

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 22 DECEMBER 1899

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QUESTIONS.

LEASES OF THE CHILLAGOE RAILWAY AND MINES, LIMITED.

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

1. What ordinary leases outside of the special 2,000 acres held under the Mareeba-Chillagoe Railway Act are held by the Chillagoe Railway and Mines, Limited?
2. Are not a number of ordinary leases adjoining the special leases, and aggregating 840 acres, held in the name of Jno. Moffatt?
3. Are not these 840 acres of ordinary leases held by Mr. Moffatt as trustee for the Chillagoe Railway and Mines, Limited?
4. Were not these leases (which are named first, second, third, and so on up to the twenty-seventh) applied for in July of last year?
5. Has any work been done on these leases?
6. If they are not held on behalf of the Chillagoe Railway and Mines, how is it that exemption has been granted on them on the ground that the necessary labour to man the leases is being concentrated on railway construction?
7. Is it not a fact that, although they are held in the name of Jno. Moffatt, the Chillagoe Railway and Mines, Limited, has issued a map showing these ordinary leases as being the property of the Chillagoe Railway and Mines?

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

1. Sixty-five leases, comprising an area of 1,285 acres.
2. Sixty-five leases were applied for by John Moffatt, transfers to the Chillagoe Railway and Mines, Limited, being lodged at Mines Office on 16th November, 1899.
3. Leases were applied for by John Moffatt, the applications not showing they were for the company.
4. Applications for leases named first, second, third, and so on up to twenty-seven, were lodged on 27th May, 1898.
5. No.
6. Answered in the above replies.
7. No map issued by the company furnished to the department.

"GARDEN OF QUEENSLAND."

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

1. Has there been a book published by the Government called the "Garden of Queensland"?
2. If so, who was the author?
3. What was the cost of same?
4. Was the author in the Government service?
5. If so, is it true that he had six months' leave of absence on full pay?
6. What was the amount paid him for such work?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. R. Dickson, *Bulimba*), for the Secretary for Agriculture, replied—

1. The book referred to was not published by the Government, but a number of copies were purchased on Government account.
2. The author was Mr. George Essex Evans.
3. £400 was paid for 10,000 copies.
4. Mr. George Essex Evans was and still is district registrar at Toowoomba.
5. Mr. Evans was granted leave of absence for six weeks from 14th November, 1898, to which he was entitled under the Public Service Regulations. The leave was subsequently extended to the end of February, 1899, making three and a-half months in all.
6. No payment has been made by the Government other than the £400 above referred to.

FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*) asked the Home Secretary—

Is it his intention to extend the provisions of the Factories and Shops Act to those places recommended by the Chief Inspector and other inspectors in the Chief Inspector's report for 1898?

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

The whole question of extension of the Act is now under consideration.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

FRIDAY, 22 DECEMBER, 1899.

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

PAPERS.

The following papers, laid upon the table, were ordered to be printed:—

- Further correspondence respecting despatch of additional troops to South Africa.
- Further correspondence respecting future administration of British New Guinea.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

LEASE OF BARRON FALLS.

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*): I desire to ask the Attorney-General, without notice—Whether it is true that, in addressing the electors of Enoggera last night, he said that the issue of the lease of the Barron Falls to the Chillagoe Railway and Mines, Limited, had the approval of all the local authorities of Cairns? and, if so, will the Government lay on the table of the House the official approval of those local authorities?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge, *Maranoa*) replied—What I said was that, when the Home Secretary went up, after negotiations had been pending, he went up accompanied by the mayor of Cairns and members of local bodies; and although there was at first a feeling of opposition to the granting of the lease, yet that feeling had turned round in favour of granting the lease. I referred to the matter to show that everything that had been done in the matter had been done in the fullest light of open day—

Mr. GIVENS: Nothing of the kind.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: And with the knowledge of influential persons.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

TRANSVAAL CONTINGENT.

The SPEAKER (Hon. A. Morgan, *Warwick*): I have received from the hon. member for Dalby an intimation of his intention to move the adjournment of the House this afternoon in order to call attention to a matter of urgent public importance—namely, the insufficient steps about to be taken by the Government to secure the presence in South Africa of those Queenslanders who are both able and willing to take part with the Imperial forces in the military operations against the South African Republic and the Orange Free State.

* Mr. BELL (*Dalby*): I am taking this course with the consent of my leader—

Mr. SPEAKER: Do I understand the hon. member to move a motion?

Mr. BELL: I intend to move a motion.

The SPEAKER: Is the motion supported?

Not less than five members having risen in their places in support of the motion,

Mr. BELL: I move this motion with the consent of my leader, and I bring it forward because it has been strongly in my mind for some time that, in regard to the crisis taking place in South Africa, this colony is being represented very inadequately, and not at all in proportion to the desire which exists among a great many inhabitants of Queensland. When the first contingent was despatched from Queensland, it was rigorously confined to men who had passed through the Defence Force, and although offers came from all parts of Queensland of men who were capable horsemen, good shots, and useful bushmen, their services were rejected by the Brigade Office on account of the fact that they had not actually qualified in drill. Within my knowledge, a man from the Mitchell district, one of the best horsebreakers in the district, an athletic man, and an admirable bushman, volunteered to go and take a couple of horses, but owing to the fact that the man had not any certificate of drill, his services were rejected; and there are within my knowledge many other similar cases. Without taking an alarmist view of the situation, or dwelling unduly on what has happened, it will be admitted, I think, that the proceedings in South Africa are of such a character as to make every man in this community take a very lively interest in them. That

interest undoubtedly is diffused throughout this community, and I regret that the practical expression of it that is being shown by the Government is limited to a contingent of 150 men. It may be said that 150 men represent the proportionate quota of Queensland towards the federal contingent, and no doubt that is so; but as a matter of fact New South Wales is contributing a great deal more than her quota. I believe her proper proportion is about 450 men, and she is sending, I believe, 740 men; and it seems to me, therefore, that as New South Wales is so impressed with the gravity of the situation as to exceed her proper quota, there is no reason why the Queensland Government should not take some similar action.

The SPEAKER: I understood that the hon. gentleman intended to confine himself to one specific subject. He advised me that he proposed to draw attention to the apparently insufficient steps being taken by the Government to secure the presence in South Africa of those Queenslanders who are able and willing to take part with the Imperial forces in the military operations now being carried on there. I gather from the hon. gentleman's remarks that he thinks the contingent which it is proposed to send from this colony to South Africa is insufficient in number. That, however, is a matter that has already been determined by the House.

Mr. BELL: I am not quarrelling with the determination of this House to send a contingent of 150 men. What I am doing—and I submit I am in order in so doing—is to suggest that, irrespective of the determination which has been arrived at to send 150 men, the Government should, over and beyond that, take steps to assist those other members of the community to whom I have referred, who are prepared to go out and take part in the operations in South Africa. That I submit is entirely within the terms of my communication to you, Sir, and not in conflict with the determination of the House already arrived at. I may put my argument in another way. The House has authorised the Government to send 150 men. It is perfectly within the province of any hon. member at any subsequent period to get up and say that events have subsequently arisen and are now arising which warrant the Government in taking further steps to assist other men who are desirous of going to South Africa. I was endeavouring to show that New South Wales was contributing more than her proper quota, and that therefore the argument which might be used by the Queensland Government if they chose to use it—I do not think for a moment they would—that they should confine themselves to sending 150 men—that argument would not really apply. It is within the knowledge of many hon. members that a great number of good bushmen possessing their own horses, men able to use a rifle, are prepared to go to South Africa if they receive some assistance from the Government in the matter of transport; and I suggest that the Government should be prepared to transport to South Africa men who can pass a medical examination—limiting the number if you will—who possess the qualifications I have described.

Mr. JACKSON: Would their services be accepted?

Mr. BELL: The hon. gentleman has put a pertinent question. One of the things which prompted me in moving the motion is the fact that in the newspaper Press of yesterday, I think, I saw that Mr. Chamberlain had stated that he was prepared to take men of the type I described, men who are good bushmen, good horsemen, but who need not necessarily have

been members of any drilled force. And I believe the fact that he mentioned that point is a distinct indication of the gravity with which the Imperial Government view the situation in South Africa. General Sir Redvers Buller has been authorised to raise there corps of men for mounted work, and I venture to say that no capable man offering himself for enlistment in those corps will be rejected merely because he happens not to be a drilled man. I believe some of the best fighting material we have in Queensland happens to be undrilled material; but the great thing is to get the material out there; and I believe that both on the voyage and at some depôt in South Africa the men we shall be able to send will soon be licked into shape, and at an early date be able to make an effective appearance in the field. I hope the Chief Secretary and the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government will take a liberal view of this suggestion: that those men, representing all that is typical of good bushmen in Queensland—men who are prepared to go with their own horses to South Africa—will receive encouragement from the Government, and that in this crisis in the history of the British Empire Queensland will not act in a grudging manner.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp Townsville): I sympathise with the hon. member for Dalby in his remarks, but he should have made his speech dealing with the matter two days ago, when the House unanimously carried a motion that a certain number of additional men should be sent to South Africa. When this motion was before the House, the hon. member for Dalby asked whether these men would be confined to drilled men, and I said, "Certainly not," but that what were wanted were good horsemen and good shots. I do not think the position has changed in the last two days.

Mr. GIVENS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Personally I do not think we should grudge sending more men to South Africa, if they were wanted. We ought to participate with the other colonies in sending men to South Africa. We were invited by the other colonies to send a quota of 150, which we have raised to 160. I think we are doing our share up to the present in this respect. If the other colonies wish to send more men, I think we should be justified in joining with them in sending another contingent. We have engaged a vessel for these 160 men and 175 horses. I am sure the selection will not be confined to trained men, if we can get good riders and good shots, because I think the bushmen of the colony are the best men to send.

Mr. FISHER: Who selects them?

The PREMIER: The Acting Commandant; and I think he will do his best to get the best possible men.

Mr. TURLEY (*Brisbane South*): I am astounded at the hon. member for Dalby bringing in this motion now, which practically amounts to a vote of censure on the Government. It is no use pretending that it is his overflowing loyalty that induces him to do this, because the hon. gentleman had his opportunity the other day, when the motion that 160 additional men should be sent came on. The hon. member should have raised any objection then, if he thought that a larger number of men were necessary to be sent, or that more freedom should be given to the Government in the matter than the Government asked for. This side of the House was in accord with the motion moved by the Premier on that day. Now the hon. member for Dalby comes down, as he says, with the con-

sent of his leader, and brings forward this motion. I was under the impression that, considering the state of business in the House, everything would be done to facilitate the business of the country, with the object of closing the session as early as possible. Instead of that, the hon. gentleman comes down with a motion which, if it were fully debated, would lead to hours of discussion. Surely the hon. member for Dalby understands that every hon. member has the right to freely debate such a matter as has been submitted by him, and that would take all day. The hon. member, I think, is taking an unfair advantage of his position and of the expression of opinion given to him by his leader. The Premier has stated that the men to be sent will not be confined to drilled men, and that other good horsemen and good shots could be selected. It is only fair to ask the hon. member if he is prepared to do anything of the sort himself, or does he stand here as an exponent of the view of certain persons who have made application to him? Are there numbers of people who have communicated with the hon. member with the object of getting assistance in this way to go out to South Africa? If so, why were they not able to communicate with the head of the Government? That would have been a far better method of dealing with the matter. In that case the Government would have been able to come to the House and say that they wanted more power in order to send men who were good horsemen and good shots. Instead of that, we have the hon. member coming down with a sort of a motion for adjournment, which the hon. member knows will be absolutely ineffective, and when the hon. gentleman finishes by withdrawing his motion, he will not be able to get any expression of opinion from hon. members whether they are in favour of the Government taking the desired action or not. No doubt he will then pose as a patriot and say that he is the one person who has said that the Government were not capable of looking after their own business. The hon. member's action is an unprecedented way of doing things. He had his opportunity two days ago, and he did not avail himself of it. He says Queensland is only sending a small proportion, as compared with the other colonies; but, seeing that a great deal of discussion arose throughout the Australian colonies when the last contingent was being sent away, to the effect that it would be more effective if an Australian contingent were despatched, than if each of the colonies sent their own contingents in proportion to the population of each colony, I do not see what he has to complain of. Now, the hon. member said the number of men to be sent was not enough. Does he contend that the sending of a federal contingent is wrong?

The SPEAKER: Order! I would point out to the hon. member that the general question of sending troops to South Africa is not now before the House. The only question that can now be discussed is whether sufficient steps have been taken by the Government to secure the presence in South Africa of those Queenslanders who are able and willing to take part with the Imperial forces in the military operations now being carried on there. The discussion must be confined to that subject alone.

Mr. TURLEY: The hon. member for Dalby pointed out the complications that had arisen in South Africa, and that Sir Redvers Buller had been authorised to raise certain troops, and that he was under the impression that men would not be rejected because they were not drilled. That may be so, but what the hon. member was aiming at has been met by what his leader has said—that they are not confining their selection

to men who have only been drilled in the corps of Queensland. They are prepared [4 p.m.] to accept people from outside who are prepared to go. The hon. gentleman apparently thinks that is not sufficient. I would point out that the hon. gentleman has brought forward a motion, whether he intended or not, which will have the effect of wasting a considerable amount of time, and which does not give him or the Government the opportunity of ascertaining the views of hon. members as to whether they are in favour of it or not.

Mr. ANNEAR: What about the waste of time last night?

Mr. TURLEY: There were matters that came before the House last night that should have taken four or five days to discuss; but we allowed them to go through in one night. It is always the same at the end of the session. Business comes before this House which affects every person, which means the spending of £2,000,000 or £3,000,000, and goes through in the course of three or four hours, while other and less important matters are discussed for some considerable time. I wish to point out that we had such matters before the House last night as the Police Superannuation Fund, which may involve the country ultimately in a matter of £500,000; but coming on in the early hours of the morning it was not able to be discussed. The fact of business coming on at the end of the session prevents members from giving it that real discussion that it deserves. I do not think for a moment that the Government are sheltering themselves behind the hon. member for Dalby; but that the hon. member has taken advantage of some expression which was used by the Premier, and interpreted it in his own liberal manner.

* Mr. J. HAMILTON (*Cook*): This is not the time for party recrimination.

Mr. TURLEY: There is no party recrimination in it.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: I feel sure that there is no hon. member in this House who would dream of doing such a thing at this juncture. We are all desirous of upholding the honour of the British flag. Whatever interpretations may be put on the action of the hon. member for Dalby, we know very well that it is prompted by patriotism. We know he intended no vote of censure on the Government. The fact of him sitting behind the Government is fact proof of that. In this instance he has actually consulted the Government. There is evidently some slight misunderstanding.

The PREMIER: About the selection, not about the matter itself.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: It is not a vote of censure. The Government decided, and we all agreed, to send a certain number of men—a certain number of drilled, disciplined men—who were to be paid by the Government. This is a different matter altogether. This is to allow the Government, in addition to that, to send a certain number of men provided their passages are merely paid. I do not quite agree with the hon. member in one thing—namely, that it is not necessary that the men who go should be drilled. It is far more desirable to get men who are drilled and who can ride and shoot than men who can ride and shoot without being drilled. If this motion is carried it will be desirable to get the best men we can, who are possessed of all the attributes necessary for such a force. In connection with this matter, I suggest that no one be allowed to go unless he is of the full age

of twenty-one years. We know what Napoleon said: that men under twenty-three or twenty-four years of age simply help to fill the hospitals.

Mr. KIDSTON: He is dead.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: His opinion dead is worth far more than the opinion of the hon. member alive. I am sure we are all imbued with the same idea, and will not descend to any party recrimination. The Acting Commandant is sending round to the commanding officers throughout the colony, asking what men feel inclined to volunteer. I suggest, in addition to that, that advertisements be put in the various newspapers—I am sure the newspapers are sufficiently patriotic to put them in without any charge—stating the qualifications required (drill, riding, and shooting), the number of men that the Government desire, and asking those who possess these qualifications and are desirous of enlisting to send in their names and details of qualifications. The result of that will probably be that we shall have a far larger number of applications than if we simply confine ourselves to the method now adopted. It is evident that the larger the selection there is, the better men we shall probably get. There is one thing in connection with this that I should like to mention. We can get Lee-Enfield rifles from Sydney. We have a Whitworth rest, and it is only necessary to fix it up. That can be done at a cost of about £30 or £40. Major-General French and Colonel Umphelby, the winner of the Queen's prize in Victoria, in reply to letters from me, say they have found them to answer splendidly for testing the sighting of rifles. To show how necessary it is to test rifles, I will read an extract from what has been written by Mr. Jeffrey, one of the best rifle makers in the world—

As regards the shooting of the .303 military rifle, we have found that only about two or three rifles out of ten are capable of hitting a man 200 or 300 yards off if aimed straight to the object. We have tested hundreds of these rifles, and find that they show from 4 inches to 6 inches right at 100 yards, and that at 300 yards from 12 inches to 15 inches. With rifles like these our soldiers would stand a very poor chance in skirmishing against continental troops, whose rifles are usually correctly sighted. Just for the sake of saving 6d. or 1s. on each rifle our Government do not take any steps to test the accuracy of the weapons turned out by them. It is true that they fire a few shots from a fixed rest from a certain proportion of the rifles that they manufacture, but they do not trouble whether the bullets hit the mark aimed at so long as they group closely on the target.

Therefore I suggest that our Whitworth rest be set up immediately at some place, and that all the rifles be tested. It can be done at a cost of a few shillings apiece, and then each man will have a good reliable weapon.

Mr. KIDSTON (*Rockhampton*): The hon. member who has just sat down says this is not the time for party recrimination. I think hon. members on this side of the House have shown within the last day or two that they are quite of that opinion.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIDSTON: Hon. members opposite know quite well, and it is a natural thing, that the party who are getting their own way are always very apt to charge the other side with party purposes.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: No one has charged that. I have not charged it.

Mr. KIDSTON: Some hon. members opposite, with many hon. members sitting on this side of the House, are, as a matter of policy, opposed to Australian troops being sent out of Australia. They also know that we have recognised the gravity of the situation in which the Imperial authorities have found themselves in South

Africa, and in view of the present position of the Empire, we have waived our personal opinions, and joined in a patriotic attempt to help the old country.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIDSTON: If any men in this House can lay a claim to patriotism on this occasion, it is the men who are giving up their personal opinions on a question of policy. I quite agree with the hon. member for Dalby that Australia might have sent more men. If Australia is going to make a pretence of taking up the burdens of Empire—which she unquestionably is doing at this time—then her contribution to the army in South Africa should have been—not 1,000 men, but 10,000 men. I am quite aware that many persons would have scrupled about sending 10,000 men, who are throwing up their hats over the despatch of 1,000. But, while I am of that opinion, I cannot help recognising that the Government of Queensland, in sending the present contingent, have done what they were asked to do. They are quite willing, probably, to do more, and they show no grudging spirit in giving what they are asked, but they have given what they were asked. Under the circumstances I do not think the Government can, in reason, be expected to do more in the matter. To give more than is asked in a case of this sort is really passing a sort of vote of censure on the Imperial Government. It is tantamount to telling them that we know their requirements better than they do themselves. There is not the slightest occasion for hysterics. The hon. member for Dalby is inclined to be a little hysterical—a little panic-stricken—in this matter. It would show more loyalty—it would at least show more strength of character—to place more dependence on the Imperial Administration. It is not necessary for men to lose their heads in this way because British arms in South Africa have met with a temporary check. I admit the situation is grave, but surely, while admitting that, we may believe that we have men equal to dealing with even such a grave situation as the present. I have no doubt at all that the men who have the control of affairs in South Africa will ultimately show that they are capable of retrieving the reverses which have been met with. There is another point, which was referred to by the hon. member for South Brisbane, and that is this: If this motion had been moved from this side of the House it would have been said that we were trying to take the business out of the hands of the Government.

Mr. COWLEY: No, I am sure it would not.

Mr. KIDSTON: It was only the other evening, when a motion of this kind was moved, that it was pointed out that to carry it would be to defeat the Government, and turn it out of office. I would like to know from the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government whether he accepts this as a motion of want of confidence, and whether, in the event of its being carried, he will resign, and advise the Lieutenant-Governor to send for the hon. member for Dalby.

Mr. ANNEAR: He might send for a worse man.

Mr. KIDSTON: There are worse men in this House. I have no complaint to make on that score. I am only pointing out the situation—that if this House carries this motion, it will be a vote of censure on the Government, and, if the Government accept the motion, they will admit their incapacity to deal with the situation, and have to be publicly instructed by the hon. member for Dalby; and, although under the circumstances, they might not feel called upon to resign, they would require to take the hon. member for Dalby into the Ministry in some way or other, so that they could get the benefit of his superior

abilities without risking a public defeat in this way. I would like to know from some member of the Government whether they look upon this as an attempt on the part of the hon. member for Dalby to oust them from office. There is another question which should be asked, seeing that the matter has been raised. We shall probably be disbanding in a few days, and going back to our homes. Now that the matter is under discussion it would be well if the Government would give the House to understand what policy they intend to pursue in the future in this respect—or, whether, when we come back—for I recognise that there is a possibility of it—we may have to blame the Government for again taking action without consulting Parliament. It might be as well for the Government to give some indication of what they intend to do in the event of such a contingency arising.

Mr. COWLEY (*Herbert*): While giving the hon. member for Dalby credit for the very best intentions, I think he has made a slight mistake in moving this motion.

Mr. DAWSON: Why not let well alone?

Mr. COWLEY: Perhaps the hon. member will control his own followers, without endeavouring to control me. I have not sworn allegiance to the senior member for Charters Towers, and I decline to be dictated to by the hon. member.

Mr. DAWSON: I would be sorry to have you as a follower.

Mr. COWLEY: While I give the hon. member for Dalby credit for the best intentions, I think he has made a slight mistake. I wish to point out to him this fact—that when the war broke out in South Africa, colonial men of the very character whom the hon. member wishes to send offered their services to the Imperial Government, and since General Buller went out they also offered their services to him, and he stated that at that juncture he was not prepared to accept them. What the Imperial Government required was thoroughly drilled, disciplined, and trained men. I would say in passing that, whilst not depreciating in the very slightest the hon. member for Dalby, or the class of men he wants to send, that both on the frontier of Cape Colony and on the frontier of Natal, men of the very character and description which he wishes to send are to be found in abundance, with this additional advantage that they have experience of the country, and know both the language of the Dutch and of the Kafir, and therefore are much more valuable than any men who might be sent from Australia, unless they are thoroughly trained and disciplined.

Mr. BELL: Why are they calling for this class of men now?

Mr. COWLEY: They are calling for disciplined troops; and what I wish to point out is, that the very class of men which the hon. member desires to send are to be obtained there, if the Imperial Government are willing to accept their services. I do not wish to prolong the debate, because I know there is a great deal of business to be done to-day, and I sincerely trust that after the expression of opinion we have had from the Premier the hon. member will withdraw his motion.

Mr. SMITH (*Bowen*): I am inclined to think that the hon. member for Dalby is quite right in calling attention to the fact that there are many young men in the colony who are not drilled, but who would yet be admirably suited for service in South Africa. At the same time I think that, all other things being equal, preference should be given to the drilled men, because unless they are drilled to move in bodies it is difficult to manoeuvre, as anyone knows who has any knowledge of troops. What I wish to emphasise is

that it would be well if the Government were to give a chance to young men who wish to volunteer in places where there is not an ordinary company of the Defence Force at the present time. I think it would be well if the call for volunteers were more widely known than it can be through commanding officers. I have had communications from young men who would be willing to volunteer, but who do not know how to go about it, and I am of opinion that if the intimation were a little more general throughout the colony the Government would get plenty of drilled men to volunteer for this service.

* Mr. BELL, in reply: I merely wish to say that I am sorry that the innocent motion which I have brought forward should be made the occasion for some decidedly disagreeable criticisms with regard to myself. It was only about two days ago that, in talking with the Acting Commandant, I heard from him that his intention was that these 150 men should be raised from men who were already in the mounted infantry or the infantry of the Defence Force. It then crossed my mind that it would be a lamentable thing that men who were in every respect suitable for enlistment should be debarred from representing Queensland, merely because they happened not to have been drilled. Since this discussion has taken place I have had a conversation with the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government, and I learn that it has been decided to get these 150 men, not necessarily from men who have been drilled, but from all over the colony. I am very glad to hear that that is so, because it will certainly give the military authorities a better selection. But over and above these 150, I should still like to see the Government assisting, by providing passages, men who pass a doctor's examination, and who possess a horse, and who are ready to go to South Africa. I regret that in addition to these 150 men we have not drawn in other respects upon our regular forces. I am very sorry that our permanent battery of artillery is not being despatched to South Africa. I say this, not from what an hon. member on the other side termed hysteria, for I think that everything is going to end properly in South Africa—

The HOME SECRETARY: Why the permanent artillery, and not the field artillery?

Mr. BELL: I should like to see the field artillery go, but I have been so sat upon for what has already been said that it seemed wiser to refrain from further suggestion. I should like to see the permanent and the field artillery as well go to South Africa, not because I view the present position of affairs with alarm, but because the work they would do, and the experience they would obtain in South Africa, would be more to them than a couple of years' drill in Queensland. I hope that later on, if the state of things in South Africa does not improve, the Government will take steps to further the passage to South Africa of that excellent material in Queensland which exists in abundance, but which does not happen to be drilled. I hope the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government is seized of what I really mean. With the permission of the House I will withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

RAILWAYS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL. CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS. COMMITTEE.

On the new clause, proposed to be inserted by the Council, as follows:—

2 This Act shall be deemed to have commenced and taken effect on and from the twentieth day of December, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine, and to that extent shall have retrospective operation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. R. Dickson, *Bulimba*) moved that the amendment of the Council be agreed to. This Bill was introduced for the purpose of continuing the engagement of the Commissioner for Railways for a period of twelve months, which was reduced by the Committee to ten months; and it was understood that the whole question of the management of our railways should be brought before Parliament as early as possible next session. The engagement of the Commissioner terminated on the 20th of this month, and the amending Bill extending his engagement was not passed by the Council till the 21st, so that there was a hiatus of one day between the period when his engagement terminated and the time when, by statute, his engagement was renewed, and the amendment proposed by the Council was to cover that small interval, and to make the engagement of the Commissioner date from the period when his original engagement expired.

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*): The necessity for that amendment was the best illustration [4:30 p.m.] they could have of the mistake the Government made in delaying that measure to such a late period of the session.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: But for recent events these Bills would have been before the House some weeks ago.

Mr. FISHER: Why were they not before the House weeks ago? The Government surely had control of the business paper! Here an important Bill was brought down two or three days before the close of the session when it was necessary to put it through in one day, and they found that it required to be amended by the Legislative Council to make it retrospective to cover a period that had not been provided for. He only desired to add that the amendment was a necessary and a purely formal one.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the Council's amendment.

The report was adopted, and the Bill ordered to be returned to the Council.

PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT. COMMITTEE.

On new clause, to follow clause 1, as follows:—

This Act shall be deemed to have commenced and taken effect on and from the sixteenth day of December, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine, and to that extent shall have retrospective operation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the amendment found necessary in that Bill arose through a similar defect to that which had been referred to in the previous Bill, except that the interregnum to be provided for covered a period between the 16th December and the present time. He moved that the Legislative Council's amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the Council's amendment.

The report was adopted, and the Bill ordered to be returned to the Council.

MOUNT MORGAN GAS, ETC., BILL.

CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.

On the Order of the Day being read for the consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's amendment in this Bill—

Mr. CALLAN (*Fitzroy*) said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that you do now leave the chair.

Mr. HIGGS (*Fortitude Valley*): When this Bill came before the House the other day, I was absent on municipal council business, otherwise I should have opposed it. As I wish to oppose

it now, I again reiterate that I consider all these public services, which are in the nature of monopolies, should be in the hands of public bodies. I hope, therefore, that though this is at a somewhat late stage, the House will throw the Bill out by voting against the motion that you do now leave the chair.

Question put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 38.

