*): Apart altogether from the evidence, what concerned him was the position taken up by the Minister in connection with the recommendation of the Public Service Board. Although the board recommended that Mr. Jack be reprimanded and his salary reduced by £10, the Minister went over the head of the board and reduced his salary by £30. He did not know whether the Minister for Works or the Chief Secretary was responsible, because, according to the evidence, the whole business went through the Chief Secretary's office.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Chief Secretary had nothing to do with it.

Mr. McDONALD: He had, according to the minute signed by Mr. A. B. Drury, the Clerk of the Council, which was to the effect that the Chief Secretary acted for the Secretary for Works in his absence. At any rate, on several occasions it had been proved that the Public Service Board was absolutely useless; the Government could do exactly what they liked with the board. If the Government wanted a new appointment, they went to the board and asked that the appointment be made, and it was made. Again, if the Government wished a reduction in the salary of any particular officer, they went to the board, and through the supineness of those officers the reduction was made.

The HOME SECRETARY: Don't you make any mistake about that.

Mr. McDONALD: Was it not a fact that for some considerable time there had been a feud between the hon. gentleman and Mr. Jack.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No.

Mr. McDONALD: That was the rumour that was going about, and if there was anything in it

it accounted for the fact of the [11 p.m.] Minister ignoring the recommendation of the Public Service Board

and further reducing Mr. Jack's salary. If what the hon. gentleman had said was true his only course was to have discharged Mr. Jack, and he had failed to do his duty in that respect because he had not backbone enough. There was another matter that demanded inquiry. The hon. member for Moreton had made a distinct charge that the evidence was not correct—that it had been faked up. That was a very serious charge, and it could be best inquired into by a select committee of the House. If true everyone of the parties mixed up with the faking of the evidence should be dismissed the service at once.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he was so convinced of the serious nature of the charge that he would take steps to have it thoroughly cleared up—he would not say at present how, but it would be done in a manner which would be, he trusted, satisfactory to the House. The evidence before the Public Service Board was taken down by a shorthand writer who was employed for the purpose.

Mr. KERR: Then he was none of the *Hansard* staff?

Mr. CAMPBELL: No; he had nothing to do with the *Hansard* staff.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The shorthand writer was employed by the Public Service Board to take down the evidence. He (Mr. Murray), of course, could not say whether the evidence was correct or not, but whatever doubt there was on the subject he would take steps to have cleared up.

Mr. CAMPBELL: The promise just given by the Minister was a sufficient justification for the action he had taken, and he was glad to learn that the hon. gentleman intended to investigate

the matter—he hoped by means of a select committee of the House. As he had urged, witnesses should have an opportunity of seeing their evidence before it was printed.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do they specify in what particulars it is wrong?

Mr. CAMPBELL said he had already specified the particulars in which it was wrong, and if the hon. gentleman had been present he would have heard them. With regard to Mr. Merry, referred to by the hon. member for Maryborough, his services were confined to one particular contract, the new Lands Office. What he complained of was the want of qualified supervision generally, and that there was no one down here to replace the man sent away. He would briefly refer to another way in which a good deal of money was lost. Mr. Robertson travelled about a good deal with Mr. Brady, inspecting various works. What could Mr. Robertson know about those works, and why was it necessary for him to go? If Mr. Brady was Under Secretary and Architect combined he could do the work perfectly well. They were nice little jaunts for Mr. Robertson, but nothing was gained by them. To be consistent with the position he had taken up he would move that the proposed increase to the Under Secretary's salary be postponed until the result of the inquiry promised by the Minister was known.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The vote must be passed one way or the other now.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Then he would move that the item be reduced by £50.

Mr. KERR (*Barcoo*): He would certainly not support the motion of the hon. member for Moreton, because considering the time the evidence had been in his hands he should have intimated to the Minister that Mr. Jack was dissatisfied and wanted to have a select committee inquiry. In that case the increase to the Under Secretary would probably have been postponed. He had read the evidence carefully, and considered that Mr. Jack was a very lucky man in not being dismissed from the service altogether, together with some officers connected with him. Mr. McCulloch and Mr. Jack were evidently spying upon Mr. Robertson, and had neglected their duties. Mr. McCulloch had, according to the evidence, watched him in and out of his office, and he would like to know how that officer could have been doing his duty at the same time. The hon. member for Moreton spoke very highly of Mr. Inspector Jack, but he might say that when he was in Croydon he had it on good authority that Mr. Jack, who was Northern inspector, knew nothing of buildings. He was a cabinet-maker by trade, and held his position for years by virtue of the influence of Sir Thomas McIlwraith. Anyone who had listened to the speech of the hon. member for Moreton must come to the conclusion that there were no other competent inspectors in the department besides Mr. Jack. That was saying very little for the qualifications of other men, because he had it on the authority of men on a goldfield not very far from the capital, who worked with Mr. Jack in the mother country, that he did not hold a very good reputation as a tradesman. He believed if he was put to the bench he would prove that he was not the great Mr. Jack that some people supposed, and that he traded a good deal upon the friends who were pushing him forward.

