

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 27 DECEMBER 1899

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 27 DECEMBER, 1899.

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

LOAN PROPOSALS.

The TREASURER laid on the table Loan Proposals for 1899-1900, which were ordered to be printed and referred to the Committee of Ways and Means.

QUESTIONS.**DOCKING THE "MAORI KING."**

Mr. DAWSON (*Charters Towers*): I desire to ask the head of the Government a question, without notice—Is it true that the "Maori King," which has been chartered for the despatch of the troops to the Transvaal, has been docked in Sydney? If so, have the Government made any effort to get the ship docked in Brisbane and the fittings done by Queensland workmen? And if so, why did they fail?

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*): We did make efforts to get the vessel docked in Brisbane. We offered the owners free dock dues and free harbour dues if they would bring her here to be docked, but the answer was that they had to make extensive repairs to machinery, and preferred to get them done before leaving Sydney.

BUBONIC PLAGUE.

Mr. STEWART (*Rockhampton North*): I wish to give notice that to-morrow I will ask the Chief Secretary the following questions:—1. Has the attention of the Government been directed to the probability of the bubonic plague reaching Australia? 2. If so, what steps do the Government propose to take to stay the progress of the plague?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. R. Dickson, *Bulimba*): I can answer the question at once. The Government have instructed a proclamation to be issued under the Quarantine Act.

NEW MEMBER.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF WARREGO.

The SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that, pursuant to a resolution of this House, dated the 21st November last, I issued a writ for the election of a member for the electoral district of Warrego, and that the writ has been duly returned to me with a certificate endorsed thereon of the election of David Bowman for the said electoral district.

Mr. DAVID BOWMAN then took the oath and subscribed the roll. On taking his seat, he was heartily cheered by the members of the Labour party.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. CALLAN (*Fitzroy*): I desire to say a few words by way of personal explanation. In the report of my speech on the printing estimates, which appeared in *Hansard* some time ago, the word *Guardian*, newspaper, appears instead of the *Chronicle*. When I saw the mistake I mentioned the matter to one of the *Hansard* staff, who was acting as secretary for the Mount Morgan Gas Bill Committee, and I asked him to have the matter rectified, but owing to the fact that he was delayed in connection with that Bill it was too late. I would not bother the House about this now except that I find some of my constituents have been making a rumpus about it. Therefore, I wish the correction made.

SUPPLY.

Upon the Order of the Day being called for the resumption of Committee of Supply,

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that you do now leave the chair.

* Mr. COWLEY (*Herbert*): I do not wish to occupy the time of the House for many minutes, but I have a grievance which I wish to state as the Secretary for Agriculture is in his place. As is generally known, a celebrated chemist—Dr. Maxwell—has been invited to this colony from Honolulu to investigate the state of the sugar industry here. The Secretary for Agriculture invited me to draw up a time-table for his journeys to the North, and I did so. It was arranged that he should leave Gladstone by the "Barcoo," that he should land at Townsville, and take the "Palmer" on to Cairns, and I know he reached Cairns up to time. By the time-table he should have reached Cairns on the 19th instant. He was to be met there by those interested in the sugar industry, and was to be driven to Hambledon and the Musgrave, and he was to spend two days in those districts. The steamer "Herbert" was to be delayed until midnight on Thursday to take him to Geraldton, where he was to be met by the Farmers' Association and driven over the district, leaving Geraldton on Friday night. He was then to proceed on the Friday night to Lucinda and was timed to arrive there some time on Saturday. Arrangements were made there for the farmers' association to meet him and convey him over the district and give him every facility for getting all the information he required.