Messrs. Philp, Chataway, Foxton, Dickson, Dalrymple, O'Connell, Murray, Grimes, Tooth, Lord, Stodart, T. B. Cribb, Forsyth, Bridges, Fisher, Leahy, Dibley, McDouneil, Stewart, Story, Petrie, Mackintosh, Forrest, Dawson, Jenkinson, Maxwell, Lesina, Browne, Moore, J. Hamilton, Jackson, Glassey, Callan, Smith, Cowley, Stephenson, Givens, and G. Thorn.

NOES, 2.

Messrs. Higgs and Ryland.

Resolved in the affirmative.

COMMITTEE.

Mr. CALLAN moved that the Legislative Council's amendment be agreed to. It was simply the substitution of the word "company" for "corporation."

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*) agreed that the amendment was a formal one, but he took that opportunity of pointing out that clause 29 gave ample power to the local authority to take over the works whenever they thought necessary.

Mr. HIGGS would like it to be explained how the municipal council could take over the works, and what was likely to be the price they would be asked to pay when it was proposed to take them over.

The CHAIRMAN: I may point out to the hon. member that we have before us an amendment by the Legislative Council. We cannot discuss another portion of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Mr. CALLAN moved that the Chairman leave the chair, and report that the Committee agreed to the Legislative Council's amendment.

Mr. HIGGS: It was a matter of regret that his side had such a small minority on the recent division. He did not expect that the majority of members would vote against the Bill, but he deemed it necessary to oppose the measure, because, although in the minority, he believed the time was not very far distant when the rate-payers of the colony in the various wards and divisions would recognise that those services, which were now in the nature of a monopoly, should be taken over by public bodies.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in referring to that question on the motion that I do now leave the chair.

Question put and passed.

The report was adopted, and the Bill ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council.

JOINT COMMITTEES.

COUNCIL'S MESSAGE.

The PREMIER: I beg to move that the following message be returned to the Legislative Council:—

The Legislative Assembly, having had under consideration the message of the Legislative Council, of yesterday's date, relative to the control of the Parliamentary Buildings, and refreshment-rooms and library during the recess, beg now to intimate that they concur in the resolution contained in that message.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*): I asked the Home Secretary to-day this question—

Is it his intention to extend the provisions of the Factories and Shops Act to those places recommended by the Chief Inspector and other inspectors in the Chief Inspector's report for 1893?

The hon. gentleman's reply was that the whole question of the extension of the Act was under consideration. This matter was brought up last year at the end of the session, when a somewhat similar answer was given. That is the usual stereotyped answer given, in my opinion, to evade the question that has been asked. Over twelve months ago the Chief Inspector of Factories recommended an extension of the Act to places which are now outside the boundaries of the districts proclaimed. In the report of that officer for 1898, he states—

During my visit to the outside districts I consulted each inspector as to any extension or alteration of the boundaries of their respective districts which would, in their opinion, be an improvement on the present boundaries for the purposes of the Act, and for the information of the Minister, I beg to quote the result of these inquiries. The principal large works outside Townsville are the Ross River Meatworks, about four miles out; North Queensland Meat Export Company's works, seventeen miles out. These works employ at certain seasons about 500 men, and use fourteen boilers.

A few miles outside Rockhampton are the Lake's Creek works, employing 800, while along the Central line, of convenient access thereto, are about sixteen works, employing a total of about 600 persons.

I beg to refer to the report of the inspector at Bundaberg on this subject, and to endorse his recommendations thereon.

The inspector at Bundaberg states in his report—

Some anomalies, owing to boundary fixed, were soon apparent, bakers and butchers outside the municipality delivering within same, and when called upon to comply, taking no notice; another anomaly being that all the large centres of employ, such as Millaquin refinery, Bundaberg foundry, gasworks, three sawmills, brewery, two distilleries, employing between them in all about 300 hands all the year round, are all outside present boundary. If it is intended to obviate the above state of affairs, I would propose that the boundary be as at present, with the addition of that portion of Subdivision No. 3, Woongarra Division, which includes Millaquin refinery, Bundaberg distillery, brewery, and sawmills, commonly called East Bundaberg; also that portion of subdivision 1 of portion 2, parish of Gooburrum, which includes the foundry; also all that portion of the parish of Gooburrum commonly called North Bundaberg. I think these additions would meet all requirements and bring a large number under the benefits of the Act.

During the discussion of the Estimates in 1898 this matter was urged on the Minister in charge of the Estimates at that time because according to the provisions of the Factories and Shops Act of 1896, section 3—

1. This Act shall apply only to such localities as are declared by the Governor in Council, by proclamation in the *Gazette*, to be a district or districts for the purposes of this Act.

3. The Governor in Council may, by proclamation as aforesaid, revoke, vary, or alter any proclamation published under this section.

I say that during the discussion of the Estimates last year this matter was urged by myself and other members on this side; it was brought up again the last day of the session of 1898, and the hon. gentleman who at present fills the position of Home Secretary promised to consider the matter. On the 4th of last June I waited on the hon. gentleman and pointed out the necessity for the extension of the provisions of the Act to those districts.

The HOME SECRETARY: In the middle of June.

Mr. McDONNELL: Yes, it was in the middle of June—the 17th. During the discussion of the Estimates this year the matter was again brought under the notice of the hon. gentleman. I said to him—

There is one matter you might refer to—that is the extension of the provisions of the Act.

Of course that is the Factories Act. The hon. gentleman then said—

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.

That was on the 21st November last.

The HOME SECRETARY: Last month.

Mr. McDONNELL: A month ago. This matter has been under consideration evidently for over twelve months. It is pointed out clearly in the report of the Chief Inspector that these places are immediately outside the boundaries of districts, particularly in Bundaberg, where the Act is at present in operation. The hon. gentleman has the power in his hands to alter the boundaries; and I am sure that any person who is desirous of extending the benefits of the Factories Act, little though they may be, would say that those places should at once be brought under its provisions. It is stated in the report of the Rockhampton inspector that a large number of boys who are refused employment in Rockhampton, boys of tender age who cannot be employed under the provisions of the Act, can go to the Lake's Creek meatworks and find employment there. I think if there is one thing more than another that this Act is urgently required for it is to protect the youth of our colony, and to prevent them being allowed to go out to work before they are of a certain age, because it is a well-known fact that in many cases those boys and girls who go out to work at a tender age receive practically no remuneration for their labour, and I think it is unfortunate that whilst we have an Act on the statute book which prevents the exploitation of the youth of our colony in this respect the authorities have not yet seen their way to extend its provisions to districts where it should have been in operation for some years past. I say now, at the close of the session, because this is the last opportunity we shall have of bringing up the subject this year, that the hon. gentleman ought to be able to come down and definitely state whether he is prepared to extend the provisions of the Act to those places which are recommended by his own inspectors. If he is not prepared to do that he ought to be prepared to tell us, because the answer given to-day, in my opinion, is simply an evasion, seeing that the matter has been under consideration for the last fourteen or fifteen months.

[5 p.m.] I do not think it can be a satisfactory answer to those hon. gentlemen who represent the localities to which the inspector refers in his report. I may say that when I brought this matter up last year, the hon. member for Bundaberg emphasised the necessity for the extension of the provisions of the Act to that district, and he and I, at that time, were of opinion that, when the next session came round, the provisions of the Act would be extended to that and other districts mentioned in the inspector's report. I do not wish to take up the time of the House at any great length on this matter, but I will say this: That the Act is a great benefit, to young people especially, and it is very necessary to include the places now exempt from its provisions. I understand the Act is urgently required to apply to those men working in sugar refineries and meatworks. In the sugar refineries there are large quantities of machinery, and the sanitary arrangements there are not in the condition they might be in. The same remarks apply to meatworks, and I have been informed by men who have worked in these works that the sanitary arrangements there are in a deplorable condition. There will be no trouble in extending the provisions of the statute to these works, and it is our duty to insist on the Government doing that.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*): I am not surprised at the hon. member's attitude towards me, when he

says that the answer I have given is nothing more or less than an evasion. I say it is the simple truth. The matter is still under consideration. The hon. member is correct when he says that the matter has been under consideration for a long time, but I have not been able to get all the information I desired. For a large portion of the recess I was away, and when the Estimates were on—I think on the 21st November—I told the hon. member for Fortitude Valley that the matter was then being considered. The hon. member has evidently forgotten the political episode which has since intervened, during which the party he supports were in power and did nothing. Had that episode not intervened, I might have been prepared to carry out the recommendations of the Chief Inspector; but I am not quite certain what those recommendations are. I have not had an opportunity of consulting with Mr. McLay, because he has been away. He has returned to-day, but I have not yet an opportunity of consulting with him on the matter as to what action should be taken.

Mr. HIGGS: When are you going to appoint the additional inspector?

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not know until I consult Mr. McLay. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley, I understand, thinks that my answer to his question is simply an evasion.

Mr. McDONNELL: That is my opinion.

The HOME SECRETARY: Well, the hon. member is welcome to that opinion. He is perhaps unable to see that the circumstances which I have alluded to have prevented me from doing anything in the matter until to-day, and Mr. McLay has not been available since I gave the hon. member the information I did. I told the hon. member when the Estimates were on that there would be difficulties with regard to some of Mr. McLay's recommendations, because he has not made it quite clear what they are. He gives a list, which apparently emanates from the report of one of his subordinates. I wish to clear this up; whether he recommends that certain isolated districts mentioned should be brought in—they are scattered throughout the colony and are not connected with any present proclaimed districts at all. If they are recommendations, I will give them serious consideration. With regard to the extension of the boundaries, the only question is where these boundaries should go, and, as it is a somewhat difficult thing to arrive at boundaries, it may be necessary to call in the assistance of the Surveyor-General, so that the boundaries may be technically and properly described. It is easy to describe the boundaries of towns like Bundaberg and Rockhampton. Of course I do not expect to satisfy the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, but I hope I have satisfied other hon. members who are more reasonable than he is.

Mr. GLASSEY (*Bundaberg*): I certainly do not wish, at this late stage of the session, to prolong this discussion, and I hope it is the intention of hon. members to conclude the business of the session to-night or to-morrow morning, so as to enable hon. members, who live at a distance, to reach their homes as soon as possible. But I do say this, that I hope the Home Secretary will delay no longer in seeing that the suggestions made in the Chief Inspector's report—which are supported by his subordinates—are carried out, so that the provisions of the Act will be extended to those important works in my district. It must be obvious to the Home Secretary that the Factories Act, to be of any service, ought to include all the chief industries of the colony. Take a large factory like the Millaquin Refinery where, during almost the whole year, there are nearly 200 men employed, and where,

I am bound to confess, without any unnecessary feeling, that the sanitation is not what it should be. I think the time has not only come, but has long since come, when the provisions of the Act should be extended so as to include those works, and other works in that particular locality. If the hon. gentleman will read the report of the inspector for that district he will see that the boundaries which, in the judgment of the inspector—who, I presume, ought to be the best judge—ought to constitute the boundaries of the district are defined. That has been brought under Mr. McLay's notice, and he embodies it in his report for 1898. This is not the time for recrimination, and I do not wish to indulge in it; but I hope the hon. gentleman will pardon me for pressing on him the necessity of adopting the report of his subordinate officer, and put the law in force by extending its operations and the boundaries within which it is to be in force in accordance with the representations which have been made by the sub-inspector. I hope the Minister in charge of this particular department, and this most important branch of that department, will, at any rate, see that the boundaries are extended to include the various industries, and the people who are engaged in those industries, and give them that protection which the law intended they should receive, but which they have not, unfortunately, up till the present received.

The HOME SECRETARY: I may be permitted a word in personal explanation. In regard to some of these areas, I have asked for exact descriptions of the boundaries, but, as yet, I have not got them.

Mr. GLASSEY: Mr. Caulfeild lays it down distinctly.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am not speaking of Mr. Caulfeild.

Mr. KIDSTON (*Rockhampton*): With regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Bundaberg, that this is not the time for recrimination, and that we should endeavour to get the business concluded this evening so as to permit hon. members to get away to their homes for Christmas, I should just like to point out that, unless this House adjourns to-night over the holidays, none of us who live any considerable distance away will be able to get to our homes for Christmas. Consequently, if this House does not adjourn at 6 o'clock, or, at the latest, this evening, there will not need to be any hurry at all, and there will not be any occasion to cease from recrimination, because, if we are not going to get away to our homes, we may as well make up our minds to stay.

Mr. STEWART: Sit here and recriminate.

Mr. McDONALD: Some will not be able to get home now.

Mr. KIDSTON: The Home Secretary is just the kind of gentleman who leads members on this side to recriminate. He has a certain manner that is apt—

The HOME SECRETARY: I was blamed, and I replied.

Mr. KIDSTON: I do not complain. What I wish to particularly ask the Home Secretary is, why it is, in the administration of this Act, that the important factory of Lake's Creek should have been left out of the boundaries which take in all the other factories in the Rockhampton district? A great deal of complaint has been made locally in the matter. There are a very large number of boys employed there, and the sanitary conditions of the places where the employees have to live are certainly of a very unsatisfactory character. Sometimes they are quite as bad as in any other factory in Rockhampton, and, at times, worse. Complaint is made in Rockhampton that, while boys who

seek employment in the factories there have to undergo inspection and comply with the other conditions of the Act, yet, if they go to Lake's Creek, they are free from the supervision of the Act. Lake's Creek is only three miles from Rockhampton, and sometimes there are 1,000—

The HOME SECRETARY: It is outside the boundary?

Mr. KIDSTON: Yes. It is even outside the boundary of North Rockhampton; although it is so near. I presume that when this Act was passed, it was not with the idea of looking after the towns, but with the idea of looking after the factories, and it does not seem to me that there is any good reason why, in defining the boundaries, the most important factory in the district should have been left out. As I have already said, there are sometimes 1,000 people—men, girls, and boys—employed at Lake's Creek under conditions, sanitary and otherwise, that are far from satisfactory. I should like to know from the hon. gentleman whether he has any intention of bringing this, the largest and most important factory in the district, and in some respects, I believe, the most badly arranged factory—badly arranged in respect to the conditions under which the employees have to work and live—under the operations of the Act. It is very much to be desired, on its own account, apart from the complaint which has been made that it is unfair to the other factories in Rockhampton.

Mr. STEWART (*Rockhampton North*): I support the hon. members who have just spoken, in their desire that the operations of the Factory Act should be extended to the various meatworks, sugar refineries, and so forth. The excuse offered by the Home Secretary for the non-extension of the Act to the meatworks at Lake's Creek seems to be a peculiar one. Apparently, had it not been for the recent invasion of the Treasury benches by the Labour party, this Factories Act would have been extended, not only to the Lake's Creek works, but to several other places. We have been told recently of a great many excellent things that would have been done if the Labour party had not rudely stepped in and disturbed the Government in its zeal for reform. The Electoral Reform Bill would have been passed.

Mr. ANNEAR: You blocked that.

Mr. STEWART: It suits the hon. member to say that we blocked that Bill. As I have said, we rudely invaded the quiet seclusion of the Treasury benches, and now we are being blamed for any delay that takes place. That is very childish on the part of the Home Secretary, if he will permit me to say so. He has had this question before him for nearly two years.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not correct. I have only been in office twelve months.

Mr. STEWART: Well, the hon. gentleman has had it before him all the time he has been in office, and his predecessor had it before him, and took no action. It seems passing strange that just when the Labour party jostles the hon. gentleman and his companions off the Treasury benches everything was ripe for an extension of the Act. That may appear very well in print.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are not quite right yet.

Mr. STEWART: Oh, then, it was not the advent of the Labour party that hindered the extension of the Act, and the excuse put forward by the hon. gentleman was not a correct excuse?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, it was.

Mr. STEWART: Will the hon. gentleman tell us the real reason why the Act has not been extended to these places? Twice the hon. gentleman's inspectors have advised that the Act should be extended to the Lake's Creek Meat-

works. I would like to ask the hon. gentleman what his inspectors are for? Are they not his eyes and his ears? Does he not send them out to see that the Act is properly administered? Does he not require them to advise him upon the administration of the Act, and does he not pay attention to any suggestions they may make? Is it not the very purpose for which the inspectors are there? Yet we have the Chief Inspector recommending the extension of the Act in 1898, and this year Mr. Hammond, the inspector at Rockhampton, makes the same recommendation, but nothing has been done. The hon. gentleman creates what appears to me to be an imaginary difficulty. He says that Lake's Creek works are situated outside the municipal boundaries. That is true. They are not only outside the municipal boundaries of Rockhampton, but they are outside the municipal boundaries of North Rockhampton; but I make bold to say that any surveyor could give the hon. gentleman's department a correct description of the boundaries of those particular works in one day. All the hon. gentleman has got to do is to wire up to some surveyor in Rockhampton, and the surveyor could make a survey, send his report to Brisbane, and have the whole thing finished in a week—or, at the very outside, a fortnight. I trust the hon. gentleman will carry out the spirit of the Act. There are a large number of employees engaged at the Lake's Creek Meatworks, who are, I am informed, under the age allowed by the Act. As has been pointed out by the inspector, boys who are not permitted to be employed in any of the factories in the town of Rockhampton, for the simple reason that those factories are under supervision, go down to Lake's Creek, and whether they are under age or not, whether they are physically fit or unfit, they are immediately taken on. I am told that the demand is so great that even the female sex has had to be drawn upon to supply the demand for labour. This last fact appears to make the case for the extension of the Act all the stronger. If the girls, as well as the boys are engaged there, then the sooner the hon. gentleman's inspectors are sent to those premises the better it will be for all concerned. I trust the hon. gentleman will carry out the promise he has made.

Mr. McDONNELL: He made no promise.

Mr. STEWART: I understood the hon. gentleman to make a kind of promise—if not a direct promise; but he ought to state distinctly to the House what he means to do. If he does not, the position will be a most unsatisfactory one. At any rate, I gathered from the hon. member's remarks—although he was not as definite as he ought to have been—that it is his intention to extend the operations of the Act to the places in question.

The HOME SECRETARY: To some of them certainly.

Mr. STEWART: I am particularly interested in the Lake's Creek Meatworks. Does the hon. gentleman intend to extend the Act to those works?

The HOME SECRETARY: That is my present intention.

Mr. STEWART: I am quite satisfied with that. Now there are other works exactly opposite to Lake's Creek works on the other side of the river. They are much smaller works than Lake's Creek, but doing the same kind of work. I believe they also employ a number of boys, and that the sanitary conditions there also require attention. I trust that very soon the hon. gentleman will extend the operation of the Act to the places mentioned.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): I am surprised that on a motion of this character the suggestion has

not been made that the extension of the operations of the Act should be held over until we appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter, and take some action about ten years hence. It is customary now, when any question of public importance is raised, and there is a possibility of its being attended to, for the suggestion to be made that a Royal Commission should be appointed, consisting of certain political hangers-on of the Government. By that means legislation is delayed, and time is wasted. I am astonished, indeed, that the Home Secretary, who is not altogether sympathetic in the administration of the Act, has not made the suggestion.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not correct.

Mr. LESINA: The impression is abroad that the hon. gentleman is not administering the Act sympathetically, and therefore I should not have been surprised if he had suggested the appointment of a Royal Commission. However, the hon. gentleman may do that later on. Another argument which I expected to hear used is that we might very well leave the matter over for the Federal Parliament to deal with. Those are two stock arguments which are becoming popularised in this House—that whenever an hon. member draws attention to some matter that requires remedying, either we must refer it to the Federal Parliament, or else we must appoint a Royal Commission consisting of political hangers-on of the Government.

Mr. ANNEAR: Is the hon. member for Bundaberg a hanger-on of the Government?

Mr. LESINA: The hon. member for Bundaberg would not be on such a commission, and it will be remembered that when the [5.30 p.m.] hon. member for Bundaberg did act on a commission he did not receive his pay, which was to his credit. I believe that the provisions of the Act should be extended to the places recommended by the inspector, who bases his recommendations on the reports sent to him by the district inspectors. The inspector has recommended an alteration of the boundaries in certain cases, and has embodied that recommendation in his annual report, which has been submitted to the Government and to the House. If the Home Secretary was in sympathy with the Act, and cared to bring the matter before the Executive Council, he could easily get the necessary alterations made in the boundaries of districts, so as to take in meatworks and other places which it is desirable should be under supervision. The thing is very simple, but the hon. gentleman who is in charge of the department has discovered many difficulties in the way of doing it, and has said that it would be necessary to call in the Surveyor-General in order to define the boundaries. That may be true, but I would point out that the district inspector at Bundaberg recommends certain boundaries which will take in certain sugarworks.

The HOME SECRETARY: No; he does not.

Mr. LESINA: I thought he did. At any rate, he makes recommendations, and those recommendations are brought before the Minister, and it appears to me that they could be easily carried out without any great loss of time or waste of money. It seems to me that there is not that sympathy manifested by the department in the administration of the Factories Act that we might very fairly expect to see exhibited. The Act is part of our legislation, and an effort should be made to have it administered successfully. The way to do that is to administer it in a sympathetic spirit, and not in a hostile spirit, but I am very much inclined to think, from the evidence we have before us, that the Act is not administered in a sympathetic spirit, and if that is so the result will be that the Act

will be brought into disrepute, and an agitation may be got up for its repeal. I said just now that the inspector has made recommendations.

The HOME SECRETARY: As to boundaries, you said.

Mr. LESINA: Yes. On page 14 of the report upon the working of the Factories and Shops Act for 1897, it will be seen that the inspector at Bundaberg makes the following remarks:—

Some anomalies, owing to boundary fixed, were soon apparent, bakers and butchers outside the municipality delivering within the same, and, when called upon to comply, taking no notice; another anomaly being that all the large centres of employ, such as Millaquin refinery, Bundaberg foundry, gasworks, three sawmills, brewery, two distilleries, employing between them in all about 300 hands all the year round, are all outside present boundary. If it is intended to obviate the above state of affairs, I would propose that the boundary be as at present, with the addition of that portion of subdivision No. 3, Woongarra Division, which includes Millaquin refinery, Bundaberg distillery, brewery, and sawmills, commonly called East Bundaberg; also that portion of subdivision 1 of portion 2, parish of Gooburrum, which includes the foundry; also all that portion of the parish of Gooburrum commonly called North Bundaberg. I think these additions would meet all requirements, and bring a large number under the benefits of the Act.

So you see he makes recommendations.

The HOME SECRETARY: He makes recommendations, but he does not give the boundaries.

Mr. LESINA: You have the divisional board boundaries.

The HOME SECRETARY: No; only certain portions of a subdivision which include certain factories.

Mr. LESINA: Is it a matter of great labour and difficulty to define a boundary which will take in a refinery?

The HOME SECRETARY: I have asked for that, and have not yet got it.

Mr. LESINA: I do not think that petty difficulties of this kind with regard to the mere extension of a boundary have been raised in other colonies where they have a Factories Act in operation, and I do not believe they would have been raised here if the Minister were in entire sympathy with the provisions of the Act. The Home Secretary does not seem to believe in the Act at all, and the Act has so far been administered in such a way as to render it as unpopular as possible. I regret to have to take that view of the matter, but I know that many persons outside who are admirers of the Act entertain that opinion. I do not say this with any desire to cast discredit on the hon. gentleman, but I do not believe he is in sympathy with the Act, and it is utterly impossible to make an Act effective unless it is sympathetically administered. I trust the hon. gentleman will make the administration of the law more effective in future, as I am sure that it will be conducive to an amelioration of economic and industrial conditions in the colony if the Act is carried out faithfully and sympathetically.

Mr. DUNSFORD (*Charters Towers*): I certainly agree that the provisions of the Factories Act ought to be extended in the direction mentioned by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. When we put an Act of Parliament like the Factories Act in operation in any district, we not only give security of life to employees engaged in different industries, but we also lessen the danger to the public health as a whole. I am under the impression that since the establishment of large meatworks and large refineries, especially meatworks, throughout Queensland and Australia, we have had a great increase in the epidemics that are constantly sweeping over Australia. I have not sufficient proof to connect the two matters, but I think that if we went to the bedrock of the matter

we should find that these large meatworks have something to do with the increase of epidemics. From information I have had at times I find that there are a large number of cases of fever, especially typhoid fever, in our hospitals, which can be traced directly to the meatworks in different places. I can quite understand, therefore, that the extension of the operation of the Factories Act will lessen the danger of death to the whole community. Is that not a good thing? Anything which will improve the health of the community is worthy of consideration, but I am afraid that the Minister who administers this Act looks at it from too narrow a point of view, and considers only the employers and employees, not looking at the effect of the administration of the Act on the community as a whole. I think that as legislators, politicians, M.L.A.'s, whatever you like to call us, we should look at it from a public standpoint. The question for us is: Will it benefit the public to extend the Factories Act to these places? I certainly think it will, for the reasons I have given. I could point to quite a number of cases to show that the health of the public would be improved by the extension of the Act. We have sufficient facts, I think, to enable us to say that many cases of typhoid can be directly traced to the insanitary condition of some of the meatworks. Let any hon. member visit one of these meatworks, and what does he strike? He strikes a smell strong enough to make a cyclone seek some other course of less resistance. Our own common sense must teach us that those smells must be dangerous to the localities in which they exist, and they should be dealt with. Some hon. members here would perhaps suggest a Royal Commission to get to the bottom of those smells; to analyse and dissect them. You could pull some of them to pieces and could see them with the naked eye, they are that thick and strong. Go down the Brisbane River, the Fitzroy River, outside Townsville, and along the Northern Railway line—go in any direction where these meatworks are, and there you strike these smells. Something should be done about them, because so many of them north, south, east, and west in Queensland must constitute a danger to the health of the community. There must be something to prevent them. It is not necessary, I am sure, to have these smells existing as a source of danger in our midst. Inventions and discoveries are now so numerous and up to date that, if the companies like to go to a little expense—and they should, if necessary, be compelled to do so by the State—they could prevent many of these sources of danger. I hope the Home Secretary will see that the Factories Act is extended to these places, because it is not a matter of legislation but of administration. Administration goes on all the while, and whether Parliament is sitting or not, the Government have power to extend the operation of the Factories Act, and they ought to do it right away.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

LOAN ESTIMATES—LAND DEFENCE.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. R. Dickson, *Bulimba*) moved that £25,650 be granted from loan for Land Defence. He had submitted the vote at an earlier hour of the day. The vote included £2,000 for Lytton defences. That was a new item for works to be entered upon on the removal of the reformatory building on the crest of the hill. There was £5,500 asked for small arms and ammunition, and a vote of £2,150 for two 4.7-inch guns, which was self-explanatory, and was in addition to £2,500 already voted in 1898-99, when the sum was under-estimated. £3,000 was asked for rifle ranges, formations, etc., and that would be

considered a popular vote, as it was desirable that, by the increase of rifle clubs and rifle ranges in the colony, the rising youth, and the male population of the colony generally, should become accustomed to the use of firearms. The vote for submarine mining equipment was a new item, £1,200 being asked to provide electric lighting apparatus. Stores and armoury buildings, Victoria Barracks, was a new item, £5,000 being asked for the purpose, because the present accommodation was insufficient. It was proposed to provide office accommodation for the paymaster and the comptroller of stores in the building, which would be erected in Blackall street, opposite the barracks. For Thursday Island defence, £7,300 was asked, and that was the amount promised in agreement with the Premiers of New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania, the other contributing colonies, to make good the amount in default, which should have been annually contributed by South Australia. £500 was asked for contingencies. Of course it must be distinctly understood that the vote was not in any way connected with any war scare or with the present position in connection with the war in South Africa, but was the provision considered necessary by the Commandant to maintain the efficiency of the Defence Force. He might say that in addition to that vote, they were ordering a considerable number of rifles, the necessity being impressed upon the Government since the vote was framed, and on that subject he was prepared to give hon. gentlemen information privately.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*) observed that there was an increase on land defence account of £10,000 which, together with the increase provided for on the Estimates-in-Chief, made a total advance of £31,000. He would ask the hon. gentleman whether he did not think it would be advisable to spend a little money on the Naval Defence Force. In the event of a European war, which was not improbable, he did not think the colony's land defence would be of anything like the same service as a well organised naval defence. A few smart vessels coming down the coast could levy blackmail on the shipping, whereas there was very little probability of invasion by land. A statement had been made in the papers that there was a proposal on the part of the Transvaal Government to issue letters of marque to vessels to prey upon British shipping, and although they probably would not have a very long reign, yet two or three smart vessels of that description could do a lot of damage to Queensland shipping, as well as injure the coastal towns. Had the Government any idea of increasing the naval defence of the colony, and, if possible, getting a naval brigade afloat to provide for contingencies? The wisest man in the world could not tell what was likely to happen within the next few months, and although they were sending their men away to fight in another country, it should be remembered that they might at any time be called upon to protect themselves.