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*): He thought, with the hon. member for Moreton, that justice had not been done. He had read the evidence carefully, and he was decidedly of opinion that Mr. Jack should either have been ignominiously sacked or should not have been reduced. The evidence clearly proved that he and some others in the department were carrying on a continual system

of spying on the head of their department, and not only that, but it further proved that Mr. Jack was quite content to permit of the continuance of a lot of evils in the department so long as he got a share of the boodle. His opinion was that the Public Service Board should have ignominiously sacked Mr. Jack. They must either accept the evidence, or cast a slur on the whole of the *Hansard* staff.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: They had nothing to do with reporting the evidence.

Mr. GIVENS: Whoever the reporters were he was quite willing to accept the evidence taken by them against the opinions of witnesses who six months afterwards came down and wanted to have it corrected. The evidence clearly proved that Mr. Jack brought charges against Mr. Robertson which, if proved, would have immediately necessitated the discharge of that gentleman. Mr. Jack said in his evidence that he was in possession of the evidence to substantiate his charges months before he made them, but his evidence was totally discredited by the fact that he was not animated by a desire to do the best for the department, or he would have brought his charges immediately he became possessed of the facts. However, he held back the charges and tried by overt acts to get favours granted to himself. He did not care a straw about the welfare of the department, or safeguarding the public interests. All he looked to was the forwarding of his own interests, and corruption in the department could run riot for all he cared. He did not want to quote the evidence, but he certainly went with the hon. member for Moreton in saying that justice had not been done, because either one or the other of those officers should have been sacked. As far as he could see, as soon as the charges were made Mr. Robertson demanded an explanation. Then because Mr. Robertson was not severe enough was that a reason why he should be punished for being lenient? He believed Mr. Robertson was worthy of condemnation because he did not immediately suspend Mr. Jack, and he should have refused to continue in his position unless Mr. Jack was sacked. What position was the public service coming to if subordinates were allowed to employ their time spying on their superior officers and trying to get softer billets—levying blackmail? That was what the evidence proved, and he would not vote for the reduction moved by the hon. member for Moreton; but if anybody moved that Mr. Jack be sacked he would vote for that.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): According to the evidence, Mr. Jack was corrupt and ought to be sacked, Mr. Robertson was corrupt and ought to be sacked, and the Minister, who overrode the decision of the Public Service Board, was corrupt and ought to be sacked also. The best thing would be to have a clean sweep out, and the country would be the better for it. The most serious matter was the fact that there was a Public Service Board which was supposed to be an independent institution acting in a judicial capacity, recommending appointments, promotions, reductions, and dismissals—that they should make a certain recommendation on the evidence before them, and the Ministers should override their decision. Either the board was a cat-paw, a bit of putty, which could be moulded at the sweet will of the Minister, or else it was an independent body with judicial functions. If Ministers could use the board as a buffer in exercising a grudge against an officer or advancing a friend he did not see the use of having the board at all. It appeared to him that Ministers did not care how the board ran so long as it did not run over them. If the Minister had the power to do as had been done in this case, and the board was merely putty—

The PREMIER: He has the power and he takes the responsibility.

Mr. LESINA: He was glad to hear that the Minister took the responsibility of overriding a decision given by an independent tribunal appointed by Parliament to do away with the exercise of political influence. If the most insignificant member of the Cabinet could do that, how much more certain was it that the Premier and the Treasurer and the Home Secretary and the whole Cabinet would exercise the same influence in connection with every department of the State? If that was so, this board was a mere body of putty, a spineless jelly-like combination standing as a buffer between Ministers and their responsibility. Let the Committee see whether that body had any bones at all—any independence—and if it had not let it go. The other night, when the vote in connection with the board was being considered, it was pointed out that this body fulfilled certain duties in a very excellent way, and the Committee passed the Estimate. Now they found that when the board proposed to do a certain thing some insignificant Minister—one atom in the Cabinet—simply trampled upon the board's decision. Where were the responsibility and independence of an organisation like that, when they could exercise no more influence than that against the fiat of a Minister? He would support the reduction moved by the hon. member for Moreton.