He was then to be driven overland to Townsville, because no steamers were available, reaching there on Thursday night. He was then to leave by coach for Ayr, reaching there on Friday night. He was to spend Saturday, Sunday, and Monday there, leaving on Monday by special train, and, catching the "Barcoo" at Bowen, to proceed to Mackay. Dr. Maxwell was to be in charge of Mr. Brunnich, an officer of the Agricultural Department, and it was definitely arranged that the time-table was to be strictly maintained in its entirety. Telegrams were sent to the local authorities and the farmers' associations to meet Dr. Maxwell and render every assistance, and supply the fullest information regarding their districts. The necessity for this arose from the fact that his time was very limited, as he had to return to Honolulu by a given date. Mr. Brunnich, before leaving, was extremely anxious to put in a day at the Barron Falls, but I told him it was impossible if he was to carry out the arrangements strictly to the letter. It was at first proposed that Dr. Maxwell should go to the Russell. I said, "Very well, we can arrange for horses to carry you overland to Geraldton"; but it was thought better to spend two days—one at Hambledon, the other with the farmers at Mulgrave—than to devote it to going to the Russell, where there is no sugar mill at present. When Mr. Brunnich left with Dr. Maxwell, I for one, and I believe the Minister, was under the impression that the time-table would be faithfully carried out, and it could easily have been because arrangements were made for horses, buggies, and steamboats to meet him. The only possible hitch that could have occurred was the steamboats getting on the bank in some of the rivers. Lately I have received telegrams from all the farmers' associations saying that Mr. Brunnich and Dr. Maxwell have not called at Geraldton or Ingham; that they had been a whole week at Cairns—that they were doing there I do not know—and that they were very anxious to know why they had not visited their districts. In these districts there are about 160 farmers, and the sugar industry is the paramount industry. These farmers have met together and compiled information, and were awaiting the arrival of Dr. Maxwell; but up till now he has not put in an appearance. What I wish to know from the Secretary for Agriculture is why the time-table has not been carried out, and is it the intention of the Government to see that Dr. Maxwell visits these two important centres before he returns, or are they to be left out? Dr. Maxwell should reach Bowen in time to catch the "Barcoo" on Monday, the 1st of January, and arrive in Mackay the next morning. Is it possible for him to visit the Ingham or Geraldton districts and meet these farmers, who have all this information available for him? I need not enlarge on the importance of these districts. Ingham is one of the oldest sugar districts in the colony, and is producing about 15,000 tons of sugar per annum. Geraldton is producing about 12,000 tons. In the two districts there are about 160 farmers, independent of the millowners, and there is about 26,000 or 27,000 tons of sugar made there per annum. I should be very much obliged if the Secretary for Agriculture could answer the questions.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. J. V. Chataway, *Mackay*): There is no doubt the hon. member for Herbert has a grievance, and I think he is quite justified in calling attention to it. When Dr. Maxwell arrived, the hon. member went to considerable trouble—knowing the difficulties of the Northern rivers and the uncertainty of getting in and out of them—in making up a time-table. Added to that it was on the representations of the hon.

member that he should visit the Johnstone River that it was arranged Dr. Maxwell should go there. It was only on the 19th instant that I got a telegram saying he was not going there. Then I sent the following telegram to Mr. Brunnich:—

Your telegram to Minister Most unsatisfactory to find arrangements altered without reference to this office. You are disappointing planters and causing friction and unpleasantness. Minister expects programme approved by him to be carried out. Reply at once.

That seemed to me all that I could do. I could not get at Mr. Brunnich. I do not excuse him for altering the arrangements without reference to the department; but I must ask the hon. member for Herbert to bear with the department until we get an explanation from him. There is one explanation I can conceive. I will read a paragraph which appeared in a Mackay paper of the 19th instant. It appears that Dr. Maxwell must have passed Flat-top the day before, because it says—

On Sunday last Dr. Walter Maxwell, the sugar expert, passed North by the "Barcoo." He was accompanied by Mr. Brunnich, agricultural chemist to the Department of Agriculture. Dr. Maxwell has been in ill-health since his landing in the colony, and, consequently, was confined to his cabin.

That may be the explanation why Mr. Brunnich and Dr. Maxwell altered the arrangements. With reference to the visit to the Herbert River, I have a telegram to-day from Mr. Brunnich—

Leaving to-day for Burdekin returning Thursday. Please instruct someone at Townsville make arrangements for our visit of Herbert Friday to Sunday.