The CHIEF SECRETARY had always taken a great interest in naval defence matters, as the hon. gentleman would admit, and his great desire was to promote the welfare of the marine service. The Government were encouraging, and would continue to encourage, that arm of the service. A large proportion of the vote for small arms was to be devoted to the naval defence of the colony, and on the Supplementary Loan Estimates it would be seen that provision was made for small arms, munitions of war, and heavy guns for the naval force. He was free to admit that the naval force had not been so carefully nursed and nourished as the land defence force, but the reason for that was apparent in the fact that a

naval force was not so readily got together as a land force. To get a marine force they must have sailors, and a large amount of shipping to furnish a proper proportion of naval men. He admitted that they had a good nucleus for a naval defence force, but the difficulties that had to be coped with in bringing it up to a high state of efficiency were very considerable. In addition to that he need not point out that ships were very costly things, and modern developments were so rapid that both ships and armaments very soon became obsolete. They must look ahead of requirements in order to properly nurse the force, and that necessarily involved a large expense. A matter which shortly would require careful consideration was the future of the auxiliary squadron, the agreement about which expired next year. No doubt the Federal Government would deal with the matter and take charge of naval defence force matters. In the meantime the whole thing was in a state of transition. He knew that the present Naval Commandant had the welfare of the force entirely at heart, but he felt the responsibilities of his position, and was rather anxious to be relieved. The Government were endeavouring to hear of a competent man in the navy who could be obtained in view of Captain Drake vacating the position of Naval Commandant. The Government would not lose sight of the desirability of giving further attention to naval defence matters.

Mr. SMITH (*Bowen*) pointed out that the organisation and maintenance of a naval force was a matter of some difficulty and expense in view of the rapidity with which both ships and armament became obsolete.

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*) said the system of charging ordinary expenditure for [7 p.m.] defence purposes to loan account was totally bad, and if continued to any extent could lead to nothing but disaster financially. It was laid down as sound policy that military expenditure should be an annual charge on revenue, and that only very permanent works and the purchase of material which would be an asset to be kept up from year to year could properly be charged to loan account.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This is nearly all for war material.

Mr. FISHER: The first item was £2,000 to provide defences of a superior character at Lytton. To do that the old defences must be destroyed, or partly destroyed, and the amount charged to loan account should be only the sum representing the superior value of the works. The next item, "small arms and ammunition," arose from the fact that the old arms had become obsolete and useless, so that in that case the original asset had ceased to exist as an asset.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The old arms still exist.

Mr. FISHER: Though they might exist, the hon. gentleman must agree that they were practically useless as an asset—the value was so small as to be hardly worth taking into account. With regard to the new guns for Magazine Island, if they admitted the principle at all that those guns should be purchased from loan, there might be some justification for this item; otherwise he attacked the whole principle of buying guns and ammunition out of loan expenditure. Another item was "rifle ranges, formation, etc." Did the hon. gentleman honestly believe that those should be paid for out of loan? Rifle ranges were a necessity for military purposes, but they did not constitute an asset in the proper sense of the term, and nothing could be realised upon them beyond a mere bagatelle. Next came submarine mining equipment, £1,200; then stores and armoury buildings, £5,000; Thursday Island defences, £7,300; and

contingencies, £500. Taking the thing altogether he emphatically entered his protest against the system of charging military expenditure to loan account when it ought to be an annual charge on revenue; and he appealed to hon. members not to submit to the principle of making ammunition, for instance, a charge upon loan, otherwise they would be piling up a loan debt for which there was no asset at all. If ammunition was correctly charged to loan it must be assumed that the efficiency acquired by men using the ammunition made them of greater value to the State, and that this increased value was an asset which might be put down as a set-off to the expenditure. It had been the policy of the Government in Great Britain to reduce the national debt by raising loans. Whatever surplus there was was placed to the credit of a sinking fund. The sinking fund in Great Britain was a specific fund under trustees, for the purpose of reducing the public debt of Great Britain.

Mr. LEAHY: What is the sinking fund taken out of?

Mr. FISHER: Out of revenue.

Mr. LEAHY: What is a deficit taken out of?

Mr. FISHER: That was different. If there was a deficit, each successive Government would protect itself. He would like the hon. gentleman in charge of the Estimates to say whether he approved of debiting the loan account with these items, and whether the policy which had been pursued in the past in this respect would redound to the credit of the colony, if it was continued in the future.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he thought the hon. member who had just spoken did not understand the position. Such matters as small arms and ammunition and improvements to the Victoria Barracks were permanent improvements for the purposes of defence. The old guns would be written off when the new guns of the large type came. When large guns and rifles were ordered a certain amount of ammunition accompanied that order. It was desirable that a certain amount of ammunition should be kept in stock. He failed to see how there could be any danger to the State by the careful administration of these matters conducted on the lines he had mentioned. Permanent improvements in the direction he had referred to were desirable, and he thought these items might fairly well be charged to loan fund.

Mr. FISHER found some difficulty in following the hon. gentleman. What necessity was there for any loan expenditure in this respect at all? There was no necessity for any increase in the vote. The hon. gentleman said that they had a certain amount of ammunition on hand, and when the Defence Force used any of it they paid for what was taken. That was equal to purchasing more to replace what had been taken away. There was no necessity for a loan vote in this respect. Did the hon. gentleman say that there was more ammunition in store now than previously?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. FISHER asked the Chief Secretary to tell the Committee what was the excess.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is very undesirable information to give to the public at the present time.

Mr. GLASSEY: With regard to the small arms and ammunition vote, he would impress on the military authorities the importance of that at the present moment. They should have an abundance and even a superabundance of small arms and ammunition in stock, in case of emergency. He was not going to prolong the discussion, but he thought it was very difficult to see what eventualities might occur with regard to what was going on at present in South Africa. Therefore it behoved every person who

had any regard for the safety and wellbeing of the country, to see that nothing short of what was necessary was provided to be ready for any emergency.

Mr. DUNSFORD: It appeared to him that it was rather unjust, if this generation desired to defend itself, that it should tax its children and its grandchildren. That was taxation without representation with a vengeance. The probabilities were that those who were living at the latter end of the twentieth century would be opposed to war, and would settle their differences by such means as arbitration; but it would be rather rough on that unborn generation to make it pay for the wars of this age. Money had been expended in erecting buildings for the storage of arms and ammunition; but these would depreciate in value and would be of no use to those who would come after them, and who would be charged with the cost. That, in his opinion, would not be fair. No loan money should be spent for any purpose whatever except works that were interest-earning. He protested on behalf of his grandchildren, and it might be his great grandchildren, against this indebtedness being placed on their shoulders. It was much better for the people themselves to bear the burden than to call on their children to do so. It would be a great check, too, on such things as war, because they would be very careful and consider a long time if they had to put their hands into their own pockets, which were generally empty. It was a very easy thing for a young colony like Queensland, which was comparatively prosperous, to go into the markets of the world and borrow money. It was very much easier to borrow than to repay.

Mr. KIDSTON: There was a good deal of truth in the statement of the Chief Secretary that it was not, perhaps, desirable to say everything he knew about the position of the defences of the colony; but it was surely very desirable, at a time like this, that members should have the very best grounds for believing that the supply of arms and ammunition was adequate for any possible contingency which might arise; and the hon. gentleman should give them some assurance on that head. No person knew what might happen in the next three months. The position was such that the slightest false move might place the colonies in the situation that they would have to provide for their own defence. That being so, it was of the utmost importance, if Queensland was in such a state of preparedness, that its enemies should know it. It was just as desirable that they should know it as that members and the country should know it.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Have we enemies?

Mr. KIDSTON: Yes, they had. If the colony was not prepared, it might be unwise to advertise the fact; but it would also be unwise to ignore the fact. It was necessary, if it was not prepared, that the Government should take steps, whatever the cost, to make adequate provision.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: What do you call adequate provision? I want a definition of adequate provision.

Mr. KIDSTON: Adequate provision must necessarily be left to the discretion of the Executive. The Executive might make a mistake; but it was in the best position to judge whether the provision which had been made was adequate or not. At the same time, while this duty and this responsibility rested on the Executive, it is also the duty of members to point out whether they thought the provision made was adequate or not. With reference to the interjection of the hon. the junior member for Charters Towers as to whether they had any enemies, he was not a warlike person and he did not want to fight with

any neighbouring people. Still, he thought it was the duty of hon. members, whatever their opinions on the question of war might be, to fulfil their duty; and their first duty, in his opinion, was to make adequate provision for the defence of the colony. It was the first duty of a self-governing people to provide for their own defence, and, as he had said before, he was a little doubtful whether adequate provision had been made. He was doubtful whether they were prepared to take their own part in the event of war being forced on them, and he should like some assurance on that point from the hon. gentleman, who was in a better position to judge than he was. With regard to naval defence, the Chief Secretary confessed it was inadequate.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I did not say it was inadequate.

Mr. KIDSTON: If it was inadequate, it was inadequate, whether the hon. gentleman said it or not. Every hon. member knew that the colonies had been depending on the mother country for their naval defence.

The PREMIER: We assist to pay for it.

Mr. KIDSTON: He knew they were assisting to pay for it—that they were assisting to maintain the Australian Squadron; but whether that squadron was adequate to protect shipping on the Australian coast was a very open question indeed.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Don't you think that the present generation should pay for its own defence?

Mr. KIDSTON thought it should, but it was also to the interests of the coming generations that they also should pay something [7.30 p.m.] towards the defence of Queensland at the present time. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Gympie that ammunition should not be charged to the loan fund account, although fortifications, barracks, and works of a permanent nature might fairly be charged to loan. Some reference had been made to the practice of the Imperial Government. Of course, when a nation was suddenly called upon to undertake a war, it was necessary to raise a loan, but ordinary provisions, such as most of that vote was for, should certainly be paid for out of revenue. Returning to the question of naval defence, the Chief Secretary confessed that the difficulty of providing naval defence had stood in the way of its being made adequate before now. That was one of the conditions which should have moved the Government to give far more attention to the subject, because, although they might raise a land force hastily, it was impossible to do so in respect of naval defence, as both ships and men had to be brought 16,000 miles overseas. Another line of defence which was altogether inadequate, but which it was quite possible to provide for without the enormous expense incident to naval defence was submarine mining, by which ships could be prevented from coming within striking distance of their ports. The small amount asked for that branch of the service—£1,200—was evidence of the inadequacy of that line of defence. The Government had not used the material at its command in the way it should have done, in regard to another line of defence. From what was seen in South Africa it would be recognised how valuable mounted troops were in a thinly-settled country. The situation had very much altered during the last three months, and it might alter very much for the worse in the next three months, and it was therefore advisable to utilise the material at their command for mounted infantry. He did not suppose there was a country in the world which had better materials for such troops. All that was wanted was the necessary preliminary training, and that they had not got. He did

not think there were any mounted infantry corps in the districts where the best class of men for that purpose were to be found. Before sitting down, he would ask the Chief Secretary whether it was true that some private persons had been permitted to deplete the Government stores of gunpowder?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that, so far as the Land Defence Force was concerned, nothing of the sort had ever occurred; but within the last month an application had been made by one of the large steamship companies to the Naval Defence Force to obtain a small quantity—he thought, of gun cotton—temporarily, to blow up the wreck of the “Glanworth,” now lying outside Gatcombe Head, and it was given on the distinct understanding that it should be replaced as soon as possible. That was perhaps the foundation of the rumour. No gunpowder had been taken either from the land force or from the naval force supplies. While he recognised that the hon. member was thoroughly sincere, and was asking very pertinent questions, at the same time it would be a very large order to place the Defence Force in such a condition as to guard against all possible contingencies. He might say that up to the time of their sending troops to the Transvaal the condition of both branches of the Defence Force had been very materially improved. The Commandant himself had expressed to him very great satisfaction at the liberal provision which Parliament had made of late years, and which had given him the opportunity of putting the Defence Force on a very satisfactory footing indeed. Of course the hon. member knew that the sending away of 400 men must for a certain time somewhat interfere with the condition of the force, and he could not affirm that it was in such a condition now that it was prepared for all contingencies, without first knowing what were the contingencies or casualties to which we were exposed. He was not prepared for one moment to say that the Defence Force could resist the combined aggression of, say, France or Russia, should their fleets visit our ports. He could, however, assure the hon. gentleman that the Commandant and Acting Commandant were of opinion that the improved condition of the force was most satisfactory, and that the munitions of war were under ordinary circumstances quite sufficient. They were being gradually increased, and would be increased, and when they had replenished the number of combatants who had been suddenly withdrawn from service in the Transvaal, he thought the hon. member could rest assured that the defence of the colony, in proportion to its population and its financial ability, would be in as satisfactory a condition as that of any of the other colonies. It was very refreshing indeed to him that there was such an improved feeling in Parliament in connection with the Defence Force. He remembered well that in earlier years if a vote was presented to the House £10,000 or £15,000 in excess of the amount granted for the previous year, it was denounced and was usually cut down without any regard to the efficiency of the force. To maintain a military or naval establishment cost money, and they must not go in for cheeseparing if they wanted efficiency.

Mr. KIDSTON: The hon. gentleman had said a great deal about all possible conditions and all possible circumstances, but he (Mr. Kidston) did not use that phrase at all. They were in a very bad position indeed if the taking away of 400 men seriously impaired their capacity for defence. He knew quite well what was the general condition of the Defence Force, and he knew that 400 men had been withdrawn, or would be withdrawn in a few days; but what he asked was, not whether they had provided against all

possible contingencies, but whether, in view of the gravity of the situation from an Imperial point of view, the Government had such stores and munitions of war as would enable what he might call our peace establishment to be suddenly swelled out to proportions adequate to deal with any attack that was likely to be made on Queensland. So long as Britain retained the supremacy of the seas he did not think any European power was likely to land a force on the shores of Australia, but what was likely to happen, if an attack was made on the colonies, was that fast cruisers would be sent down the coast of Australia to harass our shipping, and in the event of opportunity offering to make a dash at some of our more important ports; and the Government ought to be in a position, in view of the actual situation of things at present, to tell the Committee that they had sufficient munitions of war to put the ports of the colony in a proper state of defence, or to give them an assurance that if there was any insufficiency in the supplies they would at once take steps to remedy that insufficiency. Possibly the Government had framed their Estimates on a strictly peace footing, not expecting the sudden emergency which had arisen, and they were not to be particularly blamed for that, as at the time the Estimates were being framed, there was no anticipation that the situation would become what it was to-day. At the same time it must not be forgotten that they were 16,000 miles away from their base of supply so far as the munitions of war were concerned, and they were entitled to have an assurance from the Government that if there was any lack in their supplies steps would at once be taken to provide what was lacking.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Government were fully alive to the exigencies of the situation, and the position of the Defence Force now was such that the military authorities were quite satisfied that the colony was fairly safeguarded against all contingencies that could reasonably be expected to arise, and such as it was considered might arise by the highest authorities in Great Britain in connection with colonial defence—the Colonial Defence Committee. They had been consulted, and they recognised that our equipment was fairly equal to any contingency that might be expected to arise.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FISHER wanted to say a word with reference to the hon. gentleman's statement about his wanting to get information which should be kept secret. He had inquired whether the hon. gentleman was satisfied with the amount of ammunition we had in store, and the hon. gentleman professed that he could not reply, because of the secrecy which should surround a matter of that sort. Did the hon. gentleman remember that the Rosebery Government had been run out of office on a motion declaring that the amount of cordite in stock in England was insufficient? Did the hon. member imagine that Great Britain could safely tell the world how much ammunition the nation had got, and that Queensland must conceal such information, in order to prevent some European Power from sweeping down upon them in their unpreparedness? The thing was ridiculous. That desire for secrecy in such matters had brought a previous Government of Queensland into ridicule in the celebrated prosecution of a Russian scientist, who had been indiscreet enough to look at the fortifications at Townsville. Did the hon. gentleman want to make the Government of Queensland ridiculous again? It was much better that the hon. gentleman should state that, so far as the Government were concerned, if their stores and supplies were not sufficient at the present time, very good care

would be taken at no distant date that there should be ample supplies of arms and ammunition provided.

Question put and passed.

IMMIGRATION.

The CHIEF SECRETARY moved that £50,000 be granted from loan for immigration. The vote showed an increase on the vote for last year, which had not covered the whole of the twelve months. The system of moderate immigration then instituted had been attended with satisfactory results, and it was intended by the Government to continue it on the moderate scale provided for in that Estimate.

Mr. DAWSON (*Charters Towers*) objected absolutely to the increase in that vote. He was surprised that the hon. gentleman had not taken the Committee sufficiently into his confidence to tell them the reasons which had induced him to increase the vote from £22,500 to £50,000. For some time past in that Chamber, and in the country, the opinion had been that the large sums expended on immigration had been absolutely wasted. The money was expended upon immigration lecturers, who found a soft place somewhere in the United Kingdom, and the taxpayers of Queensland received no substantial benefit from the expenditure in the shape of desirable immigrants. He was not only against the increase in the vote, but against the whole vote.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. DAWSON: It was an absolute waste of money, and the whole system had been an absolute failure. He would like those in charge of the department to show within the last ten years any fair result from the expenditure of that money. Only a year or two ago, as a forlorn hope, they had made a desperate effort, and had sent immigration lecturers to England, Ireland, Scotland, America, and Germany, and in every case the result had been exactly the same—absolute failure. The Government were taught nothing by experience, and now they proposed to increase that vote from £22,500 to £50,000. It was one of the stupidest things they could possibly do. If they devised another system of getting immigrants, and offered facilities to people in the other colonies to come and settle in their midst, giving them opportunities for taking up and settling on their lands, he would have no objection to voting £50,000 for such a purpose. But he objected to that expenditure upon the present system of immigration which had been a distinct and disastrous failure. The hon. gentleman might condescend to give the Committee some reason for the increase.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They knew that there was a distinct opinion held by hon. members on the other side that the colony was full enough of people, and that no more should be brought here.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: No, nothing of the sort.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Time after time they had had it from the Labour party that they did not want to see another man, woman, or child brought into the place, and would like to close the door against increased population in this country. The opinion of the Government side, on the contrary, had always been that they wanted people in this colony to ensure the prosperity of the community, and that the money which had been spent on immigration had been spent in the most beneficial direction for the future welfare and development of the colony that could be conceived. He was not surprised at the philippic of the hon.

gentleman, but his opinions were, he [8 p.m.] was happy to say, entirely distinct from those of the Government. He was happy to say that many people thought

that this colony was languishing for population, and that a continuous stream of immigration such as he had referred to would be of great assistance in the development of the resources of the colony. The people who were brought out were confined exclusively to domestic servants and farm labourers. Mechanics were strictly excluded, but in the case of the other two classes the experience had been that as soon as they arrived they were readily absorbed. He was not an advocate for dumping down in any one portion of the colony an unlimited number of immigrants, but was of opinion that the demand should always exceed the supply. Such had happily been the case in connection with the few shipments that had arrived here. The largest number brought in any one ship was 300, and the ships only arrived tri-monthly. From 1st July to 31st December, 1898, ten ships arrived, and this year, from the 17th October, they had brought out 1,099 persons. That was nothing to be alarmed about, and it must be remembered that many of those persons paid their own passages, or came at the reduced rate of £13. He challenged the hon. gentleman to point out a single instance where any abuse had taken place through the revived system of immigration during the past two years. On the contrary, the immigrants had arrived at a market ready to employ them, there had been no interference with the wage-earning population of the colony, and the demands of those who required labour of a particular description had been met.

Mr. HARBAGE: Do you know there has been a natural increase of 14,000 persons this year?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Very good, and the Government had brought 1,099 more, and still there was room.

Mr. GIVENS: And still there is starvation here.

The CHIEF SECRETARY did not know that there was starvation for any man who chose to work.

Mr. DAWSON: The hon. gentleman appeared to be one of those men who could remember things that never occurred, and with eye-sight so excellent that he could see things that were not there. He said he knew members sitting on that side were entirely opposed to immigration, and that they considered there were enough people in the colony. Let him tell the hon. gentleman that he was entirely mistaken, and if he had not got sense enough to know what their objections were, let him get some of his colleagues who had sense enough to explain to him. The objection was not against immigration, but against the system of immigration.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: What class would suit you?

Mr. DAWSON: The class of immigrants who, upon being landed here, would not immediately become a burden on the taxpayer and be registered at the labour bureau. The class of immigrants they desired to see imported were those who would settle on the land, and not compete in the open labour market against men already engaged in manual labour, in order that wages might be lowered. He contended that before they went in for an indiscriminate importation of immigrants they should take good care that all their able-bodied men were able to get work in the colony. There was abundance of room for hundreds of thousands of people in Queensland, but he wanted people who would go on the land and not people who would go into the labour market and add to the number of applicants for relief at the bureau.

Mr. CAMPBELL: How are you going to get that class?

Mr. DAWSON: The same way as they had been got in Canada and the United States of America. The system adopted by Queensland

was to send highly-paid lecturers to England, and as long as they were able to report that they had sent out half-a-dozen persons during the year they were satisfied that they had honestly earned their money.

Mr. LESINA: They send girls out of reformatories to the colony.

Mr. DAWSON: He saw in the papers that there was in England a society largely availed of by the lecturers. It was a kind of rescue brigade that looked after persons who had been convicted and sentenced in the old country. Many of those persons when they came out of gaol were snapped up by the lecturers and sent to Queensland as farm labourers when they knew as much about a farm as a cockroach knew about his grandfather. The evil was bad enough at present, but by increasing the vote from £22,000 to £50,000 the hon. gentleman was aggravating the evil. If the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Agriculture wanted desirable immigrants they had a very good field indeed in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia. By offering the people there greater facilities to come here and settle on the land they would get any amount of men who would not be a burden on the State—men who would not only develop the natural resources of the country, but would soon be in a position to employ our surplus labour. That was the class of immigrant he was willing to spend any amount of money upon. There was a delegation sent from South Australia to find out what facilities would be afforded to people in that colony to settle here. They were perfectly satisfied about the richness of our lands, but they were so roughly and rudely treated by the Lands Department that they decided not to settle in Queensland for the present. The same thing happened to a delegation of farmers from Victoria. If they wanted people to come here and settle on the land it must be brought about by better administration, and not by the employment of more lecturers to send out people, who to a large extent, represented the rescued brigade.

Mr. GIVENS (Cairns): With regard to the Chief Secretary's statement that members of the Opposition had an objection to any individual coming to the colony, that was an absolutely false idea, and he did not know where the hon. member got it. He, in common with other members on both sides, considered that there was ample room in Queensland, under proper conditions, for millions of a population; but he had a most decided objection to the money of the taxpayers—the great bulk of whom were wage-earners—being used to bring out a further supply of indigent labourers to enter the labour market and compete against them and reduce wages for the benefit of the employing class. The Agent-General, in his report, said that the condition of things was now so good in the old country that it was almost an absolute impossibility to get suitable persons to come out here. His (Mr. Givens') opinion, which was shared by a good many hon. members on his side and by a good many people throughout the country, was that the proper way to increase the population was to make things so good and prosperous that people would be attracted to come of their own accord without our having to pay for bringing them here. And if the condition of things was made good and prosperous, so that everybody would be assured of being able to make a comfortable living by honest toil, that would induce young men to get married and rear families, which was the best way of increasing our population. At present there were dozens of young men afraid to marry by reason of low wages and precarious employment, and until the condition of things was improved the colony would probably have to depend for years on persons

coming from beyond the sea for increasing the population. The Chief Secretary had always posed as a great advocate of immigration—but why? Simply because he was the great advocate of the employing class, whose desire was to pull down wages so that their profits might be increased; and they were so cunning that they wanted to do this at the expense of the workmen themselves.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Not true!

Mr. GIVENS: As the hon. gentleman was one of the employing class, he took any statement made by him in that connection with a very large grain of salt indeed. Would it be denied that the workers paid a large proportion of the taxation? That taxation had to be used to pay the interest on the money expended on immigration; the money expended on immigration was employed to bring out a large number of immigrants who immediately competed against the workers already here, and so reduced the wages, and the employing class, of which the hon. member for Moreton was a very important individual, benefited by the transaction, for which the workers had chiefly to pay. The simple reason for this was that the workers of the colony had not sufficient representation in the House. The majority of hon. members represented the employing classes.

Mr. CAMPBELL: That is political clap-trap.

Mr. GIVENS: If it was, he would like the hon. member to get up and contradict what he said. He would be happy to show the hon. member where he was wrong. There were a large number of men in the colony who could not get work, and it was a huge mistake to spend all this money on immigration when men who were willing to work could not get it. He would also like to refer to the treatment meted out to workmen who could not get employment. The other day a workman whom he knew found himself stranded in Brisbane, and wanted a free pass on the railway to Gladstone, because he thought he could get work there—on some of the goldfields in that locality. He sent that man to the labour bureau in Brisbane, and he also sent him to the Home Secretary's Department with a note that he was a respectable workman, and that he wanted a free pass to Gladstone; but he was refused such a pass, even after his guarantee that he was respectable, and that he thought he could get work up North after reaching Gladstone. A great deal had been said about female domestic servants, but the facts of the case were that the wages here paid to that class were not as high as those paid to female domestic servants in the old country. The conditions were not good enough to induce respectable female servants to come out to the colony. This sort of thing should not be allowed to exist. They had the Agent-General's statement that the wages for female servants in Great Britain were quite as good as in Queensland, and there was great difficulty in getting suitable persons of this class to come out to the colony. In his own electorate, there were Chinamen and Japanese doing washing, and some white men allowed their wives to send their underlinen to those aliens to be washed. There were any amount of respectable white women—widows and others—in Cairns, Townsville and other places in the colony who had to depend on washing for a livelihood, and yet they had to compete with Japanese and Chinese laundrymen. Therefore he maintained that it was a most fatuous policy to spend £50,000 on immigration. They had no guarantee that these immigrants would be of the desirable class, and much of the money spent in the past on immigration had gone towards increasing the population of the Southern colonies. These other colonies

did not see the necessity to keep up such a fatuous system, because they made their conditions more attractive.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Their climate is more attractive down south.

Mr. GIVENS: His own opinion was that the climate of Queensland was quite as good, while the climate of Herberton could not be surpassed in any of the Southern colonies. He had no objection to the publication of pamphlets showing the advantages of Queensland, but he had a great objection to spending £50,000 in bringing out the scum of British cities to compete with the workers of the colony. He entered his protest against any such policy, and if no one else moved a reduction in the vote, he would do so.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON (*Brisbane North*) said he did not believe that the hon. member for Cairns was sincere in his statement that the colony was bringing out the scum of British cities. If that was true he would join hands with the hon. member in order to prevent the vote passing. This £50,000 did not come out of the public purse, but out of the loan account. What was the cost *per capita* of the population for this immigration? Only three-farthings per head per annum, and he did not think that was such a very fearful tax. He thought the Government should send the hon. member for Cairns to the old country to tell the people there about the lovely climate here, the good soil, the Northern goldfields, and the other advantages Queensland possessed. The hon. member would greatly benefit by travelling about the United Kingdom telling the people about the different departments of life in this country. The hon. member for

Cairns could take up the Barron [8.30 p.m.] Falls and describe their beauty; the hon. member for Croydon could describe the Croydon Gold Field; and the hon. the senior member for Charters Towers could dilate on his splendid career from youthhood up to manhood and the position he now occupied by reason of the fact that his mother and father were wholesome emigrants from the mother country.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Wholesome emigrants?

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Yes; sturdy, loyal citizens of this country carrying British blood in them.

Mr. DAWSON: "The worthy son of worthy parents."