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*) said that when the vote for the Government Printing Office was under consideration, he said that no other department would come out of an investigation by a Royal Commission as had been the case with the Government Printing Office; and he thought the evidence in this case bore out his contention. He was not concerned about the merits of Mr. Jack or Mr. McCulloch; but even supposing that Mr. Jack had not a tittle of proof regarding the allegations he made against the Under Secretary—which were not proved according to the evidence in the report—what state of affairs was there in the department when any subordinate officer should think that if he could get hold of something, and bring a charge against the Under Secretary, that would be sufficient to compel the Under Secretary to give him an increase? If subordinates, instead of looking after the duty they were paid to perform, found it more profitable to watch their superiors, and get hold of some lapse of character, or official duty and use it for their personal aggrandisement he thought the expression used by one hon. member was not a bit too strong in saying that it was a rotten state of affairs, and only an incompetent Government would permit such a state of affairs to exist. If such a system of espionage had proved profitable

[11.30 p.m.] in the past under the Government which had held office for so long, it was natural that subordinates should believe it would continue to be profitable in the future.

The PREMIER: It did not occur under the present Government at all.

Mr. FISHER was glad to hear it. He did not make any charge against the Under Secretary, but it was a serious thing that subordinates should think that they had a better chance of rising in the service by getting a lien on their superiors by reason of some act of theirs than by performing their duty efficiently.

The PREMIER: You have to prove that there is that feeling in the service. One swallow does not make a summer.

Mr. FISHER: There was abundance of evidence. He understood that the Premier was most anxious to have the system of government

cleansed of such a blemish, and he asked him to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the various departments.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to call the attention of the hon. member to the fact that that debate is now concluded, and the question now before the Committee is the special reduction which has been moved. The hon. member must confine his remarks to the amendment.

Mr. FISHER simply wished to ask the Premier if he was prepared to grant a Royal Commission to investigate the various departments, and cleanse the Civil Service from the reflection placed on it by the report they had been discussing?

Question put.

Mr. GIVENS thought the question asked by the hon. member for Gympie was worthy of an answer.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said that he had already expressed his willingness to grant a further inquiry into the matter.

Mr. STEWART (*Rockhampton North*) intended to support the amendment, but not necessarily for the reason for which it was proposed by the hon. member for Moreton. He understood the hon. member to move a reduction as a sort of censure upon the Under Secretary.

Mr. CAMPBELL: No. He contended that the office of Under Secretary was unnecessary altogether, and he would not be consistent if he did not oppose any increase in the salary.

Mr. STEWART said that his reason for voting for the reduction was that he believed all those officers were overpaid. On reading the evidence he was forced to the conclusion that a number of public officers had too little work to do. According to that evidence, some of them appeared to have more time to devote to picking holes in the characters of their superior officers than to attending to the work for which they were paid. Of course the Chairman had ruled that it was out of order at that stage to refer to Mr. Jack's case, otherwise he should have had something to say upon it.

Question—That the item—"Under Secretary, £650"—be reduced by £50—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 10.

Messrs. Campbell, Maxwell, McDonnell, Jenkinson, Fisher, Stewart, Dawson, Turley, Armstrong, and Lesina.

NOES, 22.

Messrs. Dickson, Rutledge, Foxton, Philp, Hamilton, Murray, Dalrymple, Kent, Nowell, Chataway, Givens, Mackintosh, Stephenson, Bartholomew, Hardeare, Kerr, Dibley, Story, O'Connell, Callan, Hanrahan, and Annear.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Messrs. Boles and Fogarty.

Noes—Messrs. Tooth and Smith.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. STEWART: There had been some discussion with regard to the action of the Public Service Board and the Secretary for Works in connection with Mr. Jack. As far as he could gather from the evidence, the board had failed most signally in its duty in merely recommending that this man, who was convicted of the meanest and most despicable conduct, should be censured, removed to another portion of the colony, and have his salary reduced by £10 a year. The Secretary for Works seemed to have been more seized of the serious nature of the offence, and reduced his salary by £30 a year. If the evidence given at the inquiry were true, Mr. Jack was not fit to be in the service of the colony. Why, he admitted that he spied on his superior officer. For what reason? In the interests of the public service? No; but so that he might get a hold on him, and in that way be able to pull the strings so that he might either get promotion, or be permitted to remain in Brisbane.