The Under Secretary to the department has very kindly arranged with the sub-collector of Customs at Townsville to expedite and help this visit to the Herbert. So I trust there will be no further difficulties, although it is too much for them to visit the Johnstone River. I believe that if this takes place the hon. member for Herbert—

Mr. COWLEY: The Johnstone is not to be visited at all?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No. This should remove the greater part of the hon. member's grievance.

Mr. JENKINSON (*Wide Bay*): On behalf of the hon. member for Port Curtis I should like to ask the Home Secretary when we may expect the papers with regard to Sergeant Grimshaw, which were asked for on the 14th of December?

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carmarvon*): I should imagine to-morrow. They are very nearly finished.

Mr. SMITH (*Bowen*): I should like to ask the Secretary for Agriculture if there is any doubt about Dr. Maxwell's visit to the Ayr and Geraldton districts?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He has been to Ayr.

Mr. SMITH: Is he going to the Proserpine?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. STEWART: It appears to me, from the remarks of the hon. member for Herbert, and from the reply of the Secretary for Agriculture, that this unfortunate colony is going to be landed in one more useless item of expense. No person appears to know what the visit of this expert in sugar-growing is to cost; but I think it must be abundantly evident to everyone that this hurried visit to the colony and this long round is not likely to be productive of much benefit. I have not the slightest idea what this expert is going to cost; but I do not think it is likely he will come to Queensland for anything under £1,000. We ought to have some information as to what value the colony is going to get out of his visit.

What can he possibly learn of the industry by rushing around in the hurried manner we have just heard? The fact of the matter is that this individual's progress round the colony is more like that of a "Cook's tourist" than that of a man who is going about the serious business of investigating one of the most important industries of the colony. Of course we have no information before us at present, and I am rather doubtful whether—when we come to discuss the payment of this gentleman on the Estimates, as we shall do, if we live long enough—we may not find that we have again been "paying far too much for our whistle."

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*): I would like to know whether this gentleman has been invited here, and whether we are responsible for his expenses, or whether he has merely come here "on his own" to investigate. If he has been engaged by the Government to come here, then the hon. member for Herbert has a just cause of complaint. He certainly should visit every sugar centre in the colony, and, although I do not know a great deal about the industry, I know that the districts referred to by the hon. member are most important sugar centres, and whoever is responsible for the bungling which has resulted in their not being visited by this expert should be severely censured. Like the hon. member for Rockhampton North, I shall certainly keep my eye on the particular department in connection with which this expense has been incurred. If this gentleman has come out "on his own" to conduct experiments for himself, or for the benefit of his health, the country should not be put to any expense over his visit at all.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*): I would like to ask the Premier when we are likely to have the papers in connection with the printing of school books in the colony laid on the table? The motion for the production of papers was agreed to on the 7th instant, and, as the session may close in a few days, I would like them to be produced, as there is some very important information that I want to get from them.

The PREMIER: I will make inquiries, and see if I can lay them on the table to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

POLICE.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carmarvon*) moved that £173,698 be granted for the police. There was a decrease in the vote this year of £195. In the departmental vote there was an increase of £85. There were certain increases to clerks of £15, £10, and £5; and one clerk who had formerly received an allowance of £20 now received an addition to his salary of that amount. In the vote for the executive there was an additional first-class inspector, at a salary of £400; and there was an increase from two to four second-class inspectors, three of whom were required for eight months only, at salaries of £250 per annum. The total increase for those two items was £650, against which was a decrease from seven to four third-class sub-inspectors—making a decrease of £400 for the year. Then twenty-one constables at £132 per annum had left the force, and been replaced by constables at £122 per annum, which accounted for a further decrease of £210 per annum, which, with the £400 already mentioned, made a total decrease of £610—or a net increase on the whole vote of £40. In the water police, Inspector Wassell had retired. His salary was £360, and he was replaced by a sub-inspector at a salary of £200. An increase of £5 each was given to five boatmen—£20 in all—which, with the salary of the sub-inspector, represented a total increase of £220. Against that was to be