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: The House had been told by hon. members opposite that if they brought in these immigrants they would compete with the men and women who were already in the country, and reduce wages. If the hon. gentleman desired an example, he would give one. Since he left the Chamber at 6 o'clock he had met one of these immigrants, and he said he was glad he had come to the country—that all his sons and daughters were employed, and that his daughter was getting 12s. 6d. a week instead of, as she got in the old country, only 4s. 6d. Hon. members had told them that the Agent-General said Queensland was going to work the wrong way to get the right sort of immigrants; but did he (the Hon. T. Macdonald-Paterson) not tell them that also through the Press when he came back from the old country? The moment they appointed an official to go from city to city, and district to district in the provinces the people would not listen to him. Then, when he was in Ireland, a man said to him, "Why, sir, when it is a free passage it cannot be much of a country," and he was right. At the same time, there were lots of people in the old country who would like to come out here, not to make money, but merely for a

change of surroundings—because they thought there was a better market here for labour, because they believed there were better prospects for their sons and daughters in a new country than in an old. There was also the belief amongst the young women, that in all new countries there were better prospects of an excellent matrimonial alliance than in old countries. Why, he remembered one of the largest merchants in Brisbane, who went to an immigrant ship and picked out his wife, lived happily, and brought up a family of sons and daughters—all of whom were now occupying high positions. Hon. members on the Labour benches had an idea that if immigrants were brought to the colony they would reduce wages, and he should like to ask them if they were honestly convinced that Queensland should absolutely cease to ask people to come here. If so, let it be well-known, let it be recorded, that this was not a country for increase of population. He was very glad to hear one hon. member say they were not opposed to immigrants as long as they came with a reasonable amount of skill and a little capital to pay their way. That was the kind of immigration he had advocated; but it was not the kind that would be got if they had lecturers going from town to town with a bale of hay a bunch of bananas, and other things.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: And a cob of corn.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: People in the old country knew a cob of corn and a bale of hay as well as they did. What they wanted to do was to send members in an honorary capacity—say seven or nine, representing both sides of the House—every recess; and he should prefer that the majority should be selected from the Opposition benches. He regretted that the White Star line of steamers, which was now running to Australia, was not coming to Brisbane. That was due to the fact that there was not a sufficient depth of water in the river for them; but he hoped that in five or ten years, if they did their duty, to have the ships coming to Brisbane. The White Star Company was offering passages from the United Kingdom to Australia for £14 14s. That brought him to what had been said by the hon. member for Cairns—that the State should not give any contribution. If they wished to appear in the old world as a country with some attractions, they must give some assistance. Even in New Zealand they offered a passage equivalent in its gross payment to what would take an immigrant to the United States. Hon. members would see that he had advocated that the passage money should be paid; but it was called “bounty” immigration—most objectionable title, that really ruined it. Let the passage from the United Kingdom be the popular £10-note. What was wanted was the establishment of a system by which people could be brought to the colony for a £10-note, and not know that the difference between that and the actual cost was paid by the State. In order to popularise immigration to Queensland, it was also necessary to cease bringing immigrants by the Torres Straits route. The passage through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea was such a trying ordeal that when people arrived in Queensland they were so disgusted that they at once endeavoured to raise money to clear out of the place. They should revert to the old-fashioned route round the Cape of Good Hope. It could be advertised in the United Kingdom that on a certain day a steamer would be leaving for Queensland, and people coming round the Cape would be prepared for the climate, and would in turn induce their friends to come out after them. Reverting to the question of labour, there was not an idle man to be found in Townsville, Charters Towers, or the Western country. There was not an idle man in the town. Brisbane was prosperous.

Mr. HARDACRE: Can you give one employment now?

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Yes.

Mr. HARDACRE: Then I will send you one to-morrow.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He could not give a man 1s. an hour for digging out roots in a paddock to save him from starvation.

Mr. DAWSON: Can you give him 2s. 6d. an hour to dig out ideas?

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: There was lots of employment in the country at old country wages, which he was happy to say were very high, and in this climate men did not need so much clothing or so much food. Let both sides declare whether they were in favour of a policy of immigration, or in favour of a policy of standing still. He was in favour of immigration by the proper route. He was not in favour of free immigrants, except in the case of those who were nominated by their friends in the colony. They should allow them to be nominated at half the regular rates—say a £5-note. If the immigrants were of the right stamp they would soon be converted into employers of labour. He was a large employer of labour within two years of the day he landed in Queensland, and there were hundreds of others who were employers of labour who came to the colony as immigrants. He did not think they arrived here with a £10-note in their pockets. The country now offered attractions which it did not offer when he came to the colony. There was not a mile of telegraph when he came to Queensland; there was not a mile of railway; there was not a Labour party in the country; there were not 10,000 acres of land open for selection, and he was one of the old Liberal party that opened up land for immigrants. What was the spectacle to-day? They had railways, telegraphs, scores of newspapers, water supplies, and numerous other advantages. Instead of decrying immigration, those hon. members who represented labour should join hon. members on the Government side in going to the old country in annual batches at the expense of the country, to tell labour there to come and join them in enjoying the blessings of this free, fruitful, and happy country.

Mr. FISHER: They were indebted to the hon. member now and again for very interesting speeches, and their only regret was that he did not favour hon. members with them oftener. He was much struck with the arithmetic with which the hon. member started his address. In correcting the hon. member for Cairns, the hon. member said that the amount of money that had been expended on that vote was £500,000, and he asked why they should cavil at an expenditure which was only equivalent to 3d. a month per head of population. Now the vote was for £50,000, which, on a population of something like 500,000, amounted to 2s. a head per annum. That was considerably over 3d. a month, as the hon. gentleman would easily see. He trusted that the calculations of the hon. member with reference to the contingent of members from either side of the Committee going to the old country were more accurate. However, that was a very small matter. He expected that the hon. member would go into arithmetic regarding the profit and loss of the matter, and that he would prove, not only that it was a good thing to bring immigrants to the colony, but also that they could make money by adopting such a policy. For instance, the debt of the colony amounted to £70 per head, and they paid £12 a head to bring immigrants to Queensland.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: £13.

Mr. FISHER: Well, he would allow a margin, and say £15. If they brought out 100,000 immigrants at £15 per head, that would add £1,500,000 to the debt of the colony, and then if they took the total debt and made the population the divisor, they would find that instead of the average debt per head being £70 it would be about £55, showing a distinct profit of £15 per head. Adopting that method of calculation, all they had to do was to bring out plenty of immigrants, and they would wipe out the national debt. If they had 1,000,000 here the debt per head would be reduced to £33, and if they had 10,000,000 it would be a mere fraction. But he was afraid that that kind of argument was illusive. As a matter of fact the loan immigration expenditure for the colony amounted to £66s. for every man, woman, and child in Queensland. Did anyone imagine for a moment that they had got an equivalent for that expenditure? He did not think they had. He now came to the political aspect of the question as far as he himself was concerned. He had given a distinct pledge to his constituents, in answer to questions, that he would not support an immigration policy during this Parliament, and the electors who had voted for himself and his colleague, Mr. Ryland, had done so on that distinct promise. He was not now going behind the pledge or promise he had given to his constituents, nor did he think it was wise to proceed in the way the Government were doing at the present time. At the present there was, as had been pointed out by the hon. member in the debate on the Address in Reply, a difficulty in obtaining suitable immigrants from the old country, but he had no doubt that in time there would be attracted to the colony a large number of people who desired to seek pastures new, and that would, he believed, be of advantage to the people who came here, and to the advantage of the colony. But he objected to the large expenditure now proposed, and intended to move that the vote be reduced by £2,000. He would not, however, do so at present, as the hon. member for North Brisbane might wish to reply.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON hoped that hon. members would excuse him from saying anything further at present, as he had been suffering from a cold for some time.

Mr. BROWNE denied that the party on that side of the House wanted, as the Chief Secretary had alleged, to exclude people from the colony. They certainly wanted to exclude one class of people, and that was coloured aliens; but he had always said, both inside and outside the House, that there was room for millions of white people in this colony, and he believed that, as the Treasurer had said in his Financial Statement, the best way to induce people to come here was to let them see that the people in the colony were better off than the people in the old country. The hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Macdonald-Paterson, had said that wages at home were not so good as they were in Queensland. The Agent-General in his report distinctly stated that the wages of the class of people we wanted in the colony were higher than they were in the old country.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I referred to servan: girls, and stated that there was no hope of getting wage-earners.

Mr. BROWNE: Sir Horace Tozer said—

I could easily fill many ships with unskilled labourers, who would, I am sure, only tend to presently swell the numbers of your unemployed. It is indeed a difficult problem to attract to Queensland farmers, farm labourers, and domestic servants. Not only have the conditions changed in this kingdom materially within the last ten years, and the very classes you require

receive better wages here, but there is an admitted scarcity in the farming districts of England for their requirements, and it requires very great inducements to get people to go anywhere.

The Agent-General also stated in his report that he had sent out a circular to 1,000 agents, and in that circular an offer was made of 10s. 6d. per head for every adult, and half that sum for every child under three years of age, sent to the colony by any sailing vessel or steamer. Did

the hon. member know that in that [9 p.m.] circular sent broadcast to those agents, who got so much per head for immigrants, the same as if they were recruiting down at the South Sea Islands, there was this statement—

All persons who are mentally and bodily sound are eligible, without regard to occupation, age, or sex.

And it was explained that they were to be provided with a ship's kit and all the rest of it. The Government in that were offering those agents a premium to pick up any unskilled labourer or mechanic.

Mr. SMITH: The Agent-General has to approve of them.

Mr. BROWNE: Did the hon. member imagine that immigrants recruited in that way from all parts of the country had to pass before the Agent-General? Since Parliament had been sitting that session there had been an advertisement standing for two or three days in the *Courier* and *Telegraph* from three clerks, one printer, two carpenters, one tinsmith, and a tutor, and they were all at the Immigration Barracks waiting to be engaged.

Mr. LORD: That is not the class we want. We want farm labourers and domestic servants.

Mr. BROWNE: No; but that was the class they were getting, and that was just what his side were protesting against. The class they were in want of were those who would start out a line for themselves when they came out here, as many members of this House had done. He had seen a number of men he took to be Scandinavians, at the depot a few weeks ago. There were some five-and-twenty of them there, and though they were supposed to be farm labourers, the hon. member for Rosewood, who went there in search of farm labourers, found that there were only five of them who had ever seen a farm. Though as a general rule he admitted that men from the north of Europe were as good men as they could get into the colony, he heard that the men he had referred to were going out on strike the morning of the day he went to the depot, because they had been asked to clean out their quarters. Men who were too proud or too lazy to do that when they were being fed at the Government expense until they got employment were hardly a desirable class of immigrants. He wanted to make their position perfectly clear. He believed with the Treasurer that if they could make the conditions of life in the colony such that people would admit that they would be better off here, they would get the right class of immigrants. If they could make settlement on the land easy, and give attractions of that kind to a class of men who would settle on the land, employ themselves there, and in a short time become employers of labour, not a single man on his side would object to it. But they did object to paying so much a head for people to come out here — "without regard to occupation, age, or sex."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: That is confined to full-paying passengers.

Mr. BROWNE: That was so; but the Queensland taxpayers had to find the 10s. 6d. per head, the ship's kit, and all the rest of it; and when these people came here they put up at the Immigration Depot, the same as anyone else. If they got the right sort of immigrants they

had unlimited resources here for them to develop; but they objected to spending a farthing of the taxpayers' money to bring out a lot of people who could only compete in the overcrowded labour market against those who were already here.

Mr. SMITH wished to emphasise every word the hon. member for Croydon had said as to the class of people they wanted to come out to Queensland. They did not want a pauper class who would only swell the ranks of the unemployed, but a class who would settle on the land, and who had got something to enable them to live upon it and make it productive. It was almost a miracle that the handful of people they had had been able to make the colony what it was. They had only half-a-million all told, and what had they done? They had made Queensland the second or third colony of the group. What was a country without people? It was all very well to say they must make this place attractive, but there were other considerations to be taken into account. They were in competition with places nearer to the old country and the large centres of population in Europe, and those places advertised their country and offered every inducement to immigrants, who could go through for something like £2 10s. a head. Unless they assisted the right class of people to come here, they could not meet that kind of competition, and they would never see the prosperity in their time that they all desired to see in this colony. In the past there had been tremendous competition between various countries for immigrants, and the competition between the different shipping companies had also been extreme. Would anyone say that this country did not offer better inducements for the thrifty than existed in the centres of population in the old land? Although wages might be as high in the old country, yet there was greater scope for the abilities of young men and women out here. He knew something about the old country, and the backward position it was in in many respects. He knew that in a great many instances where farms previously existed those farms were turned into grazing areas. But it had been the experience of every immigrant coming here that with industry and patience he could better his position, and the conditions of life were made easier to him. He had not any doubt that if the Government judiciously chose the right class of immigrants, the ultimate benefit to the colony would be very great indeed. He contended that the population which Queensland possessed at the present time was not sufficient for the development of its resources, and that if they wished to progress at a reasonably rapid rate they must introduce immigrants of the right class, who would become producers within the colony. There was plenty of room for the people, and plenty of opportunity for them to improve their condition.

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*) said he was against the vote altogether, and agreed with the hon. member for Brisbane North when he said that it did not improve the position of the colony in the old country when it was known that the Government had to pay for the introduction of immigrants. It was more a slight and stigma on the colony than anything else, and was not at all likely to induce the best class of persons to come here. People would go to New Zealand, Victoria, or New South Wales, but it was impossible almost to get them to go to Queensland. Hon. members opposite were always talking about getting the proper class of immigrants, and yet it was admitted that the proper class never reached these shores, and, in spite of that fact, they continued the same old cry for the proper class of immigrants. There

were certain people who resented the argument that immigrants should not be imported to compete with the labour already here. It was against the economic principles of hon. members on the other side to preserve anything like an even balance in the labour market. They said that the law of supply and demand would regulate everything, and that if that law was interfered with the Government of the country would be turned upside down, and things would go to rack and ruin. It was an undoubted fact that the best class of immigrants went off to the United States of America and Canada, and that was largely attributable to the fact that their system of promoting immigration was on an entirely different principle to ours. Some years ago, when he was a regular reader of *Hansard*, he gathered that it was an unwritten law that the money received for the sale of land was applied to the purposes of immigration; but he found when he grew wiser that the land was sold first, and then people were brought out here to settle upon it, finding when they came here the same conditions as existed in the country which they had left. In the old country the land was fenced off by big walls, and people had to wander about looking for employment. Here there were no walls; but there were pegs at each corner of the land, which served the same purpose, for it was not available when the people came to take it up. The suggestion of the hon. member for Brisbane North that a Labour member should be sent home as a lecturer seemed to be on the same principle as the consolation commission or another edition of the railways committee; at the same time he admitted that if a Labour member did go home in that capacity it would be a good exhibition of the intelligence of Queensland. The hon. member also pointed out that there were some good prizes to be got in this country. He admitted that; but it was something like the consultation sweep on the Melbourne Cup—there were also a good many blanks. The Chief Secretary had charged the Opposition side with not wishing to see a greater population in the country; but the hon. gentleman was entirely wrong there. He (Mr. Ryland) wanted to see the population of Queensland doubled or trebled within the next five years. If we had ten or twenty times the present population under proper conditions it would be all the better for the colony. Better land laws were wanted and better opportunities to utilise the natural resources of the colony. There was any amount of mineral wealth locked up in freehold estates which could not be prospected owing to the want of a mining on private property law. Of course, people might obtain permission to prospect, but it was not likely that prospecting would be done on those large freeholds under present conditions. If there was a mining on private property law in Queensland, it would open up a lot of that country.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member is now wandering away from the question, and I must ask him to confine his remarks to the question before the Committee.

Mr. RYLAND said he was trying to show that if the conditions here were such that people could make a good and honest living this vote for immigration would not be required.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will see that the question of mining on private property is not relevant to the question before the Committee.

Mr. RYLAND said he was only giving that as an example in passing. Under the system of immigration that had been in force in Queensland, numbers of people had been brought out here at the expense of this colony, and 50 per cent. of them had gone to the other colonies,

Recently a good many of them had gone to Western Australia. If sufficient inducements were offered, there were any number of farmers in the southern colonies who would come here and settle on the land, and they would be a good deal better settlers than immigrants brought here at the expense of the State.

With regard to domestic servants, [9.30 p.m.] if there was good employment here for them and plenty of work, numbers of domestic servants would come out, as well as other labourers. He thought a very much better class of mistresses was wanted. There was a great want of good mistresses in Queensland. A good master very often made a good servant, and a good mistress a good servant. If they could only get some sort of a reformation in society in this respect, it would be a great national benefit. He hoped the whole vote would be wiped out, and he would sooner see the £50,000 spent in other ways—in opening up the lands of the colony and in administering the second part of the Co-operative Land Settlement Act. They could only expect failure under that Act under the present conditions. If they could only put the second part of that Act into proper operation, it would be much better for the colony and for the co-operative settlements, because it would take the surplus labour away from the towns, which was giving many towns a bad name. He was entirely against the vote, and he was going to vote against it.

Mr. HIGGS (*Fortitude Valley*) said he thought the present system was a very unsound one, but he agreed that the matter was largely one of administration. If the present law were properly administered a large desirable population would be attracted to the colony. There was no doubt a large population was desired in Queensland, and they could not expect to get the benefits of civilisation without a large population. But they had a number of gentlemen controlling the destinies of the country who thought that the affairs of the colony would be better conducted by enabling syndicates and companies to get hold of large areas of land, while the small farmers were not able to obtain small areas near markets. The hon. member for Brisbane North pointed out that after he had been out here two years he was an employer of labour, but the condition of things had changed since that hon. member had arrived in Australia. They were worse in the old country and better here when he arrived, but the conditions of the working classes had very much improved in the old country since then, and had very much deteriorated in the colonies. They did not bring these people out to settle on the land as agriculturists, but to compete with agricultural labourers who were getting as low as 10s. a week; to compete with compositors who were getting from £2 to £3 a week; and to compete with carpenters, joiners, stonemasons, and other artisans, who were receiving a less rate of wages than men of the same class were getting in the old country. It had been indicated that the proper class of men to bring out were those with a capital of £100, £200, or £300, but those people who had such capital were not likely to come to Australia when they could do as well in the old country. They were bringing out a number of young women as domestic servants, presumably; but he thought, with the hon. member for Gympie, that there was room for considerable improvement on the part of mistresses. Although some mistresses could not pay high wages they might give their servants more reasonable hours, in order to enable them to get home, or to see their friends during certain hours. What was supposed to be a body of domestic servants came out by the "Duke of Portland," but they

were not engaged wholly as domestic servants; some of the factory proprietors engaged some of these girls. When they were taken into the factories they competed with a class of labour which was paid ill enough already, and drove them into other occupations in which there was just the same competition. He thought the Government should strike that vote out at the earliest possible moment and turn their attention to—

Mr. LEAHY: Strike it out now.

Mr. HIGGS: They could not strike it out now, because there were too many gentlemen in the House who said they believed in the law of supply and demand, and yet were going to pass a vote which was an interference with that law. He believed it was not possible to reduce it in the House constituted as it was at present; but he was in hopes, if the Ministry would pay attention to the wants of a large class that wanted to settle on the lands of the colony near to markets, they would soon attract a population, and attract it without any of the distressing evils that were attendant on the introduction of State-aided immigrants. He was inclined to think that, not only in connection with male immigrants, but also in connection with female immigrants, certain individuals were brought out to Australia to get rid of them—that there were people in the old country only too willing—he had it on the authority of captains of immigrant vessels—to give recommendations of character to certain persons who were not of the best class to come out to Australia because they wanted to get rid of them from the various towns and parishes of the old land. He believed that if the Ministry altered their tactics and recognised the wants of the people, and not the wants of the banking corporations and syndicates, they would be able to establish here a class that would render this vote for assisted immigration quite unnecessary.

* Mr. KERR (*Barcoo*) said he could not allow the statement made by the Premier that his party were opposed to immigration to go unchallenged. Two sessions ago he stated that it was impossible to get farm labourers and domestic servants to come out from the old country at the rate of wages offered here; but the hon. member for Cook, who was always ready to back up the Government, made the statement that wages were much lower in the old country than they were here. Now that statement of his (Mr. Kerr's) was confirmed by the report of the Agent-General. It was also borne out by a letter he had received only this week from a gentleman who was now in the old country, but who was for years a resident of Charters Towers. The letter stated that things in the old country had never been so prosperous for many years as they were now—that every branch of trade was brisk, that buildings were going up everywhere, that there was a scarcity of farm labourers, and that female domestic servants were almost impossible to obtain. If people could get good wages in the old country, why should they leave their relatives and friends and come out to a new country of the conditions of life in which they knew nothing? In reply to the statement of the Premier that his party were opposed to immigration, he would point out that he had done as much as any single man to get people to come out to Queensland. The records in Rockhampton and other portions of the colony where he had resided would show that he had nominated a number of people, many of whom, he was glad to say, were still in the colony and doing well. For a number of years, however, he had felt that he could not recommend people to come. He had stated the rates of wages and the difficulty there was in getting

constant employment, and they considered that, with the wages and the constant employment they could get at home, they would not be bettering their conditions by emigrating to Queensland. It would only be when the rates of wages were raised and the conditions under which servants were employed here were improved that the colony could hope to get the class of immigrants it wanted. He agreed with the Agent-General that the class of labour that could be got in the United Kingdom at present was not the class that was wanted here. What Queensland needed was agriculturists who would settle in the far Western portions of the colony. He believed there were people who would emigrate to Queensland if the conditions under which land could be taken up in the West were improved, and who would engage in sheep farming. Some of those who had come out on his advice had gone in for sheep farming; but they had brought a little capital with them, and with that to aid them, and perseverance and good seasons, they had amassed a little money. In reply to what had been said by the hon. member for Brisbane North, he would like to point out that when that hon. gentleman came out there were more advantages and more openings than there were at present.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No.

Mr. KERR: When he came to Rockhampton twenty-five years ago he had an offer of three or four jobs as soon as he arrived; but when he was in Rockhampton a few years after he was unable to get employment at his trade, and that condition of things existed at present sometimes. There were men of the same trade as himself—good skilled workmen—who had a very hard struggle to get a job which could be considered as constant. If a man got a job at £3 a week, if the work was not constant, it was not as good as constant work at £2 5s. or £2 a week. Then, again, they had to take into consideration the fact that the conditions of life in the old country were much more favourable. It was possible to rear a family much more comfortably in the old country, and the opportunities for finding employment for their children were also greater. A man might get a little extra money in Queensland, but if he got sick in the West, it cost a good deal to come to the coast towns for medical attendance and to recruit. If greater inducements were offered to people to settle on the land, there would be a better class of immigrants. Greater inducements were offered to people to go to Canada and the United States of America. The voyage was much shorter, for one thing. But numbers of people would be quite willing to come to Queensland if it could be shown to them that they would better their condition by coming here. As to the Chief Secretary twitting hon. members on the Opposition side with being opposed to immigration, such was not the case. There were members on that side of the Committee who had done a great deal in the way of endeavouring to bring a good class of people to the colony. The official records in Rockhampton would show that when Dr. Salmond was immigration agent in Rockhampton, he (Mr. Kerr) was the means of nominating a number of people, who came to the Central district, and remained in the colony. He was sorry to say that he had found numbers of people in New South Wales who came to Queensland at the expense of the taxpayers, but left on account of their inability to find employment. Even in South Australia and Western Australia there were large numbers of people who came to Queensland at the colony's expense. They should have immigration agents in the old country

who would tell people the truth about the colony, so that they would not be disgusted when they arrived in the colony. Let them be told that if they came to Rockhampton or Townsville they could get railway passes which would take them as far as the railways went, but if they went further out in search of work they would have to take their swags on their backs and their water-bags, that they would have to cook for themselves, and that they would have to suffer many inconveniences to which they were unaccustomed. Tell the people the truth, and the discontent that existed at the present time among immigrants would disappear. He was certainly opposed to the present system of immigration, and if an amendment was moved in the vote he would support it.

Mr. STEWART: That appeared to be the most extraordinary proposition of the many extraordinary propositions of the Government. The only inference to be drawn from the vote was that the conditions of Queensland were not sufficiently favourable to induce people to come here, and therefore they had to be subsidised before they came. A very good example of how that sort of thing worked could be found in the case of steamship companies. If they desired to get a steamship company to send vessels to the Gulf ports, they had to subsidise them, because the trade of the ports was not sufficient to induce any company to take up that particular line. The same rule applied with reference to population. By that vote they were simply subsidising people to come here. Had it not occurred to the hon. gentleman in charge of the affairs of the country that, instead of spending large sums of money in bringing people here—but who would not then remain here—they turned their attention to improving the condition of the people already in the colony? Would not that be a means of inducing further immigration? If they could make their own people comfortable and happy; if they could get constant employment and good wages, then immigrants would undoubtedly come here from all parts of the world.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Other countries can do the same, which are much closer to England.

Mr. STEWART: He did not know whether it was fortunate or unfortunate for them that people in England at the present time were very prosperous. The working classes in England were so prosperous that they looked upon emigration to anywhere with an unfavourable eye. They could not even be persuaded to go across the "herring pond" to Canada or the United States of America, and, if that was the case, was it not ridiculous to suppose that they would come all the way to Australia? The policy of the country in connection with the

increase of population should be to
[10 p.m.] encourage the settlement of people on the soil, and to make the people we had here comfortable and happy. Let them have good wages and constant employment, and then there would always be an inducement for others to follow. Were not the many thousands of Europeans who went to the Transvaal induced to go there by the high wages which were paid and the excellent conditions which existed? And if we had the same conditions in Queensland, instead of having to subsidise people to come to our shores, they would come in thousands of their own accord. When the gold boom started in Western Australia, that colony did not require to subsidise immigrants in order to induce them to go there, but men went there by the hundred from the other colonies of Australia, from New Zealand, from Great Britain, and even from South Africa. The first requisite, if they wanted to have population,

was to have good conditions. If they could show the people of Europe that they would be better off here than they could possibly be in their own country, then there was a very large number who would inevitably come here, as the population of Europe was very dense, and a considerable proportion of that population were casting their eyes round every corner of the world trying to find out some spot where they might be able to improve their condition. Wealth was now more equally disseminated than it used to be, and there were large numbers of the working classes in the old world who were able to pay their own passages to any portion of the world, and many of them would come to this colony and pay their own passages if the inducements offered were sufficient. They had a most excellent evidence of that in the recent rush to Klondyke, when tens of thousands of men went to enormous expense, braved the rigours of an Arctic climate, and underwent great hardships trying to get to that new Eldorado. Those men risked very much to go there in the hope that they would achieve a fortune more easily than in their own country, and if it could be shown that there was a fortune for them here they would come to Queensland. The whole question of land administration and of the development of their mining resources was involved in the question of immigration. If they threw open the resources of the colony to the people, and made them easy of access, they would not only be able to grow people of their own much more rapidly than they were doing at the present time, but they would offer attractions to the people of other countries to come to the colony. Every member of the House wished to see a larger population in Australia than there was at present, and they all recognised that there was room for millions of people in Queensland, and that millions of people could make a living in the colony under certain circumstances, but they had not yet reached that point of development. There was any quantity of room out on the Western plains for tens of thousands of men; but under present circumstances it would be impossible for them to make a living there. But he believed that, under proper conditions, within a very few years they could double, treble, and quadruple the population of Western Queensland. As a matter of fact, however, the conditions of the Western portions of the colony at the present time were adverse to an increase of population. No doubt during recent years, under the healthy influence of the Labour party, the Government had been making a gradual change in their policy in that respect, but a great deal required to be done yet. Those large areas which were held by banking syndicates and absentee companies required to be broken up into small holdings, and those holdings settled by men who would live there, and rear families there. No doubt that would come in time, but it ought to come sooner than it was likely to come, and the period of its advent would be largely influenced by the policy which Parliament pursued. Hitherto the influence had been in exactly the opposite direction, and that was not confined to the Western portion of the colony. The very same thing held good on the coast. Until within a few years back, and until the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act was put into operation, the Darling Downs country was in the possession of private and of syndicate owners, and there was not a single acre of it available for settlement.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Didn't you oppose the Act?