When he found that he was to be sent out of Brisbane, he made repeated applications to the Under Secretary to be kept there; and when he found that these applications were not successful, he used threats. A man who would do that kind of thing with his superior officer would do the same with contractors. Were members not compelled to come to the conclusion, that if he was capable of intrigue, which he admitted, for his own personal aggrandisement in relation to the Under Secretary for Works, he was capable of the same thing in dealing with contractors? If they were bound to come to that conclusion, the Secretary for Works, instead of reducing him £30 a year, should have dismissed him; in fact, he thought the hon. gentleman ought to do it yet. A man who would do that sort of thing was totally unreliable. If any contractor made it worth his while, he would wink at cheating the State to any extent. He was self-condemned.

Question put and passed.

BUILDINGS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved that £110,155 be granted for buildings. There was a very considerable increase in this vote—namely, £48,206. There was an increase in the vote for furniture and fittings of £2,000; painting public buildings, £1,000; rent of offices, occasioned by the removal of certain offices from the site of the new Lands Office, £1,000. Then there was £5,000 for new buildings, repairs, and additions for the Defence Force; £1,500 for repairs and additions to courthouse buildings; £3,000 for repairs and additions to police buildings; and £1,000 for repairs and additions to gaols buildings. There was an increase in the vote for repairs and additions to post and telegraph offices of £2,000. In the Home Secretary's Department there was a considerable increase. For new buildings £15,000 was required.

Mr. FISHER: What are the items? Just indicate the lines.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He could give the information. There was—Cooktown Gaol, new stockade, £1,500; Brisbane, new lock hospital, Boggo road, £995; Alpha, new court-house, £450; Goodna Asylum, matron's quarters, £450; Goodna Asylum, wards, repairs, £630; Ayr, police magistrate's quarters, £50; Barcaldine, new courthouse, £1,250; Rosewood, courthouse, additions, £230; Thursday Island, new courthouse, £1,500; and other buildings of a similar description. Then the Treasurer wanted for new buildings an increase of over £1,000, and the Postmaster-General, for new buildings, asked—

Mr. JENKINSON: What about the electric light at Goodna?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That was a proposal to light the Goodna Asylum with the electric light; but it was doubtful whether it would be carried out. The present system would be more economical, he thought.

The HOME SECRETARY: And more safe.

Mr. JENKINSON: What about the Westbrook Industrial School?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That was the removal of the buildings from Lytton to Westbrook for a reformatory. They were removed to Westbrook, because it was thought they would get better training on the farm there than they did at Lytton. There was also a considerable increase in the amount for repairs, additions, and new schools for the Department of Public Instruction. The other increases were not important.

Mr. JENKINSON (*Wide Bay*) noticed by the Auditor-General's report that there was an amount of £11,700 for unauthorised expenditure for buildings in connection with that department,

and thought it was only right that the Committee should have a little information in regard to that expenditure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The amount referred to by the hon. member was required to make up certain votes that were not sufficient to carry out the works authorised, such as the appropriation for furniture and fittings, rent for public offices, painting public buildings, repairs to courthouses and gaols, etc.

Mr. JENKINSON admitted that it was reasonable to suppose that small items of expenditure might not be foreseen, but surely the Government knew that they were going to purchase a site for a new Custom-house at Townsville, and could have provided the £1,600 required for that purpose on the Estimates last year, and also the amount of £1,450 for the purchase of land to increase the area of the courthouse and lockup at Townsville. If those items could not have been forecast prior to the passing of the last Estimates, then sanction should have been obtained for the expenditure in the ordinary course on this year's Estimates. Such a large amount for unforeseen expenditure showed either a lack of foresight or an attempt to smuggle things through without getting the sanction of the Committee, and he disagreed altogether with that system of doing business.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The table in the Auditor-General's report explained clearly that the £1,600 mentioned was for the purchase of a site for a Custom-house at Townsville, and the £1,450 for the purchase of land to increase the area of the courthouse and lockup at Townsville. With regard to the repairs to the annexes at the Exhibition Building, hon. members knew very well that the expenditure for that work was far in excess of what they anticipated when they began the repair of the annexes and the fitting of the building for museum and other purposes. The whole of the unforeseen expenditure for the department was fully explained in the report of the Auditor-General.