placed £360—Mr. Wassall's salary—and £180 for a senior sergeant, whose position was abolished—a total decrease on the vote of £540. There was thus a decrease for the whole vote of £320. While in no way deprecating discussion upon the police, or upon the report of the Royal Commission which recently sat, he suggested that the principal discussion on that report would very properly stand over till next session. It had been quite impossible for him to do more than read the report, and cursorily go through portions of the evidence, and he did not suppose any hon. member had set himself to read the whole of the voluminous evidence from beginning to end, and was in a position to analyse it effectively.

If any hon. member had delved into the report he should be only too glad to listen [4 p.m.] to him and take any suggestions he had to make with regard to future action on the report. It must be patent to hon. members that, having regard to the short time which had elapsed since the report was tabled, and the demands upon Ministers' time in that Chamber, it was quite impossible for him to have done more than sketch out in his own mind certain ideas as to what ought to be done in regard to any reorganisation or readjustment which might be necessary as a result of the report.

Mr. FISHER: How long will it take you?

The HOME SECRETARY: That depended upon circumstances. It would be necessary to go through the report very carefully before he could say how long it would take him. Any reasonable man would look at it in that light. There were persons who would be prepared to say off-hand how long it would take them, but he was not prepared to make a statement of that sort. He could only say that it would take him as short a time as possible. One reason for saying that was this: He noticed in the report, with regard to one particular case, a desire was expressed that the report should be deemed final and conclusive, and that no more evidence should be taken. Now, he was not going to accept that report, or the report of any commission, as final and conclusive. The responsibility of taking action on the report rested, not with the people who made it, but upon the Minister and the Government. They were responsible to Parliament for what they did, and Parliament was the final arbiter as to what was the proper thing to be done. Consequently he thought it was not at all improbable that he would require some more light, notwithstanding the immense volume of evidence which had been taken, much of which was very useless. Looking at the matter casually, he thought he should require a good deal more light, and possibly more evidence, before he took action. Undoubtedly the report would make a very good groundwork to start from with regard to such additional evidence, but he wished it to be distinctly understood that he was by no means prepared to act slavishly on the report, no matter how valuable it might be, because in doing so he should be sheltering himself behind it, and placing on the Commission a responsibility which he did not think was anticipated either by them, or by Parliament. Similar remarks, of course, applied to any other commission that might be appointed. The report and evidence were more or less of value to the Minister in dealing with the question, and the recommendations of the Commission were entitled to very great weight. Further than that he was not prepared to go at present. As regarded the general discussion of the Police Estimates, he should be only too glad to give any information at his disposal, but he distinctly declined to be bound down to any particular course of action with regard to the recommendations of the Commission.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*) agreed to a great extent with the hon. gentleman's view that members had not had time to digest the whole of the report and evidence; but at the same time he did think that a sufficient period had elapsed to enable the hon. gentleman to say whether, on some of the recommendations of the Commission, the Government intended to take action. There were some recommendations which, if they were going to be acted upon at all, ought to be acted upon as soon as possible.

The HOME SECRETARY: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWNE: He would not enter into a discussion on the evidence, but the hon. gentleman ought to inform the Committee whether the Government intended to take action upon some of the recommendations before the House met again, and whether the Government had considered the report at all. There had been a good many meetings of the Cabinet since the report was sent in, and although he admitted that it would be unreasonable to expect the hon. gentleman to have gone through the whole of the evidence, yet he must have considered some of the recommendations in the report. He would ask him whether the Cabinet had any intention of acting upon any of the recommendations at an early date.