Mr. STEWART: Did the hon. gentleman want to drag him into a discussion of the merits and demerits of the Act? The Act was better

than no Act; but there was another method which might have been adopted, and which would have been much better even than that Act, which, if properly administered, was not a bad Act after all. He was pointing out that the policy of the Government so far as settlement on the land was concerned had been to prevent a natural increase of population. They wanted to reverse all that. Come down nearer to the coast, and all the way from Brisbane to Townsville, and also in the district he represented, they found the same thing operating: Large areas had got into few hands, and settlement was blocked in consequence. Many men desired to settle on the land, and there was no land available, unless they went to a great distance from the railway or a market. The whole conditions were hostile to the increase of population, and, notwithstanding that, the Government proposed to borrow £50,000 to bring immigrants to the colony. From whatever point of view it was looked at the whole thing appeared to be a mistake. The question of supply and demand had been dealt with, and some hon. members had objected to the expenditure proposed on the ground that only workers would be brought here, and they would compete with the workers already here and, as a consequence, would lower wages and make the conditions less favourable than they were even at the present time. There was a great deal in that argument. Why should the working people of Queensland be asked to subsidise workers from Great Britain and Europe to come here and compete with themselves? Would the Attorney-General send £5,000 home and import fifty lawyers from London to compete with him in the Brisbane lawyer market? It would be considered a very foolish stroke of business if he did. Why should the man in Queensland who had only his labour to sell be exposed to conditions different to anyone else? Take the case of the Queensland farmer: His potatoes, maize, and wheat were protected against the potatoes, maize, and wheat of the farmers in the southern colonies. Take the sugar-grower, the bootmaker, the cabinet-maker, and the whole gamut of manufacturers, and all their occupations were in some way or other protected. But when they came to the man who had nothing to sell in the open market but his labour, they found that he was not only to be subjected to unrestricted competition, but labour was actually brought here, at his own expense, to compete with him in his own market. What would the farmers of Queensland say if the Government proposed to import 1,000 tons of potatoes or 5,000 tons of hay or chaff at the public expense to compete here with the potatoes and chaff grown in Queensland? "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you" was an excellent rule, and that was all that they who advocated the claims of labour put forward.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: What is all this stone-walling about?

Mr. STEWART was not consciously stone-walling, and a question like that involving an expenditure of £50,000, and a serious annual charge upon the revenue, and also a disturbance of the labour market, was an important question, which he was entitled to discuss as fully as he chose. Queensland had been pursuing a policy of immigration almost since she was a self-governing colony, and he found they had spent between £3,000,000 and £4,000,000 on immigration. That meant that whether they imported a single immigrant or not they were spending every year about £130,000 for immigration, enough every year to import 8,000 immigrants. Did any hon. member say that they received full

value for that expenditure? It had been said that they had been importing immigrants for the other colonies, and from his own observation he could say there was a great deal of truth in the statement. They stayed in the colony perhaps for a few weeks, and then took steamer for the southern colonies. If that had been the case in the past it was extremely likely it would be so in the future. It was astonishing to him that the Chief Secretary did not deal with the matter in his own favourite manner, and say that that was practically a federal question. Why did he not refer it to the Federal Government? They would spend £50,000 during the ensuing year, and yet within a year federation would have been accomplished, the immigrants would have come out here, a large number of them would have drifted down south, and this colony would have incurred liabilities for the southern colonies. Was there any need at the present moment for a system of immigration? An increase in population was not the only thing desirable. They might have 10,000,000 of people here, and yet they might be in abject poverty. In India almost every second year there were famines that swept away millions of people. It was not so much how many people were in the colony, but what was their condition. It might suit some people to have a large and poverty-stricken population. Side by side were often found extreme wealth and extreme poverty; but that was not the kind of thing that a man who wished to see the human race progress rationally desired. His party were striving to increase the happiness and comfort of the great mass of the people, and every act they performed, every word they uttered, was done with that one object. They might fail in their efforts, but that was their desire. They did not desire to see hills of wealth on one side and great holes of poverty on the other, yet that was the only result that could follow if they had a dense population without proper industrial and social conditions. In nation-building as in everything else it was wise to hasten slowly. The tree that took the longest to come to maturity was the one that stood the blast of years the longest. They had heard of a certain gourd which grew in a night—Jonah's gourd—but it withered away; and as it was with individuals, and gourds, and trees, so it was with nations. The slower the growth the better and the more enduring the life. There was no particular reason why they should desire to rush in population here; let it grow as quickly as circumstances would permit, but do not let there be any artificial additions to the population. Just as they prepared the country, and opened up its resources, so would population increase. He was much amused with a suggestion made by the hon. member for Brisbane North that a certain number of members of Parliament should be sent to the old country every year as immigration lecturers. If he went there as an immigration lecturer he would tell the whole truth, and nothing but it. He would tell the people that Queensland was a magnificent country, with splendid pastoral, mining, and agricultural resources; that the climate was much superior to that of the old country; that a young man, diligent, sober, and thrifty had a prospect before him that a young man in the old country never could have; and then he would show the other side of the picture. He would tell them that notwithstanding they had all those advantages they had also certain disadvantages. He would tell them of the continuous Government; that they had very good land laws in some ways, but very badly administered; that if they came here they would have to contend against droughts and floods; that they would have to compete not only with their fellow whiteman but with people of all

the colours of the rainbow. If they went in for market gardening he would tell them that they would have to compete with Chinamen; if they went in for ploughing on the sugar plantations they would have to compete with kanakas; and if they wanted employment in the sugar mills they would have to compete with Japanese. If he told them that, they would put the good

against the bad and resolve to stay [10.30 p.m.] where they were. The Government said they wanted to bring out agricultural labourers. What inducements had we to offer agricultural labourers to come here? Suppose he was appointed a lecturer, and he went to his native country, where there were the best ploughmen in the world. If he went to the populous centres there, and told them that they could get from 5s. a week and rations to £1 a week and rations they would simply laugh at him, because they could get more where they were. If they asked him whether they could get constant employment here, he would be compelled to say they could not, because he knew very well during a drought the ground was too hard to plough, and after rain it was too wet for some time; and taking the year all round the agricultural labourer was employed longer in the old country during the year than he was here. And where was the need of going to the old country and asking men to leave fairly good conditions and come out here to something much worse? Was there any particular demand here for agricultural labourers? The Immigration Agent's report for last year stated that more agricultural labourers applied for employment than he could find work for; and in his (Mr. Stewart's) opinion not one immigrant should be brought to the colony until every man already here was employed. The hon. member for Brisbane North said that every man in the city of Brisbane was fully employed—but what was the reason? Was it because of any natural increase of trade, or was it because there was between £200,000 and £300,000 of public money being spent in the city of Brisbane at present on public buildings? After those buildings were completed, the condition of things in Brisbane would be much worse than before the money was spent. But even if the people of Brisbane were so fully employed, there were many portions of the colony where there were numbers of unemployed. In his own electorate the people at the meatworks were working only half-time and getting half wages; in the Western country, and along the coast as well, a large number of workmen could not find employment. In some of the mining districts business was not nearly so brisk as it was some time ago. There was a number of men unemployed at Gympie, and he had heard that at Charters Towers there was always a certain proportion of unemployed. All over the mining districts there were men scattered up and down fossicking here and there—developing the country no doubt, but making a very poor livelihood. All that went to show that instead of the colony requiring more workmen, what we wanted was more work for the people already here. If no guarantee could be given to the men to be brought out here, why should they be brought out? The hon. member for Brisbane North said that there was plenty work here at old-country wages, but he (Mr. Stewart) did not know what that hon. member meant by old-country wages. The Government should be prepared to offer men something better than they were getting in the old country, in order to induce them to come out here. Why should they break up their homes in the old country if they could not get better conditions in the colony? The hon. member said they ought to be prepared to take the same wages as they received at home, but he (Mr. Stewart) thought they should offer these

men proper inducements to come out to Queensland. From the Auditor-General's report he found that last year £7,328 was spent on passage money, and £6,978 on contingent expenses.

At 10'42.

Mr. DUNSFORD called attention to the state of the Committee.
Quorum formed.

Mr. STEWART: There was a difference of £400 between the money expended on passages and that spent on contingencies last year. There ought to be some explanation of that, as it cost as much to get an immigrant out as it did to pay his passage money. In the Queensland *Figaro*—an ardent supporter of the policy of the present Government—there was a full page advertisement dealing with Queensland immigration. He would like to know what was the use of publishing that? If they wished for immigration, there was no need to advertise in the colony, but they should advertise where the immigrants were to be found.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: These papers are sent away.

Mr. STEWART did not believe these papers went outside the colony. The fact of the matter was that most of this money which was supposed to be spent on bringing immigrants out here was spent in subsidising Government organs. No doubt *Figaro* was all right as a publication. He would read the advertisement. It began—

Immigration Office, Kangaroo Point, Brisbane. Nominated Passengers. Permanent residents in Queensland wishing to obtain passages for their friends or relatives in the United Kingdom or the Continent of Europe, may do so under the provisions of the Immigration Act by making payments to the Immigration Agent in Brisbane or the Assistant Immigration Agents, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Mackay, or Townsville, or to the C.P.S. at any other town in the colony, upon the following scale:—

There was no inducement for men of fifty years of age to come to the colony. It was absolutely ridiculous to expect to induce men of that age to come out. They would not even find employment in the meatworks of the colony, where the average wage was about 15s. In Rockhampton the average rate of wages was somewhere about 24s. a week and food. He believed that in Townsville it was about the same, and at the meatworks west of Rockhampton it was £1 and tucker. These wages were very low considering the kind of work the men were called on to do and the uncertain nature of the employment. Owing to the drought, the meatworks were not working half the time, and, as a necessary consequence, the men were only earning half wages. The advertisement proceeded:—

Males between 1 and 12 years, £2; between 12 and 40, £4; over 40 and under 55, £3.

Females between 1 and 12, £1; between 12 and 40, £2; over 40 and under 55, £3.

Males or females, 55 and upwards, the full passage money, £13 13s.

Ship kits are supplied free to all nominated passengers.

Assisted Passengers.—The Agent-General for Queensland, in London, will entertain applications for some assistance towards the total cost of passage from small capitalist farmers, market gardeners, dairymen, and orchardists—especially in the case of those having families. Full particulars as to occupations of the head and the members of the family, their available capital, and intentions as to pursuit on landing, etc., should be forwarded with the application, and each case will be considered on its merits. Whatever money contributions it may be decided to grant towards the cost of passage, may apply to the case of persons wishing to proceed to the colony by second as well as steerage ship accommodation.

Free Passengers.—Female domestic servants and farm labourers will be granted free passages to Queensland upon the approval of the Agent-General in London, and forms of application setting forth the terms and conditions upon which such passages will be granted, may be obtained by communication with the office of the Agent-General, who must be thoroughly satisfied

with the character and *bona fides* of each applicant. The only outlay to be incurred by the emigrant will be the cost of transit from his place of residence to the port of embarkation, and also the charge for ship kit—namely, all emigrants, as enumerated above, will be accommodated, free of all expense, at the Immigration Depot at the port of arrival for fourteen days or such period as may enable them to complete their arrangements, and they will further be entitled to receive a free pass to any part of the colony where a railway line exists.

Full-paying Passengers.—Any person whose application for an assisted passage cannot be entertained can, as heretofore, avail himself of the third-class passenger rate—namely, £13 13s. (including ship kit), granted by the British-India Company's direct line of steamers from London to Queensland.

What earthly use was there in bringing out market gardeners? Would they not have to compete with John Chinaman, who would run them off on the shortest notice? There was absolutely no demand for farm labourers; there were more agricultural labourers in the colony than they could employ. With regard to female domestic servants, it must be admitted that there was a distinct distaste on the part of young colonial females to enter domestic service.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: To be a slave.

Mr. STEWART: They would rather go into shops or factories. In fact, they would rather do anything than become what was commonly called a "slavey." It was a regrettable fact, because he could not conceive of any better training for them than to serve under a good mistress for some years.

Mr. BELL: What is the explanation of that state of things?

Mr. STEWART: The young colonial female thought herself, perhaps, a "cut above" domestic service. She objected to the confinement, for one thing. If she went to a shop, she started work at a certain hour in the morning and went away at a certain hour in the evening. Then, perhaps, she had a half-holiday on Saturday. In domestic service she had to get up between 5 and 6 o'clock in the morning and remain at work until—

Mr. RYLAND: Half-past 11 at night.

Mr. STEWART: He would not go to extremes. On the average, she was employed from 6 o'clock in the morning until 8 o'clock at night every day from one year's end to the other, with, perhaps, rare intervals. These were conditions that no man would submit to. The remedy lay in making the occupation of domestic service more pleasant and more comfortable. If that was done, they would not have to send to the old country for domestic servants. It was a great misfortune for the young men as well as the young women of Queensland, that the colonial female would not enter domestic service. When they got married, as they inevitably did, the women had no training in the particular kind of work they would then have to do. They did not know how to cook, or how to do anything so far as carrying on the

[11 p.m.] work of a house was concerned.

Unhappiness was the result, and that was perhaps one reason why the average young Australian shied clear of matrimony. The whole question was one of great importance to the community. Domestic service was a much better training for young women than serving in shops, working in factories, or becoming clerks in the post office or at railway stations. Woman's chief aim in life was matrimony. The whole population question was involved in that. They ought to try and arrange their social relations so that men and women would unite in matrimony and multiply and replenish the earth. They wanted population. A few nights ago hon. members advocated the wider employment of woman. He had no doubt that in Europe, where the sexes were almost equally balanced,

large numbers of women could not get married, simply because there were not men enough to go round; but in Australia men were in a large majority, and their young women should engage in the glorious business of nation building.

Mr. GLASSEY thought the discussion had gone on long enough. He certainly was not going to stop there all night to take part in a discussion for which there was no necessity, and it was only reasonable that they should take a vote. He moved the reduction of the vote by £20,000. That would leave £30,000, a little larger sum than was voted last year. That was quite sufficient. Although the money came out of loan, and not out of revenue, the Government were pursuing a mistaken policy. If they could induce the right class of people to come to the colony, if they could be absorbed into the population when they arrived and could obtain remunerative employment, there would not be the same objection to the vote. But that was not the case, and it was on that account that he moved the reduction.

Mr. LESINA said he was sent there as an opponent of State-assisted immigration, and, as he was not a mere voting machine, he wished to give his reasons for supporting the amendment. Last year the trust and special funds, the Loan Fund Estimates, and the Appropriation Bill had been passed practically without discussion, and it was all the more necessary that the question of immigration should now receive the attention which it deserved. According to table P, attached to the Financial Statement, the expenditure on account of immigration from the date of separation to 30th June, 1899, was £3,154,030 5s. 9d. That was the cost of introducing 184,000 people. Were the majority of those people now in Queensland, or had they drifted to the other colonies?

The PREMIER: They have made the colony what it is to-day.

Mr. LESINA: At one time the other colonies had voted money for the purpose of obtaining immigrants, but all of them had abandoned that policy with the exception of Queensland. Instead of sending lecturers to Europe, why should they not send them to the other colonies in order to secure people who were already used to the conditions surrounding Australian industrial and civic life? They could point out the splendid advantages offered by Queensland. They could point out their liberal land laws, what a liberal Government they had, and how superior Queensland was to the other colonies. It was pointed out during the federal campaign what a glorious country Queensland was, and how superior it was to the other colonies. But they were sending home to England, Scotland, and Wales for immigrants, and when they arrived here they drifted over to New South Wales and the other colonies. What advantage was that to the unfortunate taxpayers of Queensland? He agreed with the statement made by the Treasurer in his Budget Speech that, "the prosperity of our own people after all is the greatest inducement we can offer to the surplus population of the old world to come here and participate in our advantages." But what were the inducements held out to those people? They were asked to come here to settle on the soil, but they were not told that the Government were buying back land at three times its value in order to settle farmers who were already in the colony on the soil, that squatters held 185,096 square miles of country, that banks and syndicates held 238,000 square miles, farmers 12,070 square miles, and agricultural farmers 3,630 square miles. Those facts were not placed before the people of Great Britain. Mr. Randall had issued a pamphlet in the old country dealing with immigration, and pointing out the

advantages which Queensland offered to persons desiring to settle here, and in that pamphlet there was a poem containing these lines:—

There is room and there is freedom, there is virgin soil
to till;
There to gain an independence, all that's wanted is the
will.

That little poem jarred with the facts he had mentioned with reference to the purchase of estates by the Government, and the area of country held by banks, syndicates, grazing farms, and agricultural farmers. All persons were, the Agent-General stated, eligible as immigrants, without respect to occupation, age, or sex, and yet hon. members were told here that it was agriculturists who were required. The officer in charge of the Government Labour Bureau, stated in his annual report that in only about five places was the demand for labour greater than the supply, and that in every other place the supply was greater than the demand. From the reports made by the district officers of that department it appeared that at Allora large numbers of labourers had been passing through the town in quest of employment; that at Aramac the wages for labourers were from £1 to £1 10s. and found: at Banana the ruling rates of wages for station hands and fencers, which were the main employments offering, were from 20s. to 25s. and rations; at Beaudesert the rates of wages were 15s. per week and found for farm labourers, and 10s. for useful lads; at Blackall no engagements had been made through the office during the year; at Boonah there were few applications for labour; at Burketown there was very little demand for labour, either in the town or district; at Bundaberg 907 applicants out of 1,228 found employment; at Cabarlah there were no applications for employment during the year; at Cairns, where domestic servants had to compete with Chinese, Javanese, Cingalese, and a mixed and indefinite breed of aliens, the ruling rates of wages for domestic servants were from 10s. to 15s. a week; at Charleville the demand for labour was nil; at Chinchilla there had been no demand for labour during the year, the supply being in excess; at Cleveland there had been very little demand for labour during the year; at Cloncurry there was practically no market for labour at present; at Cooktown there had been a considerable number of unemployed; at Dalby the supply of labour was fully equal to the demand; at Eidsvold there had been no applications for labour through the year, during which thirty-eight men, looking for work, were supplied with rations; at Emu Park males received 15s. a week and found; females getting 15s. a week; waitresses 15s. per week, and cooks £1 a week and found. At Esk all labour requirements were mostly met by the fixed population. At Eulo £1 5s. and board was the standard wage for station work; at Geraldton the supply in all other cases, except that of carpenters, had been equal to the demand; and at Georgetown there was no demand for labour of any description. Yet they were told there was a demand for labour all over Queensland, and that employers were simply pining for domestic servants and farm labourers.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: And yet those people are absorbed as they arrive.

Mr. LESINA would tell the hon. gentleman how they were absorbed when he came to that part of the subject, and some of the conditions under which they were not absorbed. At Gin Gin, firemen were getting £1 13s. a week, a mill hand £1 7s. a week, and find themselves, and men in similar occupations could get as much in England. At Goodna there was no demand for labour, and men were

working in that district at from 4s. to 6s. per day. At Gympie carpenters, blacksmiths, and other artisans were in full supply. At Ipswich the supply was 677, and the demand 209, so that nearly 500 could not get work there at all. The wages offering there for domestic servants ran from 6s. to 10s. a week, and for ordinary labourers from 10s. to 12s. per week. At Jondaryan the report was that a number of travellers had obtained work during the shearing season at 5s. to 6s. a day or 15s. a week and found, and there were no unemployed in the district except casual swagmen. The "casual swagman" was not supposed to be a human being at all in that report. He could tell hon. members that the casual swagman was a distinct entity who would have to be reckoned with in Queensland society, and there were many good men "humping bluey" in Queensland. He could speak feelingly on that subject, as he had humped bluey in this and the other colonies, and four years ago in New South Wales he did a 1,500 miles' track with bluey up. To propose to add to the class who humped bluey in Queensland to-day in the never-ending search for work that never came was nothing short of a crime, and those who supported that vote did an injustice to the community and to those whom they proposed to bring here. At Leyburn there was no demand beyond the local supply. At Maytown the report was that there were no idle people, nor was there any demand for labour. At Morven the report was, "No unemployed in the district during the year; few travelling swagmen; no demand." At Nanango it was doubtful if any extra labour would be required. At Nerang the ruling rate of wages was from 10s. to £1 a week and found. At Normanton there were no unemployed, but the wages for general labourers was 10s. a week. They got that in England, and were asked to leave it and home associations centering around a place where their ancestors had lived for centuries, that they might come out here to work for the same wages on sugar plantations cheek by jowl with kanakas. Why did not the Government instruct the Agent-General to send copies of that labour bureau report to all their immigration agents? A man would not leave the rockiest patch in Ireland to come here if he read that report. They did not do that, but they issued pamphlets with a beautiful view of Merivale Station, and told people that a man actually required no capital at all to establish himself on a selection in Queensland, which he could get at half-a-crown an acre payable in ten years. Such cajolery as that was only false pretences, for which in ordinary business, the person guilty of such an offence would get sent to gaol for three months or longer. At Port Douglas there was no demand for labour. At Ravenswood, a week's rations had to be given to twenty-four destitute travellers during the year. At Rosewood, the report was that a good number of swagmen came, and went there between Ipswich and Toowoomba, and sometimes found temporary local work at 15s. a week. At Roma, a good many rations had been distributed during the year to old men who came in seeking admission to Dunwich—worn out soldiers of industry who had worked their way for thirty or forty years in the back districts. Southport—the demand for outside labour was limited. Southwood—nothing doing in the labour market. At Stanthorpe a considerable falling off was recorded in the number looking for rations, and that was about the best report of the lot. At Surat the wages offering for fencing and ringbarking were 25s. and 15s. a week and found. At Tallebudgera there was no demand. At Tiara there was

little demand for labour. At Winton the supply of labour had been fully equal to the demand. And so on down to Yeulba, where there had been no demand for labour during the past year. In another part of the same report it was shown that £5,658 14s. 9d. had been spent during the year in feeding destitute citizens throughout the colony who had been too poor to buy bread for themselves. He remembered a case of a girl who came here from Norway in the "Duke of Portland," and [11.30 p.m.] she was engaged at 5s. a week, although she was probably led to

believe that she would get £1. Very likely she had been working at that wage ever since. He also had it on good authority that a benevolent lady in London, who had a home for reformed girls, had sent a good many of them out here as immigrants. If it were true that they were taking in rescued girls at the public expense, then the fact was worth pondering over, for he understood that the Agent-General had to pass all emigrants, and certify as to their character. Another significant fact was that the 2,042 unemployed in Brisbane lost on an average three weeks' time during the year. If their labour was worth only £1 a week that was £3 per head, or a total of £6,129 for the year, and if to that was added the lost time of other unemployed throughout the colony, there would be found to be a total loss of something like £10,000 or £20,000 a year. And yet they proposed to spend £50,000 to bring others to compete with men who were willing to work for 5s. per week and upwards. Another serious fact was that about 572 of the Brisbane registrations were those of married men with average families of three—572 unemployed men with a small army of wives and children dependent upon the result of their labour. Those were facts that the people of England should ponder over. He found at the end of the report from which he had been quoting a list of the tradesmen and others seeking work, and the number who found it. There were twelve axemen in demand, and the supply was ten, who were employed at from 12s. to 15s. a week. There was a demand for one baker, and sixteen offered their services; showing an excess of supply over demand of fifteen. There was a demand for three blacksmiths, and eighteen offered, the wages being from 7s. to 10s. a day. Why, a decent blacksmith in the old country could get 8s. a day. One bushman was asked for during the year, and twenty-six offered, and the one was engaged at 16s. a week. For butchers there was no demand, yet thirty-five were out of employment. Three caretakers were wanted, and there was a supply of two, and the wages offered were 6s. a week. Two carpenters were wanted, fifty rushed the job, and the two were engaged at 9s. a day. Rough bridge carpenters got £1 a week and found.

At twenty-five minutes to 12 o'clock,

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with Standing Order No. 171, I call upon the hon. member for Dalby, Mr. Bell, to relieve me in the chair.

Mr. BELL took the chair accordingly.

Mr. LESINA: There was no demand for clerks yet thirty-five were seeking work—they were a mere surplusage in the labour market. There were fourteen cooks asked for and forty-seven offered themselves. The men were engaged at from 15s. to £2 a week. There were thirty-five dairymen wanted and thirty-two offered, the wages being 10s. to 18s. For engineers there was no demand, although seventeen were on the list. Two engine-drivers were wanted, and fourteen offered—wages 12s. Fancy a man who had learned a trade, passed examination, and become really skilled at his

work, being offered a wage of 12s. a week. Farm labourers, 216 were wanted, and 171 were found, leaving an excess of demand over supply of forty-five, and the wages were from 10s. to £1 per week; seventeen grooms were wanted and forty-nine offered, wages 10s. to 15s. a week. He maintained that those facts did not by any means bear out the contentions of the supporters of the vote. Although they were only a small community they had a plethora of unemployed, who in every branch of the industry were engaged in cutting down wages, and it was proposed now to add to the evil by introducing others to still further increase the competition. With regard to the lecturers at home engaged in trying to induce agricultural labourers and domestic servants to come to Queensland, he noticed in the Agent-General's report that a lecture was given to a large number of labourers in the east of London by Mr. Ben Tillett, who strongly counselled those who could to emigrate, recommending New Zealand for those who desired comfort merely, but Queensland and its potentialities in preference to all who wished to permanently better their conditions of livelihood and settle down on their own lands. He would like to know how many agricultural labourers were to be got in the East End of London; he would like to know also whether Queensland could afford to pay a lecturer to recommend New Zealand to people in England as a field for emigration? The amount asked for advertising, commission, and contingent expenses was £10,000, or £5,000 more than last year. A great deal of literature was printed and circulated for the purpose of inducing people to come here from the different European countries, but the result was very small. Quite an enormous quantity of immigration literature had been circulated in Scandinavia. What was the result of all that literature? One full-paying Swede, who had been followed by three other Swedes. Was it just to fetch these men here, who soon after they had arrived in the colony cleared out to New South Wales or some other southern colony, and afterwards returned to their native homes? Two of these Swedes, according to the *Worker*, complained of the treatment they had received on their arrival in the colony. They complained that they had been deceived by the immigration agents in their native country, and that since their arrival in Queensland they had only had three weeks' work. They were led to believe that Queensland was a country where they could make money quickly; but, as a matter of fact, the conditions in their own country were far better than they were in Queensland. He thought the present system of immigration was a cruel fraud, and that these men came out here under false pretences. They had been deceived by touts, whose lies had been condoned by the present Government. He would support the motion of the hon. member for Bundaberg. One man who came out by the "Duke of Portland" had committed suicide soon after his arrival in Brisbane because he could not find work. That was another fruit of the present system that the present Government were responsible for. When was this cruel fraud going to cease? The public of Queensland and the people in England had not been apprised of the true facts of the matter. Under present conditions the Government had not found employment for men within the borders of the colony, and he strongly protested against the present system of immigration. It was just as well that *Hansard* and the Press generally should note these facts. Why should men in other countries, where the conditions were better, break up their homes to come to Queensland? Some hon. members were content to sit behind a Government who would vote large sums of money without any investigation being made at all. The members of the

Opposition could claim credit that they carefully scrutinised every vote and every item that was submitted to the Committee. This vote which required the most careful scrutiny, had been increased this year by £27,000. If members on

the other side persisted in supporting the system, it would be carried on, and they would be responsible for it. If they were parties to inducing unfortunate men to come out here, and they, like the man he had referred to, committed suicide because they could not find work, they would be guilty of manslaughter. He should certainly vote for the reduction.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*) said he desired to express his strong objection to this vote, and most emphatically to protest against the increase that had been made in it this year. He happened to be one of the State-assisted immigrants to Queensland, and he was sorry he had ever come out. In fact, he had made a vow that he would do all in his power to prevent other men from being deceived in the way he had been. This was a wilful waste of money. It was money expended on a system of fraudulent misrepresentation, wilful falsehood, and exaggerated statement as to the prospect of the country. It took people away from home and friends. It took them away from good situations. The system of giving commissions to the thousand emigration agents was a bad one. These people made the most glittering statements as to the prospects of Queensland. It was their business to do it. They had no consideration for the character of the people who were sent out. All they cared about was to get people away and claim their commission. It was an utterly wrong, heartless, and cruel system which he, for one, should have no part in supporting. Hon. members forgot that in the colony there was a natural increase of 14,000 persons annually, which was fourteen times the number brought out to the colony yearly at this very large expense. It was a trouble to the people of Queensland how they were to find openings for their children. Let hon. members go to some of the small towns in the inland districts, and they would see the large number of children growing up there, and the difficulty there was in finding work for them, or getting land on which they could settle anywhere near their homes. Then look at the expense of the system. It was enormous. Last year the expenditure was £22,000, or £22 per head for every immigrant brought here. But the chief objection he had was the false pretences and laying statements which were used to induce people to come to Queensland. Mr. Randall was a gentleman whom he should use every effort to have removed from the office of Government lecturer.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: He is a very excellent officer.