Mr. JENKINSON: The Minister's reply was eminently unsatisfactory. He could [12 p.m.] see from the Auditor-General's report what the different amounts were set down for. Was the purchase of that land at Townsville so hurriedly decided upon that it could not appear in last year's Estimates and could not wait over until this year's Estimates?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Tenders were called for a new courthouse at Townsville, and it was found that an additional area of land was required on which to erect the buildings which had to be provided for the department.

Mr. JENKINSON repeated that the answer given was not satisfactory, and he was sorry the hon. gentleman was not prepared with the information required by the Committee. Tenders were called for the erection of that courthouse some time ago, and if the Government did not know that additional land was required they should have known it. He objected to so large a vote for unauthorised expenditure going through without more information upon it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS regretted very much that he was not able then to furnish the Committee with detailed information, but he promised to supply to-morrow a detailed list of the whole of the amounts referred to showing what was done with each.

Mr. JENKINSON: Will you postpone the vote till to-morrow, then?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No. Unfortunately he had not that detailed information with him, but it could easily be furnished.

Mr. JENKINSON: The Minister must know that they could not discuss the vote after it had been passed. That was the last item on the hon. gentleman's Estimates, and it might well be postponed until the hon. gentleman was in a position to give them reliable information upon it.

The PREMIER: The request of the hon. member was perfectly inadmissible. They knew that questions might be asked a Minister in Committee of Supply the answers to which could not be furnished *instanter*. There was no desire to prevent the Committee getting the fullest information, and if the hon. gentleman would not accept the Minister's word for that he could move for a return of the expenditure. It was unreasonable to ask that the Minister should delay the Estimates for such a request for information which the Secretary for Works had promised to supply.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS promised to lay on the table a return giving a full statement of the whole of those votes.

Mr. MAXWELL called attention to the disgraceful state of the police quarters in Georgetown. In coming through Croydon also his attention had been drawn to the necessity for some fence between the bachelors' quarters and the residence of the sergeant of police there to secure some degree of privacy for the sergeant's family.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The inspector for the district would be instructed to report upon the matters to which the hon. member referred, and they would try to have them remedied.

Mr. KERR referred to the necessity for a new courthouse at Barcaldine which had been reported on by Inspector McGhie, and to a promise made by the late Premier when at Barcaldine, in connection with the removal of the police barracks there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said that £1,250 was down for a new courthouse at Barcaldine, and the plans and specifications for it were being prepared. The removal of the police barracks, he thought, was already in hand.

Mr. LESINA noticed in the Auditor-General's report a reference to the purchase of the Maryborough skating rink as a drillshed for the naval brigade corps. What arrangements had been entered into for that purchase?

The PREMIER could answer the hon. member. A drillshed had been urgently required for the Maryborough corps, and a building erected for another purpose had been purchased, after full inquiry, and the purchase was made under very favourable terms for the Government. If the building had not been secured, a much larger expenditure would have been incurred. It was purchased for the Marine Defence Force at Maryborough, which was a very satisfactory component of the Marine Defence Force of the colony. He had seen the building, and he thought the purchase was a very satisfactory one; it cost very little more than the value of the iron on the roof of the building.

Mr. LESINA asked what was the area of the land adjoining the courthouse in Townsville, for which the Government paid £1,450, and from whom had it been purchased?

The TREASURER explained that in times gone by, the Government had been too fond of selling their land, especially in the Northern towns, to recoup the Treasury, and this particularly applied to Townsville. On one side of the courthouse there was a vacant allotment which had been sold for £1,100, and which the Government had bought for £600. On the other side, and in front, there was a Chinaman's

boarding-house which had been sold to the Government for £850 by the mortgagees. The land had been purchased at a very cheap rate, and it was really wanted in connection with the courthouse there.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW (*Maryborough*): On behalf of the hon. member for Burnett, who was absent, he wished to draw attention to the state of the courthouse at Biggenden. On visiting the place some little time ago he found that it was nothing but a room with a ring in the centre to chain prisoners to, which was even more barbarous than the old fashion of chaining them to a stump; and the next room was the courthouse and police quarters. Biggenden was getting a large place; it had a population of about 1,500, and land was being taken up there very rapidly. He hoped the Minister would attend to the matter.

Mr. JENKINSON (*Wide Bay*): The last time he visited Biggenden and saw the courthouse there he got a startler. The place in which the prisoners were confined was nothing more or less than the constable's kitchen.

The HOME SECRETARY: Hear, hear! the scullery.