The HOME SECRETARY: He was not prepared to say what recommendations he was prepared to act upon; but he could tell the hon. member and the Committee that he intended to take action at the earliest possible moment. There was no doubt about that. Let hon. members distinctly understand that he was not going to pigeon-hole the report and take no action at all. Undoubtedly a great deal would have to be done with the Police Force, and he had some misgiving as to his own ability to tackle such a question in the short time which would necessarily be available for it; but it had to be done, and he would not shirk his responsibility one jot or tittle. As for going into details with regard to any particular recommendations, he certainly deprecated being asked to pledge himself either one way or the other. As regarded the Cabinet considering the question he might say that, since the present Government had taken office, a fortnight or three weeks ago, they had had absolutely no time to consider the report in any way. Most of the time of Ministers had been spent in Parliament. There certainly had been Cabinet meetings for the transaction of the ordinary business of the day, and which was urgent, from day to day; but that had occupied the time of himself and his colleagues to such an extent that it would have been impossible to have gone into the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission.

Mr. GIVENS: Is not the reorganisation of the Police Force an urgent matter?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, but there were certain things which must be done from day to day, and the reorganisation of the police could take place to-morrow, or next week, or in a couple of months. If the hon. member was more familiar with official life he would understand that there were certain things which could not be postponed. The police in the meantime were there, and were working. It might be that there was a certain amount of disorganisation, and that necessarily had had a bad effect in some directions. He was quite alive to that fact, and until the whole force was put on a better footing the disorganisation would continue to exist. He was thoroughly persuaded that that was so; and hon. members might take it from him that, although he was not prepared to say at that moment what he intended to do, still the whole question would be grappled with at the earliest possible date. He could not say more than that,

He was now obtaining information in the nature of further evidence in regard to some matters that were dealt with by the Commission, as he considered the evidence they got on those matters was cut somewhat short, and, without the further evidence to which he alluded, he certainly would not feel himself justified in dealing with the questions mentioned in the various recommendations of the Commission. He should be only too delighted to receive from hon. members any suggestions as to what they thought ought to be done, but he would ask them to make those suggestions as short as possible, so that he might be able to grasp them thoroughly. Further than that he was not prepared to go at present, except to give an assurance that the matter would be dealt with by him, possibly not as a whole, but piece by piece, without any loss of time.

Mr. FITZGERALD (*Mitchell*) agreed that the matter was of such great importance that in common fairness the Committee ought to give the hon. gentleman time to consider the whole question of the reorganisation of the Police Force. He believed that it was generally accepted in the country that the present organisation of the force should be considered very carefully, and the whole thing revolutionised. He did not think a single person in the country would say that the present organisation of the force was satisfactory. But it was not only the question of the general organisation of the force that had to be dealt with; there were also the complaints of officers and ex-officers of the force, who, according to the Commission, or some members of the Commission, had been unjustly dealt with, and if the grievances of those persons were not dealt with at once they would be out of their salary or employment for months. For instance, there was the case of ex-Detective Seymour, which loomed very largely in the report of the Commission, and that man was, as he knew himself, waiting to see what justice was going to be done to him. The name of ex-Detective Grimshaw also cropped up very prominently in the report. If those cases were not dealt with promptly, the men would no doubt get billets elsewhere, and then, whatever the decision of the Minister might be, it would be no good to them.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not think Grimshaw's reinstatement is recommended.

Mr. FITZGERALD: It was not recommended by the Commission, but it was recommended very strongly by Mr. F. W. Dickson, who from his experience in the courts was accustomed to look at such matters from an impartial point of view, and who was to be complimented in the very straightforward statement he had made in that matter. He (Mr. Fitzgerald) had in his hand the evidence taken at the departmental inquiry on which Detective Grimshaw was dismissed, and it was the biggest travesty of justice he had ever heard of. Grimshaw was supposed to have been guilty of taking bribes from Chinamen at Townsville, and in the evidence on that charge there was the following letter which was supposed to have come from a Chinaman named Ah Fat:—

I enclose herewith £1, which I trust you will accept for my small present—

Imagine a Chinaman writing in that way, "I enclose herewith £1, which I trust you will accept"—

Kindly tell Tom Lee leave Townsville, if he stay here a little longer he will make many trouble.

Yours faithfully,

AH FAT.