Mr. HARDACRE: It was a scandal for the Government to have him in the colony's service. Lying statements on his part had been proved over and over again in that House. Then there was his general lack of ability, and the character he possessed. He would not say anything about the moral aspect of his character, but treat only of its cleanly and social aspect. The uninviting appearance of the articles that Mr. Randall exhibited at the various agricultural shows in England was not likely to lead people to form a very high opinion of the attractiveness of the colony. He would always oppose State-aided immigration, as it was a waste of money, and caused a great deal of suffering to the people who were induced to emigrate.

Mr. JENKINSON (*Wide Bay*) had a great deal of sympathy with immigration, but the people who had been sent out lately, especially the females, were not of a character to increase

the reputation of the colony. Some of the immigrants who came out by the Ducal line of steamers, especially those who came in the "Duke of Portland," as domestic servants, were now working in factories, while he had been informed that others were now on the streets of Brisbane.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is not true. Inquiry into the destination of every one of those girls was made, and it is not a fact.

Mr. JENKINSON accepted the hon. gentleman's statement. The information came to him from a gentleman he had no reason to doubt. At the same time the hon. gentleman had heard that the characters of many of the girls who came out would not bear investigation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There may be rumours, but they have not been substantiated.

Mr. JENKINSON: Was it not a fact that many of the girls had come from rescue homes in England?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I deny, so far as we can ascertain, that they came from the source referred to.

Mr. JENKINSON: He was bound to accept the hon. gentleman's statement, but at the same time he did not think they were selected as they should be. They needed more domestic servants, just as they needed people who would settle on the land. He intended to vote for the reduction. He wished to know whether anything had been decided with reference to the sending of Mr. Fraire to Italy in connection with immigration?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that nothing had been decided with regard to Mr. Fraire's mission to Italy. When Mr. Finucane was in Italy he got information about some intending emigrants from Genoa and Piedmont. The difficulty had always been to get a vessel to call in at Genoa. Under ordinary circumstances, those people would have to join an Australian steamer at Port Said, and hence there had been some delay in the matter. The Government were more inclined to encourage immigration from the British Isles and Northern Europe, as the northern nations made better colonists than the Latin races.

Mr. LESINA asked how it came that the aboriginals who were sent back to Queensland by the Agent-General were stranded in London?

The CHIEF SECRETARY regretted that owing to the lateness of the hour he was unable to get the information from official sources, but he understood that they formed part of a troupe of aboriginals who were taken to England; and when Sir Horace Tozer found them stranded in London, with his customary benevolence, he took charge of them, and sent them back to Queensland.

Question—That £30,000 only be granted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 19.

Messrs. Glassey, Ryland, Lesina, Kidston, Givens, Kerr, W. Hamilton, Browne, Maxwell, Turley, Fisher, McDonald, McDonnell, Dunsford, Stewart, Dawson, Jackson, Hardacre, and Jenkinson.

NOES, 27.

Messrs. Philp, Dickson, Rutledge, Foxton, O'Connell, Chatway, Murray, Dalrymple, Finney, Leahy, Smith, Macdonald-Paterson, Petrie, Moore, Forsyth, Bridges, Stephenson, Forrest, Mackintosh, Campbell, Callan, J. Hamilton, T. B. Cribb, Cowley, Grimes, Story, and Annear.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Messrs. Curtis and Fitzgerald.

Noes—Messrs. Hauran and Bartholomew.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. LESINA wished to know what was the reason for the increase of £1,000 in the item of rent, printing, stationery, etc., and the increase of £1,500 in the item incidental expenses, London office, and in what manner those sums were expended.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He had in his hand an analysis of the expenditure from loan fund for incidental expenses in connection with that vote, from which it appeared that the executive engineer received £400, that £453 was paid for rent, £130 for advertising, £202 for telegrams, £193 for petty cash expenses, £68 for the drawing and mounting of plans, £24 for subscriptions to newspapers and books, repairs £83, Scandinavian immigration £194, expenses at shows £26, carriage of parcels and bills £21, outfits £7, printing and stationery £89, auditing £16, engineer's expenses £26, clerical assistance £30, typewriting 13s. 3d., postage £106, expenses of congress at Leige £31, and two other amounts of £41 and £13. If there was any other information required he would be glad to supply it.

Mr. GIVENS: What is the reason for the increase this year?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member would observe that the amount asked had been exceeded last year.

Mr. HARDACRE was surprised that they had not heard from the Secretary for Railways on the vote. He found from *Hansard* that in 1897 the hon. gentleman had spoken most strongly against assisted immigration to this colony, holding that their first duty was to themselves, and that they had no right to consider people on the other side of the globe. The hon. gentleman then held the opinions hon. members on the Opposition side had been expressing that night, and he might give the Committee some explanation of his change of views.

Question put and passed.

MARINE DEPARTMENT—HARBOUR WORKS.

The TREASURER moved that £142,638 be granted from loan for harbour works. There were only two items in the vote. £12,638 was asked as the balance of the vote required for dredging the entrance to Broadmount Harbour and £130,000 was asked on account for new dredges and plant. That was for the Lindon Bates dredges, the contract price for which was £155,000, and two tug boats and appliances would bring the amount required up to £200,000.

Mr. GIVENS asked if during the recess the hon. gentleman would have a Harbour Board Bill drafted for Cairns, so that it might be introduced early next session?

The TREASURER: The matter would be considered during the recess.

Mr. GIVENS: That did not satisfy him. The Harbour Boards Act of 1892 had been passed to enable the people concerned in the welfare of local harbours to form boards to look after them, and the people of Cairns, after full investigation by a committee of the Chamber of Commerce, and after consultation with the whole of the local authorities of the whole of the district served by the port, proposed to take advantage of that Act. He would like some specific promise that the people of Cairns would not be treated as outcasts in the matter.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he thought it would be as well for the hon. member to exhibit patience in this matter. The Premier had said the matter would be considered during the recess. That was all he asked for Brisbane, and he thought it was unwarrantable for the hon. member to claim an answer at this stage of public business more specific than he had received.

Mr. ANNEAR (*Maryborough*) considered that the request made by the hon. member for Cairns was a very reasonable one. Of course they did not want a harbour board for Brisbane as long as they could draw on the Treasury on every occasion when money was required. There would be no need for harbour boards at Maryborough and other places if they could draw on

the Treasury in the same way. He trusted that the present Premier was not going to act as though there were only two places in the colony—Brisbane and Townsville. In the past, when anything was wanted for those two places it was just put down on the Estimates, and there was no fear about it going through.

The TREASURER thought there was no need for heat over the matter. It was the intention of the Government to appoint harbour boards for Brisbane, Maryborough, and Cairns. Townsville had been treated just the same as any other port in the colony.

Mr. GIVENS was very pleased to hear the Premier's assurance that it was intended to establish a harbour board in Cairns. With regard to what the hon. member for North Brisbane had stated as to the port of Brisbane not having been treated any better than any other port in the colony, he wished to point out that the people of Brisbane rejected the proposal for a harbour board, because they thought they would not get sufficient endowment. According to official documents, he found that £630,598 8s. 9d. had been spent on the port of Brisbane, and the total revenue to the 30th June last was £153,378 0s. 4d., leaving a net debit of £477,222 8s. 5d., and yet the hon. member said Brisbane had not been well treated. The whole fact of the matter was that Brisbane did not want a harbour board, because it could bleed the taxpayers very well without it. The people of Cairns only wanted a fair thing, so that they could manage their own affairs properly in connection with their harbour.

Hon. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that was all the people of Brisbane wanted.

Mr. KIDSTON desired some more information about the £130,000—one of the items on the vote. Were all the harbour board dues paid into the trust fund?

The TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. KIDSTON: Was the £130,000 credited as payment made into that trust fund?

The TREASURER: No. He hoped that very shortly they would have harbour boards established in every port in the colony.

Question put and passed.

BUILDINGS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. Murray, *Normanby*) moved that £205,900 be granted from loan fund for public buildings. There was a considerable increase in the vote. The increases comprised the following items: Supreme Court additions, £5,000; Naval Defence, stone magazine and smithy, £1,000; Naval Defence, new headquarters offices, £1,500; new Lands and Survey offices (on account), a revote of £13,500; new Post and Telegraph office (on account), £10,000; women's gaol at South Brisbane, £18,000; Bundaberg, new Custom-house, £4,000; Bundaberg, new police station, £2,000; Dalby Consumptive Hospital (to complete), £1,500; There was a vote of £5,000 for a new courthouse at Gympie. That was a revote. £2,000 was asked for additions to the Goodna Lunatic Asylum, and £5,500 for a new ward there. For new post and telegraph offices at Ipswich £7,500 was wanted, including £5,000 that had been voted last year. £2,000 was asked for a technical college there. To complete the new Custom-house at Rockhampton, for which £12,000 was voted last year, £6,000 was provided. There was also a vote of £3,000 for additional cells at the Rockhampton Gaol. For a new courthouse at Roma, £6,000 was asked. £15,000 was set down for a new gaol in that town. To erect a new Custom-house and titles office at

Townsville £20,000 was put aside, and for boundary walls, etc., to the gaol at Stewart's Creek £3,900 was included. £6,500 was provided for a new ward at the Toowoomba Lunatic Asylum, and £1,000 was granted for additions to the Toowoomba Post Office. For Warwick, £4,500 had been voted to erect new police buildings, and for other buildings £15,000.

Mr. JENKINSON: And £10,000 for public abattoirs.

Mr. CAMPBELL (*Moreton*) referred to the case of the Under Secretary for Works and Mr. Jack, and stated that the Secretary for Works had refused his request for the appointment of a select committee of the House to inquire further into the matter. Mr. Jack felt he was resting under a stigma, and was willing to abide by the decision of a select committee. He (Mr. Campbell) urged the Minister to reconsider the decision, and appoint a committee consisting of Messrs. Annear, Leahy, Petrie, McDonald, and Jackson.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS claimed that he had fulfilled the promise he had made to the House in the matter by referring it to the Civil Service Board for inquiry as to whether the printed notes of the evidence taken at the inquiry were correct, and said that if the hon. member for Moreton felt aggrieved he could move for the appointment of a select committee.

Hon. E. B. FORREST (*Brisbane North*) said the Queensland Institute of Architects had been in communication with the Secretary for Works on the subject of architects on the supernumerary staff of the department taking private work. It appeared that members of the permanent staff were not permitted under the Public Service Act to enter into competition with gentlemen in the profession outside, but there was no restriction on the members of the supernumerary staff, many of whom, as a matter of fact, had been in the service for one, two, or three years, and who might, therefore, be regarded as permanent. There was no specified time when a member of the supernumerary staff ceased to be regarded as a temporary hand. One way out of the difficulty that he saw was to fix a time when officers of the supernumerary staff would cease to be regarded as supernumerary, and become permanent officials.

Hon. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that this had been a public scandal for years past.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS sympathised with the remarks of the hon. member for Brisbane North, Mr. Forrest.

The PREMIER: It should not be allowed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS thought that after a supernumerary had been six months in the service he should not be allowed to take private practice, and promised to try to get the matter remedied.

Hon. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON asked if it was intended to call for tenders for the proposed new lands office in Brisbane and Queensland only, or in all the colonies?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS replied that with regard to buildings of such magnitude as the proposed new post and telegraph offices in Brisbane it was proposed to invite designs from all the colonies.

Mr. FISHER contended that when a vote was asked on account, the total estimated cost of the building for which the vote was required should be given in the Estimates. He congratulated Brisbane on the large amount it had expended during the year on public buildings.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: All for the public good.

Mr. ANNEAR: It is all national work in Brisbane.

Mr. FISHER also congratulated Roma on its success in the same respect.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No public buildings have been put up there for the last twenty years.

Mr. FISHER thought the Attorney-General deserved congratulating for having obtained £21,000 from the Government in one short session. The Premier also required congratulations upon having secured a new Customs-house [1.30 a.m.] and Titles Office, to cost £20,000, and buildings in connection with Stewart's Creek Gaol. If other electorates received public expenditure in the same proportion it would make a big hole in the next loan.

Hon. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON contended that the buildings to be erected in Brisbane were works of a national character. The total expenditure on Brisbane works was only one-fifth of the vote, which was less than its fair proportion. He asked the Attorney-General to explain how it was that Roma was to have £21,000 for a courthouse and gaol. That savoured of a job. If he thought he could succeed he would move the omission of the vote for Roma buildings.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge, *Maranoa*) said that the strongest representations had been made to him of the absolute necessity for building a new gaol at Roma. The present building was an old wooden building, and if a fire broke out it meant the sacrifice of the lives of the prisoners. The new building would be built of brick. With regard to the courthouse, Roma was the place where the Circuit Court for the whole of the south-western district sat. Roma was the Western metropolis, and £6,000 was a very modest sum for the courthouse there. The hon. member for Brisbane North should be the last man to complain, seeing the large amount being voted in the hon. member's constituency.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*) asked if any provision was made in the vote of £15,000 for other buildings for a police station at Pinkenbah, which was urgently needed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS had not got particulars of the works included in the vote, but he had no doubt from the great progress being made at Pinkenbah the building mentioned was provided for.

Mr. ANNENAR thought the hon. member for Brisbane North had nothing to complain of, and he contrasted the public expenditure in Brisbane with the expenditure on public buildings in other towns. The wealthy people of Brisbane were most illiberal, and Brisbane was known throughout the colony as the octopus of Queensland.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) explained that the exhibition building in Brisbane was being converted into a museum, while the present museum building was to be used as a free library. As to the Customs-house in Townsville, up to the present there had never been a proper Customs-house there. Old second-hand buildings had hitherto been used for the purpose. No large town in Queensland had such poor public buildings as Townsville.

Mr. GIVENS regarded it as a peculiar coincidence that the Government had [2 a.m.] not discovered that the gaol at Roma was in such a disgraceful condition as was represented, until that electorate returned the Attorney-General to Parliament.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Carpentaria*) asked that steps should be taken to provide a better lockup at Camooweal than that which existed there at present, which was an iron building 10 feet by 12 feet, with no windows and no ventilation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS promised that he would have the building reported upon, with a view to its improvement if necessary.

Mr. HARDACRE joined in the protest against the large expenditure on public buildings in Brisbane as compared with the amount spent in other parts of the colony, and pointed out that the courthouses at Alpha and Duaringa were in bad condition.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: A new courthouse was to be built at Alpha, and he believed the matter of the Duaringa courthouse was also in hand.

Mr. DUNSFORD argued that members for the Central and Northern divisions of the colony had just cause for complaint regarding the manner in which that vote was distributed, four-fifths of it being allotted to Brisbane and the Southern districts, and that members should make a determined stand against the continued exceptional treatment meted out to Brisbane.

Mr. BROWNE endorsed the protest against the way in which that vote was swallowed up by Brisbane, and pointed out that the total amount set down for the mining townships of the colony was a paltry sum of £5,000 for a new courthouse at Gympie, which was a revote. He considered that the way the mining industry had been treated was a disgrace to the hon. gentleman, who had held the position of Treasurer for years past.

Mr. LESINA pointed out that the courthouse at Clermont was in a most unsatisfactory condition, and did not provide adequate accommodation for officials and jurymen, and wished to know what improvements it was proposed to make in the building. What was really wanted was a new courthouse entirely.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Tenders had been invited, or were about to be invited, for the extension and improvement of the courthouse at Clermont, and if the hon. member would call at his office he would be pleased to show him what was to be done to the building.

Mr. LESINA would accept the offer of the hon. gentleman. He joined in the protest against the large proportion of public money which was expended in Brisbane, and urged that more attention should be given to outside places where various public buildings were much needed.

Mr. KERR thought that the hon. member for Clermont had, with other members of the Central district, just cause for complaint at the way in which his electorate was treated by the Works Department. £21,000 was to be spent in Roma, as a bribe to the electorate to secure it as a pocket borough for a few years. The fact that the vote showed that £170,000 was to be spent in electorates represented by Ministers and Ministerial supporters, while only £30,000 was down for electorates represented by members on the Opposition side, should convince the people that the Government endeavoured to maintain their position by public expenditure in the electorates supporting them.

The PREMIER said that the hon. member was unjust in saying the Government did not deal fairly with electorates represented by hon. members opposite. Mr. King, when member for Roma, had been well treated by the present Government, and two bores had been sunk in the district last year—one at Roma and another at Wallumbilla. The hon. member for Clermont should have represented the matters to which he had referred to the Minister before the Estimates were prepared.

Mr. LESINA admitted that he had not been to the office of the department in connection with the Clermont post office, because the local progress association, the council, and other local bodies had communicated directly with the department.

Mr. McDONNELL could not allow hon. members to denounce Brisbane as an octopus in the matter of Government expenditure. He reminded the Committee that a woman's gaol to take the place of the building used for that purpose in Fortitude Valley had been urged upon the Government for years. He was prepared to defend the expenditure of public money upon necessary works in the capital of the colony.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Burke*) thought Brisbane had been leeching the rest of this colony for years.

Mr. FISHER asked the Minister if he was prepared to accept the suggestion to show on the Estimates the whole amount that was required for any particular work.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. gentleman's observations on the point had not escaped his attention, and he would see if what had been asked could be done.

Mr. RYLAND asked whether the whole of the vote for public abattoirs was to be spent in Brisbane?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The matter was one which was administered by the Agricultural Department, and he presumed it would be spent all over the colony.

Mr. RYLAND was afraid that £10,000 would not spread far over the colony. He would like to have seen £20,000 instead of £10,000 for that very necessary purpose.

The PREMIER: This is to make a start.

Question put and passed.

BRIDGES.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved that a sum not exceeding £1,650 be granted for bridges.

Mr. FISHER said he understood there was some difficulty in connection with the Albert River Bridge at Burketown. Was it the fault of the engineer?

The TREASURER: It was the fault of the local authority.

Question put and passed.

WATERWORKS AND WATER SUPPLY.

The TREASURER moved that a sum not exceeding £2,417 be granted for waterworks and water supply.

Mr. LESINA asked whether the hon. gentleman could give him any information in regard to the proposed water supply for Clermont?

The TREASURER said that a scheme had been prepared and sent to the local authority for approval.

Mr. FISHER doubted whether the items included in this vote should be charged to loan. He saw no justification whatever for charging to loan the salaries of inspectors for collecting pressures and other statistics of artesian bores.

The TREASURER pointed out that the vote was required for the supervision of the works in connection with artesian boring and water supply; and both works and supervision were properly charged to loan. It was the same with railway works—engineering and supervision were charged to loan as well as the works themselves.

Mr. KERR referred to a report made by an officer of the department on a water supply for Isisford, and pointed out that such reports sometimes recommended works altogether out of proportion to the requirements of the place.

Question put and passed.

ARTESIAN BORING AND WATER SUPPLY.

The TREASURER moved that a sum not exceeding £32,185 be granted for artesian boring and water supply. He was sorry he could not ask the Committee to vote double the amount, because this was one of the best things that could be done for the Western country. Provision was made for new bores at Adavale, Dalby, Kynuna, and Wooroorooka.

Mr. SMITH: There was a sum of £5,000 for artesian wells to encourage settlement. Was that to assist grazing farmers?

The TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. FISHER: If artesian boring was such a good thing—and he believed it was—the amount was totally inadequate, and he did not see what was to hinder the hon. gentleman from doubling it.

The TREASURER: The total amount on the Loan Estimates this year was £1,696,889. That was a fair amount of loan expenditure for one year, and it had to be fairly distributed amongst the various works. The amount voted last year for artesian boring and water supply was £23,000.

Mr. KERR said that there had not yet been any water in the tank constructed at Jericho, and he advocated putting down a bore in the locality. He also thought it would be a good thing for the Government to advance money to deepen the bore on Malvern Hills.

At twenty-five minutes past 3 o'clock,

The ACTING CHAIRMAN, in accordance with Standing Order 171, called upon the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Stephenson, to relieve him in the chair.

Mr. STEPHENSON took the chair accordingly.

The TREASURER said he would consider the matters mentioned by the hon. member for Barcoo if the hon. member would call on him in his office.

Mr. W. HAMILTON (*Gregory*) was glad to know that provision was made for a bore at Kynuna. He would like to know what had been done in connection with the petition for a bore at Bedouri. With regard to the question of putting down bores generally, he thought it would be well to try the New South Wales system of putting down bores wherever the persons benefited were prepared to pay interest on the money expended.

The TREASURER said the Bedouri petition had been handed to the Hydraulic Engineer, who had, perhaps, sent an officer to inspect the country.

Question put and passed.

LOANS TO LOCAL BODIES.

The TREASURER moved that £233,684 be granted for loans to local bodies. £40,000 was asked for advances under the Local Works Loans Act of 1880; £25,000 for the Brisbane Board of Waterworks (portion revoted); Cairns-Mulgrave tramway, £1,776 (portion revoted); Mosman River tramway, £19,600 (portion revoted); Herbert River tramway, £17,308 (portion revoted); Johnstone River tramway, £30,000; Bundaberg water supply, £20,000; Ayr tramway, £60,000; and McGregor's Creek tramway from Mirani, £20,000. The Ayr line would be a very good one, because it would go through good land, and he thought the line would pay very well.

Mr. SMITH (*Bowen*) said he intended to move the omission of the item of £60,000 for the Ayr tramway, and divide the Committee on the matter. In 1896 a vote had been taken in favour of the completion of the Bowen line, and the House instructed the Government to proceed with that work. An amendment had been

moved by the late junior member for Townsville, but it lapsed for want of a seconder. This Ayr line was really moved for originally by Townsville people, and it was strange that the Townsville people were objecting to the continuation of the Bowen line, and that this Ayr line vote was brought up at the present juncture. He had fought against the route to Townsville because he thought that line would never be any good. This tramline had not been initiated in Ayr, but by two local authorities in Townsville. The Cairns-Mulgrave tramway had been a success, but that was due not only to sugar, but to the quantity of bananas, firewood, and cane carried; the freight on the sugar carried was very small, and there was a good deal of passenger traffic on the line. This Ayr tramway was brought forward now to block the Bowen line, and it would interfere with the policy of the Government, and would be in defiance of votes taken in the House. If the Premier would give him the assurance that tenders would be called for the completion of the Bowen line before the Ayr tramway was started, he would withdraw all his objections. The estimated cost of the Ayr tramline, according to the Minister for Railways, was £75,440, and he did not believe the local authorities had power to borrow that sum. The Thuringowa Divisional Board wanted to borrow £30,000 to build this tramline, and its borrowing power was £18,000; the Ayr Divisional Board's borrowing power was £13,000, and it wanted to borrow £15,000; and the Townsville Municipal Council's borrowing power was £62,000, and it had borrowed £80,698.

The TREASURER: That includes £39,000 that it has borrowed on water supply account, which gives it a revenue of £8,000 a year, and loans on water supply account do not affect its borrowing powers on general account.

Mr. SMITH: Its net revenue from water, not including interest on loan, was only £1,635.

The TREASURER: Including interest, I think.

Mr. SMITH: The Townsville council, which had exceeded its borrowing power, wanted to borrow £30,000 for this tramline. He should like to call attention to the fact that the Commissioner for Railways in a report stated that, if the Bowen line was to be connected with the 37-mile peg, no encouragement should be given to the tramline, as it would be impossible for it to pay, but since then, for some reason, he had changed his mind. The tramline would not pass through any good country beyond Pioneer. He begged to move the omission of the item.

The TREASURER denied that the proposal had originated with the Townsville Municipal Council. It was mooted, he said, by Mr. Drysdale, who had sent away 12,000 tons of sugar last year, and who had guaranteed to send the whole of it by the tramline, at the rates charged at present, for ten years. That traffic alone would make the line pay. Then the line would serve a meatworks employing between 400 and 500 men, and treating from 40,000 to 50,000 cattle annually. There would be a big passenger traffic from there. Again, the line would serve the Houghton River, and for miles up and down that river there was a lot of good land. Then it would also serve the Ayr delta, where there were two townships—Ayr and Brandon—where there was a lot of good land, and where there would be any amount of sugar grown. This section of country produced bananas and mangoes in abundance; but, owing to the want of communication, they simply rotted on the ground. The irrigation works were a revelation. They

watered from 4,000 to 5,000 acres of land, and when the tramline was built they would water almost double that area. Tramlines were the life of districts like this, and there was no doubt this particular line would pay, and that the State would run no risk. Mr. Drysdale was satisfied the line would pay. So was the Ayr Divisional Board, and it was prepared to pledge itself to borrow the money to construct it. So was the Townsville council, whose borrowing powers were £60,000, and whose indebtedness now on general account was £40,000. So also had the Thuringowa Divisional Board. The line would not interfere with the hon. gentleman's railway.

Mr. SMITH: Ayr has excellent water communication.

The TREASURER: No. It costs 50 per cent. more to take produce to the coast now than it would cost by the tramline. The tramline was to serve a special district which was fourteen miles away from the district that would be served by the line the hon. gentleman wanted, and which wanted to be connected with Townsville and not with Bowen. Townsville did not care whether the tramway was built, because it got all the traffic at present. It was the people of Ayr who were most interested, and they did not want to go to Bowen.

Mr. SMITH quoted from a report to show that the proposal originated with [4.30 a.m.] the Townsville people, and said that two members of the Ayr Divisional Board stood out against the Townsville influence as long as they could, but at last they also succumbed to that influence. [The hon. member then read the Commissioner's report of 6th July, 1890, on the route of the proposed tramway.]

Mr. GIVENS was in favour of the general principle of building tramways as a factor in developing agricultural districts. The Cairns-Mulgrave tramway carried cane cheaper than it could be carried on a State railway, the difference being equivalent to a profit to the farmer of 15s. per acre. The net profit from 1st May, 1898, to 30th June, 1899, on the tramway was £3,390 14s. 7d., which was not only sufficient to pay interest and redemption, but to provide for increasing the stability of the line and improving the rolling-stock. It was a pity that the Burdekin delta should be deprived of the benefits of tramway communication because of a squabble between two rival ports. The hon. member for Bowen contended that the tramway would not pay, but he was prepared to vote for it if he got a promise that the Government would extend the Bowen Railway. That was political jobbery. The policy of building those tramways was one of the wisest that had ever been initiated in Queensland, but caution had to be exercised that no lines were built which would not pay. The great success of the Mulgrave tramway was largely due to Mr. O'Leary, the officer placed in charge of the tramway by the divisional board.

Mr. SMITH denied that he had stated that if the Bowen Railway extension was first carried out he would vote for the construction of the Ayr tramway. He said that if the railway extension was first considered the Minister could consider any tramway he chose, but he had not said he would vote for it.

Mr. COWLEY: You said you would withdraw your opposition to the tramway.

Mr. SMITH: If he had said that, it was a mistake, as it by no means expressed his feelings. There was very little agricultural land along the route of the proposed tramway. He had an uphill battle to fight. Although he had twice

carried resolutions approving of the extension of the Bowen Railway to the Northern Railway, the influence of the Premier in the Cabinet was too powerful. He asked the hon. gentleman to postpone the consideration of the construction of the tramway to Ayr until the Government brought forward their railway proposals, and they knew whether the tramway would interfere with those proposals or not. Until then it would be unwise to vote the £60,000 for the tramway. He moved the omission of the item, "Ayr tramway, £60,000."

Mr. STEWART did not think the hon. member was acting fairly towards the
[5 a.m.] Committee in moving the omission of that item at the present time, as other hon. members might desire to move the omission of previous items.

Mr. SMITH had no desire to do that, and, with the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his amendment until hon. members had discussed previous items in the vote.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. STEWART objected to the passing of the vote, which would make the country responsible for nearly £245,000, without a single scrap of information to show them whether the loans were justified or whether the local authorities interested in the works enumerated in the vote could legally incur those loan obligations.