Mr. JENKINSON: And during the progress of any case in the courthouse the constable's wife could not carry on cooking operations. This was a disgraceful state of affairs in any civilised community. The constable in charge had also told him that when drunken men locked up in the room became noisy, he and his wife could get no sleep. The matter required immediate attention.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member had not drawn the long bow at all in the matter, but he forgot to mention that the roof of the courthouse was only about 3 feet above the heads of the magistrates. The place was absolutely unsuitable for the purpose, and when he saw it he took steps to have the defects remedied. He understood that the Secretary for Works was attending to the matter.

Mr. J. HAMILTON (*Cook*) said that if the sergeant there had been a resourceful man like the sergeant at Croydon some years ago, he would have had no cause of complaint in this respect, because if prisoners misconducted themselves, or did not return to the lock-up before 9 o'clock at night—he used to let them out for a walk—he would lock them out all night.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS stated that £700 was on the Estimates for a new police station at Biggenden, and that tenders would be in on the 15th December.

Mr. STEWART (*Rockhampton North*) asked the Minister on what principle he went with regard to defraying the cost of the erection of buildings—from loan or revenue? From the report he saw that during last year the Customs-house at Rockhampton was paid for out of loan, and the courthouse at Townsville out of revenue. The post and telegraph office at Warwick was paid for out of loan, and that at Gympie out of revenue.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS explained that buildings of a temporary character—of timber—were paid for out of revenue, and buildings of a more permanent character—of stone or brick—out of loan.

Mr. STEWART thought that principle was altogether a wrong one. Loan money should only be expended on reproductive works.

The HOME SECRETARY: Would you not call the Lands Office a reproductive work?

Mr. STEWART: He would not. The cost of the erection of the new Lands Office should be paid out of revenue. If they were getting as much revenue out of their lands as they ought to get they would not require to borrow money to build a Lands Office. Such buildings as the

Dalby Consumptive Hospital, the Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery, the courthouses at Charleville and Gympie, and the Goodna Lunatic Asylum were not reproductive works, and should be erected out of revenue.

Mr. LESINA wished to bring under the notice of the Minister the fact that a public meeting of representative ratepayers was held at Clermont two months ago to protest against the petty additions that were proposed to be made to the courthouse there, which was already forty years old, and entirely out of date. The Peak Downs Progress Association had been in correspondence with the department on the matter, and they had received a curt reply stating that the police magistrate—whose removal, by the way, had been petitioned for, not by political friends of his own only, but by those who were opposed to him in politics—who was a stranger in the district, had been asked to send in a report on the question. He held in his hand a copy of the Clermont paper containing a report of that public meeting at which the leading local public men protested against the proposal of the department to add a couple of yards of accommodation to the present ramshackle old building. Precisely the same remark might be made about the local public school, which was built to accommodate 200 or 300 children, and had to accommodate twice that number.

The TREASURER: That is the fault of the people. If they will find one-fifth the money, the Government will build the school.

Mr. LESINA: The people collected a certain amount, and a pledge had been given to find the remaining £20 inside the next twelve months, when a letter from the department demanded £40. The people of his district demanded better treatment. They protested against the plans which had been adopted, and [12:30 a.m.] they asked for the matter to be reconsidered. They claimed that they

were entitled to a better courthouse, a better lands office, and a better school for their children. Furthermore, the local residents claimed that they knew more about local requirements than a strange police magistrate. There was scarcely a small town in the whole colony that had such inferior public buildings, but on inquiry it was generally found that the places whose wants were best attended to were represented by Ministers or Ministerial supporters, who managed to secure much more consideration than opponents of the Government. They could, it seemed, find money for almost anything but dire necessities. They could find money to send away 250 troops to fight for liberty elsewhere, but they could not find enough to put a school in order, or to build a decent courthouse, or construct water-works for an important section of the people. The only remedy he seemed to have was to continually repeat his complaints, and in future he intended to repeat them and repeat them on every available opportunity. Hitherto he had merely referred to such matters briefly. In future he would be found protesting in season and out of season, and he cared not what time he occupied. He intended to advocate at length the just claims of his district to a fair and necessary share of public expenditure. He would offer no apology to the Government or anyone else for doing so. That was the attitude he intended to take up from that time forth.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions, and obtained leave to sit again at a later hour of the day, and the resolutions were ordered to be received at the next sitting of the House.

The House adjourned at twenty-two minutes to 1 o'clock.