That looked as if some one wrote the letter, and tried to imitate the expression of a Chinaman, but had failed. Then the envelope, which was addressed to Detective Grimshaw, was marked

"From Ah Fat." Would anyone say that a Chinaman would do that if he wished to bribe a police officer? The explanation was that some officers of police wanted to get Grimshaw out of the force, and they got a Chinaman to lay that trap, the envelope being marked in that way, so that the postmaster at Townsville could communicate with the police when Grimshaw applied for the letter. He had quoted that letter to show the ridiculous evidence on which Grimshaw had been dismissed. Any sensible man sitting as a judge in that matter, and having such evidence before him, would simply say, as he said, and as Mr. Dickson said in his rider to the report of the Commission, that Grimshaw had been badly treated. He hoped the Home Secretary would come to a decision with reference to that case as soon as possible, because Grimshaw was not a rich man, and he was waiting to see what justice was going to be done to him.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have read all that evidence; it was before me long ago.

Mr. FITZGERALD: If the hon. gentleman read that evidence he might come to a different conclusion from that arrived at by the Commissioner.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am thoroughly satisfied that Grimshaw took those bribes.

Mr. McDONNELL: Have you read the evidence?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. FITZGERALD: The Minister had just asked them to postpone the whole question, on the ground that he had not had time to read the whole of the evidence, and when a special case was mentioned the hon. gentleman said he had read the whole of the evidence. If he had read the whole of the evidence the hon. gentleman must be prepared to go on, and they should go on.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have read the evidence you have there—the evidence given at the inquiry. That is what I am speaking about, and I have arrived at a different conclusion from you.

Mr. FITZGERALD: He had admitted that the hon. gentleman was justified in asking for the postponement of the whole question of the reorganisation of the force, as it was important that it should not be rushed; but he was suggesting that something should be done in the meantime in the case of individuals who believed they had been badly treated by their officers, and they might be given temporary appointments until the hon. gentleman had arrived at some definite conclusion upon all the points raised at the inquiry by the Royal Commission, for which he would, of course, have to answer to Parliament afterwards. For instance, the Commission had reported in favour of Seymour, and he would like to know what the hon. gentleman intended to do with him in the meantime? In Grimshaw's case some consideration must be paid to the recommendation of Mr. F. W. Dickson, who, looking at the offence from a legal point of view, did not consider there was satisfactory evidence against that officer.

The HOME SECRETARY: You misunderstand me entirely. If you will allow me to say a word or two I will show you. We are at cross purposes.

Mr. FITZGERALD: He did not care to speak more than once upon those questions, and he would like to make himself properly clear. He thought such a recommendation as that of Mr. Dickson should be taken into consideration, and if they were going to postpone the whole question the hon. gentleman should go carefully into the whole of the evidence.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have said so. I have given a pledge to that effect.

Mr. McDONNELL: You said you had made up your mind in this case.

The HOME SECRETARY: No. If the hon. member will allow me I will explain.

Mr. FITZGERALD: He would ask if the hon. gentleman had carefully read Mr. Dickson's rider, and the evidence given at the preliminary inquiry in Grimshaw's case?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. FITZGERALD: Then he was very sorry to hear the conclusion at which the hon. gentleman had arrived. He would put it before the Attorney-General or any other lawyer in the Committee, and he was sure he would arrive at a different conclusion.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member and himself were at cross purposes, and he would show how. The hon. gentleman spoke of Mr. Dickson's legal knowledge, and of that gentleman arriving at certain views with regard to Grimshaw, as a lawyer. As Home Secretary he desired, as far as possible, to avoid mere legal technicalities, and to do ample justice to every man whose case had been brought before that Royal Commission, irrespective of any legal technicalities at all. He had seen all that the hon. member had before him, and possibly more, when the hon. member referred to the evidence taken at the inquiry before the Commissioner, Mr. Okeden, at Townsville.

Mr. FITZGERALD: Is there more evidence than I have here?