The TREASURER: As to the item of £40,000 for advances under the Local Works Loans Act, a similar vote was granted every year for the assistance of divisional boards that wanted money, and all applications for loans had to be approved by the Home Secretary. Part of the amount of £25,000 for the Brisbane Board of Waterworks was a revote from last year; the board was in a splendid financial position, and paid its interest and redemption regularly. The £1,776 for the Cairns-Mulgrave tramway was a revote of part of an amount granted last year; the local authority had made their payments in full, and were now spending a lot of money in improving their line. The £19,600 for the Mosman River tramway was a revote of part of a sum of £22,000 voted last year. The £17,308 for the Herbert River tramway to Stone River was a revote of the balance of a sum of £24,000 granted last year, only £7,000 having been expended. At the present time there was a private line, constructed by the Colonial Sugar Company, from a place called Lucinda Point, at the mouth of the Herbert River, to Ingham, and the local authority were building a line from that tramway to the Stone River. The item of £20,000 for McGregor's Creek tramway from Mirani was a revote entirely, the local authority not having taken advantage of the offer made last year. The £30,000 for the Johnstone River tramway was a new vote, and was for a line seventeen miles from Geraldton through some of the finest agricultural land in Queensland towards Jordan Gold Field. He thought every acre was rich agricultural land, and he believed it was cheaper to construct a tramway there than to build a railway. With regard to the next item on the vote, he saw no reason why Bundaberg should not get a loan of £20,000 for a water supply. As to the vote of £60,000 for the Ayr tramway, about which so much had been said, he could assure the Committee that there was sufficient traffic there now to make the line pay from the start, and that, unless a guarantee was given that the sugar grown in the district would be sent by the line for a certain number of years, the money would not be lent. Before the money was advanced by the Government, the local authorities would

have to submit plans and specifications of the tramway, and an estimate of the probable traffic. The ratable value of the Townsville lands was £780,000, of the Ayr division lands £155,000, and of the Thuringowa division lands £316,000. With regard to the power of the local authorities to borrow money for tramway purposes, section 88 of the Tramways Act provided that local authorities might borrow money for the construction of tramways, "notwithstanding any restrictions or limitations imposed by any other Act."

Mr. SMITH repeated that he wanted the Bowen Railway before the construction of the Ayr tramway was authorised, as a line by the latter route, which he could have got at any time since he had been in the House, would be of no benefit to the people of Bowen or the people of the Western district.

Mr. FISHER was entirely in favour of the tramway, or light railway, system, but with the limited amount of information before the Committee, he would have a difficulty in deciding how to vote on those proposed advances. The hon. member for Bowen objected that those local authorities had no legal power

[5.30 a.m.] to enter into those guarantees, but the answer to that was that, if those tramways would assist in the development of the districts in which they were built, the House would see that the powers of local authorities in that respect were extended. If that was a Townsville monopoly, at the expense of Bowen, it was a serious charge to make. If, on the other hand, it was a legitimate plea from settlers in outside districts, who could not get into Bowen, by all means let them grant it. That was his position, as a strong advocate of the light railway system. He would like to hear a concise statement from the Treasurer on the subject.

The TREASURER: The distance from the 6-mile peg to Ayr was 44 miles, and that distance was through the Thuringowa and Ayr divisions. On the other hand, the distance from Ayr to Clare, on the Bowen line, was 14 miles, from there to the 37-mile peg it was 36 miles, and from the 37-mile peg to Townsville 37 miles. The trade of the district was all with Townsville, and the Ayr people would never use the line the hon. member for Bowen wanted to build for them, as it was 14 miles west of Ayr, and would make them 87 miles from Townsville.

Mr. KIDSTON: They might ship their sugar at Bowen.

The TREASURER: No. The distance to Bowen was 74 miles—14 miles to Clare and 60 miles from Clare to Bowen. There was as much water in the harbour of Townsville now as in the harbour of Bowen, and all the steamers, including the meat steamers that called at Bowen, could come up now to the Townsville jetty.

Mr. MAXWELL: Yesterday morning it had been the Opposition who were wasting the valuable time of the Government, but that morning it was a Government supporter who was doing so. The hon. member had commenced by going into figures to prove that the proposal before the Committee would be a bad investment for the Government, and then he had turned round and told them that if the Premier would give him the railway from Bowen to Charters Towers he would withdraw his objections to that line.

Mr. SMITH: I did not say so.

Mr. MAXWELL: Then he would like to know what the hon. member did say, for he had been in the Chamber when the statement was made.

Mr. SMITH: I deny that what you say is true.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Bowen having denied the statement, the hon. member for Burke must accept the denial.

Mr. MAXWELL: The proposal introduced a very good system, and where the local authorities guaranteed a line which they believed would develop their districts, it was the duty of that House to build it for them before they built lines which were not guaranteed. He was prepared to vote against the reduction in the vote which the hon. member for Bowen had said he would move.

Mr. W. HAMILTON spoke in favour of the proposed extension of the Bowen Railway from Wangaratta to the 37-mile peg, which would greatly benefit owners of stock in the Western country. The Townsville people wanted to force everything to Townsville, and if the hon. member for Bowen moved a reduction he would give the hon. member his support.

Mr. KIDSTON: The contention of the hon. member for Bowen was that the continuation of this line from Townsville to Ayr would not only benefit the Ayr people, but would injure somebody else. That seemed a legitimate objection if it could be borne out by facts; if the facts did not bear it out the contention fell to the ground. Looking at the map, he could not see how the building of a tramway to Ayr would injure the chances of the Bowen people getting a railway to the 37-mile peg.

Mr. LEAHY (*Bulloo*) contended that the strongest evidence for or against the case of the hon. member for Bowen was the map. After all that had been said on both sides, he did not intend to go into the merits of the case, and if no additional light could be thrown on the subject, they might as well go to a division.

Mr. SMITH maintained that the line to the 37-mile peg was the one that was in the interests of the people about Ayr, and in the interests of the colony, even though the Ayr people, influenced by Townsville, advocated another route.

The TREASURER pointed out that sugar was, and always would be, the staple product of the Burdekin delta. The whole of the sugar sent from there was raw sugar for the refinery, and it all went to Townsville for transhipment to Brisbane and Sydney. It was an ideal agricultural district, and the people had guaranteed the line from Ayr to Townsville, whereas they had never expressed a wish to build a line to Charters Towers or Bowen.

Mr. DAWSON said that if the hon. member for Bowen accepted this proposed tramline from Ayr to Townsville he might give up all hope of getting the extension of the Bowen Railway to the 37-mile peg. This was a Charters Towers question as well as a Bowen question.

The TREASURER: It is an Ayr question.

Mr. DAWSON: The majority of the people in the township of Ayr desired very much that they should be in the Townsville electorate instead of being in the Bowen electorate, and at the last two elections the member for Bowen was in a minority so far as Ayr was concerned. From their hatred of Bowen they tried to do all their business with Townsville. He quite agreed with the Premier that the Ayr people wanted railway communication for their produce, and that line was in the same position as the Bowen line. The Ayr people wanted railway communication, and their best market was Charters Towers.

The TREASURER: Don't they know their own business?

Mr. DAWSON: A good deal of property in Ayr was owned by Townsville people. It was not thinkable that, if this Ayr tramline were constructed, the 37-mile peg extension would be constructed; it would be gone for ever.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Bowen and the hon. member for Bowen were to be sympathised with in the matter, because Bowen had been shamefully treated. Bowen was a good harbour, but its gates had been closed, owing to the action of Townsville. Townsville was making an effort to euchre Bowen. The motion of the hon. member for Bowen, which had been carried by a large majority of the House, should have been given effect to. The Government had permitted the local authorities to order material for this Ayr tramway.

The TREASURER: Unless this vote is passed, the line will not be gone on with. Not a penny has been spent in the matter so far.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Parliament should give effect to the vote that had been twice passed by the House. It had been intended that the Bowen harbour should be utilised, and if it was utilised the whole of the interior districts there would be twelve hours nearer to Brisbane.

The TREASURER: Unless the money was voted by Parliament, the Ayr tramline would not be built. This line was only for the benefit of the Ayr people. If the House did not want the line, they would not pass the money.

Mr. DAWSON: That would be a nice way to get over the difficulty. The great bulk of hon. members on the Government side did not know the merits of the case, but they would vote with the Treasurer, although they had not heard the debate. This line was not a tramway, but was really a railway. If it was called a railway it could not get through this session, because the plans and books of reference would have to be laid on the table. He objected to the extension to Townsville, and he objected to the principle adopted by the Government.

Mr. SMITH moved the omission of the item "Ayr Tramway, £60,000."

Mr. McDONALD said the whole object of this tramline was to outwit Bowen. The idea of a line from Bowen to the 37-mile was to save a matter of nine hours or more to the North-western districts in their communication with the South. If it was purely to give Ayr communication, the route which should be adopted was to Wangaratta. A railway from there to Ayr would not cost as much as a railway to Townsville.

Mr. COWLEY: It will cost nearly double.

Mr. McDONALD: This was purely an attempt to "dish" Bowen, and he should therefore vote against it.

Mr. KIDSTON said he would like to know what the Premier intended to do. Was he going to adjourn over the holidays? The hon. gentleman must recognise that they could not get through the business before 12 o'clock that night, and that being so, what purpose would be served by going on?

The PREMIER replied that he proposed to go on with the business.

Mr. KIDSTON did not know that that would facilitate matters.

The PREMIER: He wanted to give the House time to finish the business to-day. There were a number of members who wanted to conclude to-day, and work would be tackled again after breakfast.

Mr. BROWNE: The Sugar Works Guarantee Act debates will take all day. We are going to fight that for all it is worth.

The PREMIER: There is plenty of time.

Mr. DAWSON: You know it is utterly impossible to finish to-day.

Mr. KIDSTON said that if there was any reasonable probability of finishing he should prefer to go on and have done with it, but the Premier knew that was impossible. Hon. members had been complaining of the Government pushing through a mass of business in a few hours at the close of the session, and they were not going to have it done any more. The hon. gentleman might punish this side of the House for refusing to let him get these votes through, but in doing that he would also punish his own side.

The PREMIER: I am suffering more than you are.

Mr. KIDSTON was sorry to hear that. It was a foolish way of doing business. It was unnecessary, and also absolutely useless. There was no prospect of finishing that night, and the hon. gentleman might adjourn until Wednesday after the new year.

The PREMIER said he would not ask hon. members to stop there if he did not think it possible to finish that day.

Mr. KIDSTON: Do you think it probable?

The PREMIER: If there was no stonewalling it could be done; but if half-a-dozen members got up and said the same thing over and over again they might be there for a week. A great deal more had been done in the same time in previous years. It would be for the good of the country to finish now. For example, the cost of lighting the House would be saved, which was more than would be saved by stopping there. It was a fair thing to get through to-night.

Mr. FISHER: It is hopeless.

Mr. BROWNE said the hon. gentleman might as well understand that hon. members on that side were quite prepared to go on until 12 o'clock to-night. The hon. gentleman said the business could be got through if hon. members would sit quiet; but they were not sent there to sit quiet.

Mr. KIDSTON: There is more than £750,000 to vote yet.

Mr. BROWNE: The hon. member was going to try to force business through by virtue of the majority behind him; but there was not the slightest probability of finishing by midnight.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: What about the promise of the leader of your party?

Mr. BROWNE: He denied that there was a promise given. The leader of that party had no power to pledge his supporters. What he said was that he would use his influence.

Mr. FISHER: That is true.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall resume the chair at 9 o'clock.

On the Committee resuming,

Mr. J. HAMILTON (*Cook*) said that the statement that the leader of the

[9 a.m.] Opposition promised to use his influence to close the session this week was borne out by *Hansard*. He knew the leader of the Opposition had really used his influence with his followers.

Mr. DAWSON understood that the accusation made against him was that he had not kept his promise to use his influence with his party to close the session before Christmas. At the time he made that promise there was a glimmer of hope that the session might close this week; but yesterday afternoon an hon. member on the Government side had introduced a very contentious subject of discussion, and what little hope there had been was lost for ever.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: The discussion did not last more than three-quarters of an hour.

Mr. DAWSON: He knew that, but he had used his influence to prevent a prolonged discussion, and met with a great measure of success. Whatever promise he had made with the Premier he had conscientiously kept.

The TREASURER: After the hon. member for Dalby moved his motion, he told the House distinctly that he had no sympathy with it.

Mr. KIDSTON said that no one blamed the Premier for encouraging the hon. member for Dalby. The leader of the Opposition was accused of breaking some promise, but he had supported the Government on that occasion.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: No one hinted that he broke his promise.

Mr. KIDSTON was pleased to hear it. They were prepared to close the session if there was any reasonable prospect of doing so. Several Government supporters had actually been stonewalling the Estimates for many hours during the night. He thought, as there was no chance of finishing that day, that the Premier might agree to an adjournment over Christmas.

The TREASURER: If they went on doing as much work as they did yesterday they could finish. For the last five or six years they had never been as long discussing these Estimates.

Mr. DAWSON asked the hon. gentleman to mention a single instance when such a large amount of money had to be passed, and such a number of very important items had to be considered? It seemed to be a growing practice to include very contentious matters in the Supplementary Estimates in order to avoid discussion. Two or three mornings ago he told the Premier that there was no possible hope of getting through before Christmas. He distinctly understood the hon. gentleman, when moving the adjournment yesterday morning, to say that if he could not get through by Christmas he would adjourn on Friday night, and that they would meet again on Wednesday. Some of the most contentious matters that had cropped up this session were still to be dealt with. If the Government insisted on going on, all the vitality they had left would be devoted to seeing that there was a full discussion of all business of importance. He defied any man to say that the Supplementary Estimates should be passed in a few minutes.

The TREASURER certainly understood yesterday morning that the leader of the Opposition would try and finish that week, and since then they had done a lot of business. Last year they passed all the Loan Estimates and the Appropriation Bill by about 6 o'clock in the morning. If they only used the same expedition this year, they would finish that night.

Mr. FISHER: We want to discuss the Police Commission report.

The TREASURER: He understood it was not desired to discuss the report this session.

Mr. FISHER: Well, I want to discuss it.

The TREASURER: It would have to be in the hands of hon. members for two or three months before they would be competent to discuss it.

Mr. DAWSON said that the practice of placing votes for tramways like the Ayr tramway on the Estimates was a reversal of their practice in dealing with railways, and would enable an unscrupulous Government to give a railway to any district under the name of a tramway. It was even said that the Executive could grant the money without the consent of Parliament, and, as a matter of fact, it was stated that part of the money was already

granted. He intended to support the amendment. Apart from the fact that it was a reversal of their policy in regard to railway proposals, he objected to the tramway because it would benefit Townsville at the expense of the people of Bowen, Charters Towers, and the Western district.

The TREASURER: The Government had not advanced any money, but asked Parliament for authority to do so. Not 1s. of the money had been spent.

Mr. DAWSON: What about the rails?

The TREASURER: They would do for any railway. The money would not be spent until it had been voted by Parliament. He would like hon. members to cast out of their [9.30 a.m.] minds anything relating to the 37-mile peg, because that had nothing to do with the matter. The very fact of the proposed cost of the line indicated that it was not a railway, but a tramway pure and simple. The estimate for building a railway line was £127,000.

Mr. FISHER strongly supported the principle of light lines of railway, but he was confronted with the statements of the hon. members for Bowen and Charters Towers that the proposed line was not a legitimate one, and was aimed at the trade of Bowen. By itself he should feel inclined to support the proposal were it not an attempt to oust Bowen. On looking at the map one would be inclined to think that that was not an attempt to get at Bowen, but in view of the assurances of others that it was, he did not feel in a position to arrive at a decision, and should be glad to hear further argument.

Mr. SMITH: It had been pointed out by the hon. member for Charters Towers that under that system of making branch lines a railway that should be made would be prevented from being made. That was just the difficulty in the way. That tramline was intended to interfere with the railway policy of the Government, and should not be made. If hon. members who thought that that was simply a guileless tramline would go North they would soon learn more about it. One of the cardinal points of his argument was that the interests of the primary producers should be kept in view, which they were not under the Government proposal. He believed firmly that the line he had always advocated was the best in the interests of Ayr, because it would give the settlers there a market at Charters Towers for all the produce they could grow. It was indisputable that it was Townsville influence that dominated Ayr. Practically the same men controlled the Municipal Council of Townsville and the Thuringowa Divisional Board, and those were the local authorities that were moving principally in the business. Of course all the local authorities through which the proposed line would run favoured it, and it ran through a portion of the territory controlled by the Ayr board. He contended that the Ayr Divisional Board would be better served, though they could not see it themselves, by the line which he had endeavoured to push forward for so many years. It would serve the whole colony by making the produce of that district available to all. He hoped that hon. members who voted for his motion on a former occasion would not stultify themselves. They would occupy a very anomalous position if they voted for the Government proposal, which was intended to prevent the completion of the Bowen Railway. He did not think hon. members would like to occupy an inconsistent position, and those who supported him formerly were bound to vote against the Ayr tramway.

Mr. GIVENS: The issue before the Committee was becoming clouded. It seemed to him that neither Bowen nor Townsville had anything to do with the matter. The question was whether the local authorities should be allowed to take advantage of an Act passed for the benefit of agricultural districts. He did not see why the claims of an agricultural district like the Burdekin delta should be set aside simply on account of the rival claims of Bowen and Townsville. It was the producing interests that should be considered. He was amazed at the attitude of the hon. member for Bowen, because every speech he had made was a practical accusation of political corruption against the Premier. If the Premier was fathering a corrupt job, how was it that the hon. member for Bowen was one of his most staunch political supporters? He did not see why he should cast his vote in favour of depriving the people of the Burdekin delta of the tramway facilities to which they were entitled in order to develop the resources of the district. When the 37-mile peg connection came before the House, let it be dealt with on its merits, and not mix it up with the present proposal. He could not understand what claim the Western country had to two different lines of railway to two different ports, while other parts of the country engaged in both agriculture and mining were languishing for want of railway communication. Some hon. members seemed to think that the whole country was made for the benefit of the port of Bowen instead of the port of Bowen being made to serve the whole country. The duty of Parliament was always to foster the producing interests, and not to give favours to any particular port which existed merely as a parasite on the country.

Mr. SMITH: There might be something in the hon. member's argument if the proposal for the construction of the Bowen Railway was now before them, but the fact remained that half of that line was in existence, but the influences operating against Bowen were so powerful that it could not get a yard further on. There was no unprejudiced person who did not sympathise with the exceptional position of Bowen, which was wearing out a very weary existence, because it was blasted by the influence of a more powerful neighbour. He denied the charge that his action was tantamount to accusing the Premier of corruption. He did not believe for a moment that he was guilty of corruption. The hon. gentleman was simply doing the best he could for his constituents, but he believed now that he had attained to his present high position he would prove himself worthy of it by doing justice to all parts of the colony.

Mr. COWLEY (*Herbert*): As the hon. member for Rockhampton and the hon. member for Gympie had expressed a desire for further [10 a.m.] information to enable them to arrive at a correct conclusion in the matter, he might state that he knew the district well, and could assure hon. members that the bulk of the good land there was on the Townsville side of Ayr. The good land did not extend between Ayr and the proposed route of the Wangaratta line to Charters Towers, but it extended the other way; so that a railway from Bowen to the 37-mile peg would be of no use to Ayr. In 1890 the Railway Commissioners, who examined the three proposed routes for the extension of the Bowen Railway to the Northern line, reported that the whole of the land through which the railway by the 37-mile route would pass was "unfit for agriculture, and was but indifferent grazing country"; that if the 24-mile route was adopted "a branch line to Ayr must naturally follow, which would entail further construction to the extent of 14 miles,

to which must be added the expenditure, for all time, which the working of a branch line must of necessity involve"; that "the 37-mile route showed a saving of about 15 miles in construction," but "would necessitate a branch line to Ayr of about 20 miles in length," and that, "while the survey of the 6-mile route traversed the entire length of the Ayr agricultural area, the branch line to Ayr would accommodate but a small extent of the agricultural settlement in the Ayr district." From his own personal knowledge of the country, he could corroborate those statements. The Ayr district was a very wealthy one, but there was any amount of good land there which was as yet untitled and untouched, and the reason why the district had not advanced as rapidly as other sugar districts in the North was the want of this proposed railway communication. Fruit-culture and dairying would pay there, but they could not grow at a profit the crops which were grown down South—the whole of the maize and hay consumed by the farmers there on the plantations were the product of Southern farmers—and sugar was the only crop that would pay well in that district. The only place they wanted to send their sugar to was a port, so that it could be sent down the coast, as the whole of the sugar produced in the district was made for the refinery. At present they suffered a serious drawback in the transit of their sugar, as they had to cart it to the stores on the wharf, stack it there until the arrival of a vessel, and then rehandle it to send it down to the steamer, which was a costly procedure. With the construction of the tramway, things would be entirely different. The local authorities were so satisfied that that line was the one they wanted, that they were prepared to pledge their securities to the fullest extent in order to get it constructed, and he was confident that if the line was built, before many years had passed, instead of making 12,000 tons of sugar per annum in that district the annual output would be nearer 25,000 tons.

Mr. SMITH wished to point out that, in the report to which the hon. member for Herbert had referred, the Railway Commissioners stated "that after leaving the agricultural area in the Ayr district there was not very much available land for agriculture along the eastern route; a few isolated patches were met with on the banks of the creeks, but the area was so small that it was hardly worth taking into account in forming an estimate of what would be the probable traffic along the line when constructed." He did not, however, rely on the report of the Railway Commissioners, as they were newcomers at the time they visited the district, and did not know much about the colony. If hon. members would take the trouble to look up the debate on the Bowen Railway extension in *Hansard* of 1890, vol. lxi., they would see that that report was torn to pieces, and that the then hon. member for Enoggera stated that it was saturated with Townsville influence. As to the suggestion which had been made that he would benefit by the Bowen Railway extension as advocated by him, he had only to say that the property he had in Bowen was not so great or so valuable as to lead him to advocate the railway for that purpose, and that in any case he would be ashamed to allow himself to be influenced in his public duty by personal considerations of that character. He contended that, in the interest of the colony, in the interest of the Western settlers, in the interest of the people of Charters Towers, and in the interest of the people of Bowen, who had all petitioned for the railway he advocated, that line should be constructed.

Mr. HARDACRE: Members on the other side had proved conclusively that the wise thing for the Committee to do was to vote against the proposal—because when doctors differed how were laymen to decide? It was evidently not a matter which concerned Ayr alone, nor was it an ordinary tramline. If that line was constructed from Townsville, that would afterwards be an irresistible argument for continuing it to Bowen, and then there was very little likelihood of the line from Bowen being extended to the 37-mile peg. The Western districts had to be considered as well as the Ayr district. Voting for the proposal would probably mean that the extension of the Bowen line to the 37-mile peg would not be carried out, and voting against it would not mean that it would not ultimately be carried, but that it would be left over for further information.

Mr. BRIDGES (*Nundah*) objected to members on the Government side stonewalling their own measures. After discussing that proposal for the last twenty-four hours the hon. member for Leichhardt now asked them to adjourn for information on the subject which would enable them to give a vote. They had been trying to encourage the farming districts of the colony by borrowing money for cheap railways; here was one district that wanted such a railway, and though the people had shown their *bona fides* by saying that if the Government lent them the money they would build the line and take all the responsibility, hon. members objected to it. If he could be shown that the Government would lose money by the proposal he would vote against it, but the junior member for Charters Towers, who knew what he was talking about, admitted that the line would pay and would be a good thing for the district. It had been said that that line would hurt Charters Towers, but they were not there to build two railways to Charters Towers while there were a number of places that had no railways at all.

Mr. DUNSFORD: This is an extra railway for Townsville.

Mr. BRIDGES: It was not Townsville that wanted that railway, but the farming district of Ayr. He would support the proposal, and if any other farming district could show as good a case for a railway it would have his support.

Mr. DUNSFORD thought the hon. member had done well to lecture his own side for stonewalling their own Estimates. That was not a question of Charters Towers getting two railways at all, but it was the old battle of the 6-mile peg railway and the 37-mile peg railway. When the Townsville people found they could not secure the 6-mile peg railway by starting from Bowen they had cleverly turned round, and proposed now to start it from Townsville towards Bowen. That was really the 6-mile peg railway, and if it was adopted by the Committee, the 37-mile peg railway, or the line *via* Ravenswood, whichever might otherwise be constructed, would be killed stone dead. He would ask the hon. member for Nundah whether he thought Townsville should have two railways when other places had none? He had visited the district and he had found that what Ayr had been clamouring for was direct communication by railway with Bowen. Now it appeared they were prepared to go along the line of least resistance. They saw there was no immediate prospect of their getting railway communication with Bowen, but as there was a new Premier and Northern influence in the Cabinet they were going now for direct communication with Townsville. The hon. member for Herbert had told them that Ayr must look to Townsville for its market, but if Townsville had no existence, Ayr's

market for fruit and other produce of the kind would still be Charters Towers and the districts West of that town, and the sugar grown at Ayr must come down to Brisbane or down the coast and the nearest way down the coast for Ayr was *via* Bowen. The nearest way for Ayr to the markets of Charters Towers, Ravenswood, and the Western districts was by connection with the Bowen extension to the 37-mile peg.

Mr. W. HAMILTON agreed with the junior member for Charters Towers that this was the old question fought out in the House last session. The three rival routes then were the railway to the 37-mile peg, the 24-mile peg, and the 6-mile peg. By a large majority vote the House affirmed the extension to the 37-mile peg.

Mr. LEAHY: No. Only that the plans and specifications should be laid on the table.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: The people of Townsville seeing that they had been defeated by the vote of that House, now started the 6-mile peg railway out to Ayr and called it a tramway. What was the use of starting a railway out from Bowen if it was going to end when it was among the gum-trees? The extension from Wangaratta to the 37-mile peg would benefit a very large portion of the Western district, giving them their mails twelve hours earlier and permitting stock to be carried by train right through to Bowen. The hon. member for Flinders and himself had that year presented petitions from the Western district in favour of it. He would vote against the proposal before the Committee, because he felt that if it was carried the other line from Wangaratta to the 37-mile peg would never be built.

Question—That the item "Ayr tramway, £60,000" be omitted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 15.

Messrs. Smith, Hardacre, Dunsford, Dawson, Lesina, Browne, Mackintosh, McDonald, Kerr, W. Hamilton, McDonnell, Stewart, Turley, Jenkinson, and J. Hamilton.

NOES, 20.

Messrs. Philp, Dickson, O'Connell, Murray, Foxton, Chataway, Dalrymple, Finney, Forsyth, Bridges, Leahy, Bell, Cowley, Givens, Fisher, Forrest, Campbell, Lord, T. B. Cribb, and Kidston.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Messrs. Stephenson, Fitzgerald, and Curtis.

Noes—Messrs. Story, Bartholomew, and Hanran.

Resolved in the negative.

Original question again stated.

Mr. SMITH asked whether the plans, sections, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the Bowen Railway from Wangaratta to the Reid River would be placed on the table next session.

The TREASURER: If they went on with railway legislation next session, as he hoped they would, that would be one of the lines brought forward. There were three lines as to which the routes were disputed—the border line, the Nanango line, and the Bowen line. Those lines would be reported on during the recess, so that next year the reports might be brought forward. There was no doubt as to the routes of the other lines in contemplation.

Mr. STEWART was in favour of the construction of these tramlines or light lines of railway in agricultural districts, but objected to the vote on the ground that full information should be given before the money was voted. Some of the local authorities concerned might fail, and then the Government would have to pay the piper.

The TREASURER informed the hon. member that the first item of £40,000 was for loans advanced under the provisions of the Local Works Loans Act of 1880. With regard to the £25,000 for the Board of Waterworks, Brisbane,

he might say that the board was in a splendid position. The Cairns-Mulgrave tramway paid 6 per cent., and the loan was a good investment. The sum put down for the Mosman River tramway was a revote. The Herbert River tramway was a continuation to Stone River of a tramway built by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. With regard to McGregor's Creek tramway from Mirani, the local authorities so far had not spent any money, and there was some doubt as to whether they were likely to go on with the line or not. The Johnstone River tramway went through about seventeen miles of scrub land. He thought there was no doubt about Bundaberg being in a position to pay interest on the loan advanced for water supply there. The last item, Ayr tramway, had already been fully discussed.

Mr. JENKINSON asked whether the hon. gentleman could give any information as to an application with regard to a tramway from Mount Bauple towards the North Coast line.

The TREASURER said that he had been called on in reference to the matter, and if the information given to him was correct, he thought there would be no trouble about lending the money.

Mr. HARDACRE had no objection to money being voted for works already started; but with regard to new works he deprecated granting loans for which the Government might receive a lower rate of interest than they would have to pay, in view of the position of affairs in South Africa, on the money they might have to borrow.

The TREASURER said the Government would not borrow if they had to pay more than they would receive. The point raised by the hon. member could be discussed on the Loan Bill.

Mr. McDONNELL asked for information as to the position of the Brisbane Board of Waterworks, and the amount of the overdraft. He thought the opinion was largely held in Brisbane that the present system should be discontinued.

The TREASURER said the local authorities could take over the waterworks any time they liked. As to the position of the board, they had paid up in full interest and redemption. He would inform the hon. gentleman as to the overdraft later on.

Mr. McDONNELL asked whether the Government had appointed a successor to Mr. Finney, the hon. member for Toowoong, who had resigned his position as a member of the board.

The TREASURER said that no appointment had yet been made.

Mr. McDONNELL thought a discussion on that question was necessary, but he would not say any more on the matter at present. Many municipalities were to blame with regard to the heavy waterworks taxes. If joint local authorities had the business under their control, the expense to the Government would be less. He thought—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order, because Standing Order No. 313 states that—

After a question for omitting or reducing an item has been disposed of, a motion shall not be made nor debate allowed upon any preceding item.

Mr. McDONALD rose to a point of order. He would like to know if any hon. member could speak on the matter at all now.

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing to prevent hon. members debating the main question, but they cannot refer to a previous item.

Mr. McDONNELL said he wished to refer to different items.

The CHAIRMAN: That is just what the hon. member cannot do. We had a general discussion before the reduction of the vote was moved, and the hon. member is not in order in discussing a preceding item.

Mr. SMITH: According to the Chairman's ruling, the Ayr tramway could be discussed till further orders.

The CHAIRMAN: The matter of loans to local bodies can be discussed generally, but a former item cannot be discussed.

Mr. McDONNELL asked what the indebtedness of the waterworks boards was.

The PREMIER: The total amount was £474,000.

Mr. McDONALD said a principle had grown up in connection with loans to local bodies, which required some explanation. This year the amount in this connection had been increased to £233,684. The Treasurer should say what was the exact amount required for these works.

The TREASURER: We cannot tell.

Mr. RYLAND thought the Government had not been careful in the past in the matter. With regard to the Ayr tramway—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot discuss that now.

Mr. RYLAND: The Government should be more careful of the taxpayers' money. It would be far better if the waterworks of the colony were under the control of municipalities. The waterworks boards should be done away with. The weight of taxation in this respect was put on the poor man and not according to valuation. His remarks applied to tramways and guarantee railways as well. Sir Horace Tozer had said, "Borrow all you can, and all debts can be wiped out by repudiation." He had advised the Gympie council to borrow all they could, and to borrow often, but he (Mr. Ryland) did not believe in his advice, and he had been laughed to scorn. [The hon. member then read a list of the amounts owing by municipal and shire councils to the Government on account of loan on the 30th of June last.]

Mr. McDONALD (speaking from the front bench on the right hand of the chair) expressed his surprise at the hon. member for Gympie reading a long list of figures, and declared that, if it were permissible to do so, he should almost be inclined to accuse the hon. member of stonewalling. He also expressed his surprise at a member of the Labour party advocating repudiation.

Mr. RYLAND rose to a point of order. He said he did not advocate repudiation; he only suggested the possibility of it.

Mr. McDONALD continuing to speak from the front bench on the right hand of the chair,

The CHAIRMAN said: Standing Order No. 99 says—

Every member desiring to speak shall rise in his place uncovered and address himself to Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is ridiculing legislation in speaking from the place where he is now doing, and, to put himself in order, he should go to his own seat and address himself to the Chair.

Mr. McDONALD: Which is my seat?

The CHAIRMAN: There is the Standing Order, and it is my duty, I think, to call the hon. member's attention to any breach of it. I call on the hon. member to speak from his place, not from the seat he at present occupies.

Mr. McDONALD: This was the first time he had had a seat allotted to him, and he should like to know by what authority he was allotted a seat, how long he could occupy it, and when he could change it?

The CHAIRMAN: The seat of the hon. member is his accustomed seat, and I request that the hon. member will not persist in making a farce of the proceedings. It is unbecoming, I think.

Mr. McDONNELL: Particularly at Christmas time.

The CHAIRMAN: It tends to lower the dignity of Parliament.

Mr. McDONALD: He objected to being insulted by any man. When—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. McDONALD: When any man stated he made a farce of the proceedings he denied it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. McDONALD: A man who said that said something which was not true.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will be seated. If the hon. member objects to my ruling, he will move that it be disagreed to.

Mr. McDONALD: It was not the rule; it was the statement.

The CHAIRMAN: He has no right to continue to address the Chamber.

Mr. McDONALD: He wished to ask whether the Chairman was in order in stating—

The HOME SECRETARY: Order!

Mr. McDONALD: Shut up!

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. gentleman move that my ruling be dissented from?

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. (After a pause.) What he disagreed with was not the Chairman's ruling, but his statement that he was making a farce of the proceedings.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you move that my ruling be disagreed to?

Mr. McDONALD: What was it?

The CHAIRMAN: That you are not in order in not being in your accustomed place.

Mr. McDONALD: He would moved that the ruling be disagreed to.

Mr. KIDSTON: The hon. member for Nundah spoke from this side of the House for half-an-hour.

Mr. McDONALD: The reason he moved that the ruling be disagreed to was because it was so absurd that it would bring the whole procedure into ridicule. There was hardly a member that made a practice of speaking from a particular place. It was a common thing for hon. members to shift all round. They talked all over the Assembly.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is still transgressing. I have said he is out of order in speaking from that position.

Mr. McDONALD: He had moved that the ruling be disagreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: But you are not still to continue to break the Standing Order; the hon. member must proceed to his place.

Mr. McDONALD: Would the hon. gentleman tell him, in the first place, where he was to sit?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Standing Order said—

Every member desiring to speak shall rise in his place, uncovered.

I cannot answer for the Standing Order. It is only for me to put it in force and prevent it from being broken. I call on the hon. gentleman to speak from his accustomed place.

Mr. McDONALD: He was—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BROWNE: Relating to the motion—

Mr. McDONALD: Would the hon. gentleman wait a moment? He wanted to know where he was to go. Would anybody tell him where

he was to go? Would any hon. member tell him if the Standing Order directed him where he was to go? If so, he would go.

The HOME SECRETARY: Perhaps it would be as well for him to read Standing Order No. 12—

The front bench on the right hand of the chair is reserved for members holding office under the Crown, and the front bench on the left hand of the chair, and the front cross benches on either side of the chair, are ordinarily occupied by members who have held office under the Crown.

The front bench and the front cross bench on the Opposition side had been occupied by hon. members during the last Parliament who had not held office under the Crown, for the simple reason that there were no members on that side who had held office under the Crown. Now, when he came into the Chamber, he saw three members of the Opposition side of the House in occupation of the Treasury bench, and none of them had held office under the Crown. These were the hon. members for Croydon, Cairns, and Gregory. If hon. members chose to make themselves ridiculous, and throw ridicule on and deliberately flout the Standing Orders, it was a matter for them. This was a Standing Order which could only be enforced by the good taste of hon. members themselves. It was one of the italicised Standing Orders. If hon. members chose to sit on the front Treasury bench or in any portion of the House, he was inclined to think they were entitled to do so. It had been ruled in the House of Commons that members were entitled to address the House from the gallery. It was purely a matter of good taste.

Mr. BROWNE agreed with the Home Secretary as to the practice of the Assembly. On [12.30 p.m.] several occasions recently hon. members on both sides had addressed the House from the benches opposite to those they ordinarily occupied. The fact that members on his side had been sitting on the Treasury bench was because not a single Minister thought fit to be present. It might be a matter of good taste, but he intended to support the motion of the hon. member for Flinders that the Chairman's ruling be disagreed to.

Mr. W. HAMILTON said that he disagreed with the Chairman's ruling. The other night the hon. member for Bulloo and the hon. member for Carpentaria had both addressed the Committee from the Opposition side, and that morning the hon. member for Nundah had done the same thing. His reason for crossing the floor was to show that he thought it had taste on the part of Ministers to be absent during such an important debate, and he wished to direct attention to their absence. The point had never yet been raised that a member had any particular seat.

Mr. LESINA said that the Chairman's ruling caused him a certain amount of trepidation, because, if it was upheld, it would mean that if an hon. member changed his political views, and crossed to the other side, he would have to obtain the consent of the Chairman as to where he should locate himself. It was a dangerous ruling, and he intended to support the hon. member for Flinders. He was thoroughly in accord with the Home Secretary that it was entirely a question of good taste; but he did not think it was in the power of any official of the Committee to dictate where any hon. member should sit in the Chamber. The interpretation he put upon the Standing Order was that hon. members were to stand up when they addressed the Assembly. If the ruling was going to be sustained, it would lead to all sorts of difficulties. In New South Wales, members, instead of standing up, as they did in Queensland, in the positions which they

usually occupied, advanced to the table and spoke from there. He saw no utility in the ruling.

Mr. HIGGS was anxious to assist the Chairman in maintaining order, but he thought he was wrong on the present occasion; and he hoped the Chairman would withdraw his ruling. It would not be possible to put such a ruling in practice in the House of Commons, from which they got so many precedents. He understood one-third of the members of that body had not seats at all, and if a member wanted a particular seat for a certain evening, he placed his hat on the spot. The practice in Queensland was for members to sit wherever it was most convenient for them to sit, and he took it that the correct meaning of the Standing Order was that members must stand up when addressing the Chair. If the Chairman insisted on his ruling, it would be necessary to appeal to the Speaker.

Mr. DUNSFORD was of opinion that the Standing Order meant that members must stand up when addressing the Committee. The enforcement of the ruling would lead to great confusion, and the liberties of hon. members would, to a great extent, be taken away. The Chairman gave his ruling without knowing that the hon. member for Flinders had not changed sides.

Mr. KIDSTON quite disagreed with the Chairman's ruling. Several hon. members had spoken elsewhere than in their ordinary places in the Chamber, and hon. members might do that as a matter of convenience. He supposed the hon. member for Flinders had gone to the other side because he had been converted. After what had taken place that morning, he thought the hon. member for Flinders had some little reason to doubt the perfect partiality of the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE (*MacKay*) regretted that the parliamentary institutions of the country were being gradually lowered. Instead of transacting business at that late period of the year, they were making a ridiculous farce of the whole thing. Parliament was being degraded by hon. members playing at being mountebanks night after night, at a time when, if they could not legislate, they might be in town with their children. If hon. members addressed the Chair from where they pleased, chaos would result. When hon. members crossed the floor to address the Committee, it showed that they desired to make parliamentary institutions ridiculous. It would substitute disorder for order, and would not conduce to the despatch of public business.

At 1 o'clock,

The CHAIRMAN said: I shall resume the chair at 2 o'clock.

The Committee resumed at the hour named.

Mr. MAXWELL thought it was really time that the farce ended and that they came back to business. It would be advisable for the hon. member for Flinders to withdraw his objection to the Chairman's ruling.

Mr. McDONALD did not wish to press his motion, which he would withdraw on the understanding that the ruling was withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the ruling be withdrawn?

Mr. STEWART objected to it being withdrawn. The ruling should not be permitted to form a precedent. He would draw attention to the rules of the House of Commons on the subject of the occupancy of seats. [The hon. member here quoted the rules of the House of Commons, providing that a member could sit anywhere in the House except on two front benches, provided he affixed a card to the seat subsequent to attendance at prayers.] The rules made it abundantly clear that there were no

reserve seats in the House of Commons, any more than there were in that Chamber. That being the case he was bound to support the motion of the hon. member for Flinders.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL regretted that the time of the Committee had been taken up with that discussion. He had never seen action similar to that taken by the hon. member for Flinders adopted except when the House had got into a demoralised condition, and then only in the early hours of the morning, and by way of a joke. "Cushing" said that the general rule was for members to speak from their places, and not from passage ways or at the table. An hon. member's place was where he usually sat, and from where he recorded his vote. He thought they ought to get back to serious business, and he hoped the hon. member for Rockhampton North would withdraw his objection.

Mr. STEWART: I will withdraw.

Mr. FISHER pointed out that the rule in reference to hon. members speaking from their places was adopted in 1892, and was aimed at the then member for Bundamba, Mr. Glassey.

Mr. McDONALD pointed out that the rule quoted from "Cushing" by the Attorney-General had no bearing on the case, because in America members were provided with seats and desks.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Rockhampton North having withdrawn his objection we will now proceed with business.

Mr. McDONALD said it was distinctly understood that the Chairman's ruling would be withdrawn.

Mr. STORY (*Balonne*) said that the difficulty had arisen during a lengthy speech by the hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Ryland. The hon. member for Cairns and one or two others had crossed over to the Government side, and there being no Minister present, the hon. member for Flinders adopted the role of Minister and remonstrated with members of the Opposition for wasting time. Up to that point the whole incident had been a bit of fun, but as hon. members became somewhat disorderly, the Chairman requested that they would not continue to occupy seats on the Government side of the House. After that request of the Chairman's, it was not very good taste for hon. members to continue to occupy their wrong seats.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Flinders has withdrawn his appeal, and the hon. member for Rockhampton North has withdrawn his objection, and I shall now put the question.

Mr. KIDSTON: Are we to understand that your ruling has been withdrawn?

The CHAIRMAN: The motion of the hon. member for Flinders has been withdrawn. The hon. member for Rockhampton North has withdrawn his objection, and I now propose to proceed with the ordinary business of the committee.

Mr. FISHER: But your ruling stands.

The CHAIRMAN: The disagreement to my ruling has been withdrawn. The ruling will not be enforced.

Mr. RYLAND pointed out that it was the tendency of local authorities to, if possible, get away from their liabilities. He quoted from a speech made by the mayor of Gympie in 1892, in which he expressed the opinion that a great day of repudiation would take place among divisional boards and municipalities on account of the reduction of the endowment, and that when that day arrived the whole of the indebtedness would be wiped out. He thought the Government should show some discrimination in lending the money of the State.

Question—Loans to local bodies, £233,684—put and passed.

DEEP SINKING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) moved that £10,000 be granted for loans in aid of deep sinking. The vote was the same as last year. £5,755 had lapsed during the year.

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. gentleman recently made reference to a battery going to the Coen. Was that paid for out of the prospecting vote?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes.

Mr. JENKINSON asked if it was the custom of the department in every instance to get the opinion of the geologist before any money was granted in aid of deep sinking?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That was the custom, except in a few instances in which the opinion of the warden was taken.

Question put and passed.

LOANS IN AID OF CO-OPERATIVE PRODUCTION.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. J. V. Chataway, *Mackay*) moved that the sum of £10,000 be granted for loans in aid of co-operative agricultural production. A similar sum was voted on the Estimates last

[2.30 p.m.] year, but it was only drawn on in one case, that was the case of the

Gympie Dairying Company. The intention, when that vote was first introduced, was to assist farmers who wanted some sort of a factory, and who could give security for advances but were not able to raise the required capital themselves, to erect flour-mills, rice-mills, etc. The only tangible proposal with respect to the vote at the present time was in reference to the erection of a flour-mill at Roma.

Question put and passed.

WIRE-NETTING UNDER THE RABBIT BOARDS ACT, 1896.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that the sum of £6,500 be granted for wire-netting under the Rabbit Boards Act of 1896. The amount was considerably less this year, as it was anticipated that less netting would be required.

Question put and passed.

ENDOWMENTS TO HARBOUR BOARDS AND PORTS.

The TREASURER moved that the sum of £176,255 be granted for endowments to harbour boards and ports for harbour improvements. The items in that vote were in every case revotes. Last year £246,764 was voted, but only £70,000 was spent, and the only two cases in which the full amount of the endowment was drawn were Cairns and Port Douglas.

Mr. GIVENS asked why there was no endowment for the Cairns harbour this year?

The TREASURER: They spent the money last year, and will now have to work on their harbour dues.

Question put and passed.

DEBENTURES UNDER SUGAR WORKS GUARANTEE ACT OF 1893.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that the sum of £134,600 be granted for debentures to be issued under the authority of the Sugar Works Guarantee Act of 1893. There were three sums mentioned in the vote amounting to £24,600, for which debentures were issued or about to be issued under the Act. There were two other items to which he wished to make special reference—namely, the item of £45,000 for the Johnstone River mill, and £65,000 for the Russell River mill. In those cases legislation would be required, as they were entirely outside the amending Act, which limited the amount for which debentures might be issued to £500,000, and the necessary legislation would

be introduced accordingly. The late Hon. T. J. Byrnes made a promise that provision would be made for a mill at the Johnstone River, and he (Mr. Chataway) thought it was desirable that he should ask the House to allow him to carry out that promise. The £500,000 for which debentures might be issued would not provide sufficient to complete the mills enumerated in the vote and those already authorised, and bring them into a state of efficiency, so that he would have to ask Parliament to make a further provision of £15,000 or £20,000. With regard to the Russell River mill, the department had preliminary reports upon the land, which stated that the land was exceedingly good land, and the centre a favourable one for the establishment of a mill, but they were not yet in possession of full reports.

Mr. McDONALD understood that there was a sum of £35,715 arrears, of interest, and a sum of £52,706, arrears of redemption, in connection with those mills, and wished to know if the Government were doing anything to see that the interests of the State were protected.

* **THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE:** The position of the mills in so far as the reduction of the original loan and the payment of interest were concerned showed a considerable improvement. In 1897 they earned on their capital 5·1 per cent.; and in 1898, 9·1 per cent.; and they paid in interest in 1897, £5,196; and in 1898, £11,000. The repayments for the present year were scarcely in yet, but during the last three days the department had received £2,149 from the Mosman mill; £1,800 from the Mulgrave mill; and £2,456 19s. 11d. from the Gin Gin mill, which altogether was almost as much as they got for the whole of last year. The Minister, while not desiring to escape responsibility, would have to be largely guided by the House as to what should be done in cases where the mills were largely in arrears with their payments. The Moreton mill, which was not only in arrears in the payment of interest, but which had also got hopelessly into debt, the department had foreclosed on, and they were now running the mill and working it at a profit; and it was hoped that by this time next year they would have paid off the arrears, and be able to hand the mill back to the shareholders if they so desired. The Proserpine Company was also in a very bad way; they had paid no interest this year, the crop having been nearly entirely destroyed by the frost. The yield was something less than 1,000 tons, but next year they should make 2,800 tons. They had petitioned the department to send up a manager, and inquiries were now being made as to what course should be adopted.

Mr. GIVENS was acquainted with the situations of the proposed mills at the Johnstone and Russell Rivers, and could honestly say that there was every prospect of the mills being a success. When the Sugar Works Guarantee Act was passed in 1893, the then Premier made a distinct promise that no Chinese, Javanese, or other coloured aliens should be allowed to work in the mills; but that promise had been broken by his successors. The Mosman Central mill Company had indentured 100 Japanese direct from Japan, and the Mulgrave Company were employing Japanese at the cane carrier, simply because they did the work ½d. a ton cheaper than white labourers. He hoped the Government would do everything in their power to discourage the employment of Asiatic aliens of any kind in connection with the work in central mills.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: With regard to the employment of Polynesians in central mills, that matter was in everybody's hands, and before he was a politician he had done

everything he could to prevent them being so employed. The employment of Japanese was in a somewhat different category, because it was not against the law. There were some mills situated at long distances, like the Mosman, which he could not help having sympathy with, as they had a difficulty in getting labour. Japanese were not coming here now, and when the time of those who were here expired they would go back, and he believed that within the next three or four years the trouble and unpleasantness of coloured labour working in the mills would be a thing of the past. At any rate, he would do everything he could to prevent the employment of coloured labour of any description inside a mill.

Mr. LEAHY noticed that provision was made on the vote for some new mills, and he thought that was a matter that deserved serious consideration. He did not object to assist the sugar industry, or any other industry, provided the State could see its way to get its money back. But at the present time the sugar industry in Queensland might be said to be trembling in the balance, and it was doubtful whether it was going to succeed. Everybody was agreed that in the near future, whether by legislation or the scarcity of labour in the islands, Polynesians would gradually disappear from the sugar plantations, and if that labour was absolutely necessary for the production of sugar, in order to make it pay, was it not absurd to launch out into the expenditure of those large sums of £40,000 and £60,000 on central mills? The Minister should give the Committee an assurance that if that money was voted now it would not be expended until it was sanctioned in the form of a Bill, and unless the hon. gentleman was prepared to do that he did not think the Committee should be prepared to allow the amounts to pass.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE had already explained that legislation would be required to sanction the expenditure of that money, and he would certainly not recommend the Treasurer to expend it until it was authorised by Parliament.

Mr. LEAHY: Will this money be spent until it is authorised to be spent?

THE TREASURER: Certainly not.

Mr. GIVENS: How long will it be before the Bill is introduced?

THE TREASURER: I can bring it in next week.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): There were Japanese working in the central mills at Mulgrave, Goondi, and Mourilyan, and he believed that some time ago the hon. member for Herbert, Mr. Cowley, said that it would be necessary to introduce coolies.

Mr. COWLEY: No.

Mr. LESINA: He remembered that the hon. member pointed out to a deputation that waited upon him that coolies would be a reliable kind of labour.

HON. G. THORN: The whole question of the sugar industry required to be thrashed out, and he thought the industry was doomed in Queensland so long as bounty-fed sugar was allowed to come in as it did. He was glad the promise had been given that none of that money would be expended without further legislation, as he did not think the Government would ever see the £500,000 already loaned under the Act.

Mr. LESINA asked if the Minister was aware that the Mosman mill, which was down for £12,000 on the vote, had imported Japanese to work in the mill?

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He had not heard that that was the case.

Question put and passed.

RAILWAYS—GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Murray, *Normanby*) moved that £290,010 be granted from loan for railways—general establishment. There were a few increases in the vote to a number of clerks and other officers in the various branches included in the vote. They were principally classification increases.

Mr. LESINA noticed that the Commissioner in his report stated that the department had paid £2,826 14s. 3d. for 1 acre 1 rood 34 perches of land at Brunswick street, Bulimba Reach. Did the Government actually pay that price per acre for land?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It depends where it is situated. It may be worth £10,000 per acre in the centre of the city.

Mr. LESINA noticed also that £193 had been paid for an acre on the Hughenden-Winton extension, and £1,767 for an acre on the South and North Rockhampton line. He wanted in that connection to urge the imposition of a betterment tax to secure to the State a share of the increased value put upon land through railway construction.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS was sure that there was no case in which the Commissioner had given more than its value for land resumed for railway purposes.

Mr. McDONNELL brought up the matter of the resumption of a piece of land for the Bulimba line, from Johannah Maloney. The award given in that case by the arbitrator had been very much less than the value of the land, and the owner had no remedy, as under the Act there was no appeal from the valuation of the arbitrator where it was less than £500. In every case where the award had been above that amount, and appeal had been made to the Supreme Court, the valuation had been increased by 50 per cent. In the case to which he had referred, the owner of the land had for three years declined to accept the arbitrator's award, £380, and the money was still in the hands of the arbitrator. In justice to property-owners the Government should next session introduce an amendment of the Act providing for legal redress in cases where the arbitrator's award was less than £500.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS had had all the papers in the case mentioned by the hon. member before him, and had brought the case under the notice of the Commissioner, who assured him that he had no power under the Act to give more for the land than the arbitrator's award. He promised to consult with the Commissioner again, and if injustice was done under the Act to see what could be done to amend it.

Mr. HARDACRE: Whilst amending the Act the hon. gentleman would, he hoped, give some consideration to the proposal of the hon. member for Clermont. In one case in Rockhampton the owner of land claimed £10,000 and had been awarded £120.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The principle was very largely acted upon. He was aware of the case mentioned in which the owner claimed £10,000, and the arbitrator set down the value of the land at £120, and that was all the owner got.

Question put and passed.

ENGINEERING BRANCH—SOUTHERN DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved that £253,950 be granted from loan for engineering branch, Southern division. There were some considerable increases on that vote. There was £15,000 down on account for the extension of wharf, etc., Racecourse to Pinkenba line;

but of that £5,000 was a revote. The estimate to complete the scheme was £60,000. For the Central Station buildings £35,000 was asked for on account. The amount of £10,000 on account for new railway offices on last year's vote lapsed, and did not appear on the Estimates this year, as the work would not at present be proceeded with. £20,000 was down for new workshops at Ipswich, and it was intended to increase them to a very great extent. It was estimated that £125,000 would be required for the purpose, and for machinery another £50,000. £15,000 was asked for deviations and alterations to curves on the Main Range, and another £15,000 for alterations to grades, including a bridge at Sadlier's Crossing on the line from Ipswich to Rosewood. The Chief Engineer's estimate for alterations at Maryborough was £34,200, and £11,500 was asked for in that vote. For deviations and relaying on the Maryborough-Gympie line £32,500 was asked for, and £6,250 for extension of steel spans, Burnett Bridge. There was £20,000 down for miscellaneous works, including water supply, but the details of the vote were too voluminous to read.

Mr. KERR admitted that the department could not at present enter largely upon the construction of locomotives, but they were in a position to construct carriages and wagons, and they should take the matter up.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The matter had been fully considered by the Commissioner, and it was found that at the present time they could get the work done more satisfactorily by private contract. The department devoted more attention to repairs.

Mr. McDONNELL asked the reason for the withdrawal of the vote for new railway offices?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There was a good deal of work of that description going on, and it was thought far better to have those works coming on in regular succession. It was just possible that next year they would be able to make a start with these offices.

Mr. McDONNELL: The necessity for those offices had been pointed out again and again, and it was surely as great now as it had been some years ago.

Mr. CAMPBELL: The hon. member deserved credit for standing up for Brisbane as he did, but as a man also identified with Brisbane he was satisfied with the amount of buildings provided for on the Estimates at the present time.

Mr. McDONNELL did not object to necessary works being gone on with in other parts of the colony, but he protested against the action of the department in withdrawing the money for necessary works in Brisbane from the Estimates.

Question put and passed.

ENGINEERING BRANCH—CENTRAL DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved that a sum not exceeding £65,100 be granted from loan for engineering branch, Central division. The vote included £10,000 on account for a high level bridge over the Dawson River, which was estimated to cost £30,350.

Mr. KERR asked whether it was intended to go on with the promised work at Alpha?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Mr. STEWART protested against several of the works promised in the vote being charged to loan.

Mr. HARDACRE advocated the employment of day labour in connection with deviations and reductions of grades.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS said most of this work was being done by day labour. Question put and passed.

ENGINEERING BRANCH—NORTHERN DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved that a sum not exceeding £98,850 be granted from loan for engineering branch, Northern division.

Mr. KIDSTON pointed out that in this loan vote there was a sum of £8,000 for renewals to bridges and miscellaneous works on the Cairns line; and in the Estimates-in-Chief, page 89, there was a sum of £5,000 for rebuilding the Dawson, Comet, and Nogoia bridges. In both cases the works were of the same character, but in the one case they were charged to loan, while in the other case they were charged to revenue. He thought it would be better to put down the items in such a manner as to clearly distinguish between works properly chargeable to loan and works properly chargeable to revenue.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS thought it might be well to act on the suggestion made by the hon. member.

Question put and passed.

GENERAL EXPENDITURE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved that a sum not exceeding £172,500 be granted from loan for general expenditure.

Question put and passed.

ELECTRIC TELEGRAPHS.

The PREMIER moved that a sum not exceeding £45,000 be granted from loan for electric telegraphs.

Question put and passed.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, assenting to the following Bills:—Marsupial Boards Act, 1897, Continuation; Legitimation; Railways Acts Amendment; Public Service Act Amendment; and Mount Morgan Gas and Lighting Company, Limited.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER moved that the House, at its rising, adjourn till Wednesday next.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move that this House do now adjourn. The Government business on Wednesday will be Estimates, Supplementary Estimates, Loan Bill, and Appropriation Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twelve minutes to 4 o'clock.