The HOME SECRETARY: He did not know what the hon. member had before him, but the point was that he had seen all there was to be seen, and the hon. member had not more before him than he had seen. Having read that evidence, he had arrived at a totally different conclusion from that at which the hon. gentleman said he had arrived. With regard to Seymour, he had arrived at an opinion which was somewhat favourable to Seymour. That was his present attitude of mind on the subject. What he had not read with the analytical care with which he certainly should read it before he dealt with those cases was the evidence given before the Royal Commission. He had not had time to do that, and until he had done so he should preserve an open mind, not only with regard to Seymour's case, but with regard to Grimshaw's also. It was possible that the hon. member was right, and that he was wrong in the conclusion he had arrived at with respect to Grimshaw. There might be something in the evidence given before the Royal Commission, or in evidence which he might himself call for in Grimshaw's case, which would convince him that he was wrong in the opinion he at present held with regard to it. It was upon that very ground that he desired that he should not be asked to pledge himself to any particular line of conduct until he had all the evidence. He did not hold with Mr. F. W. Dickson that it was only evidence such as would be acceptable in a court of law which should guide him in dealing with such cases.

Mr. FITZGERALD: I do not argue that.

The HOME SECRETARY: What would be the effect in a private firm if it were deemed to be harsh action on the part of an employer that he should dismiss any employee before he had legal evidence, or evidence such as would be acceptable in a court of law to convict him of some offence?

Mr. FITZGERALD: I never argued that.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was the way in which he read Mr. F. W. Dickson's statement—because he felt that the evidence was not legal evidence, or such evidence as would have been accepted in a court of law, he held that it was not sufficient to justify the dismissal of Grimshaw. Possibly that was so, but then the employer, whether he was a public or a private employer, must go beyond that and take into consideration matters which were not questions

of strict legal evidence. Doing that he had arrived at the conclusion that Grimshaw had been properly dismissed, but, as he had said, there might be some evidence taken by the Royal Commission or some he would himself be able to get which would convince him to the contrary. He had arrived at the conclusion he had mentioned before the letters had been opened by the Commission in Grimshaw's presence.

Mr. FITZGERALD: You believe the Chinaman's word before Grimshaw's.

The HOME SECRETARY: He believed the evidence of his own senses.

Mr. FITZGERALD: That is the only evidence there was.

The HOME SECRETARY: They were now discussing the evidence taken at the [4.30 p.m.] inquiry. Why did not Grimshaw do as other members of the force, and report that he had received a bribe—he admitted having received a bribe—and then return it? Why did he not report it to his superior officer?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Does the regulation say he should do so?

The HOME SECRETARY: Every man knew what he ought to do in a case of that kind; it did not require to be stated in a regulation. He only wanted to point out that it was merely beating the wind to discuss Grimshaw's case now, because he was not in a position to discuss it from every point of view. He had not read the whole of the evidence taken by the Royal Commission, and he might require even more evidence to be taken before he could deal with the matter. He wanted to be in a position to do ample justice, regardless of legal technicalities.

Mr. FITZGERALD: He might point out that Grimshaw was trying to catch a number of Chinamen who were keeping gambling dens in Townsville. If a Chinaman gave him a bribe and he reported that he had been offered a bribe, what chance would he have of catching the Chinamen? If he was any good and he wanted to catch the Chinamen, he would say, "I'll collar this bribe," and then the Chinese, thinking he was a friend of theirs, would allow him to have full scope, and then he would be able to catch them.

The HOME SECRETARY: How would the Chinamen know if he reported it to his superior officer?

Mr. FITZGERALD: It was well known that sometimes the police went as accomplices in burglary for the purpose of catching burglars. He had known Mr. Grimshaw many years as a good and efficient officer, a man who knew how to conduct cases better than a lot of those who had come after him, some of whom were regular nincompoops. The hon. gentleman said something about evidence that might crop up outside the inquiry. With regard to that point he might mention that when Mr. Grimshaw heard in Townsville that certain statements had been made against him by Sub-Inspector Macnamara, Senior-Sergeant Malone, Sergeant Moylan, and others he applied to the Commissioner of Police for a summary of that evidence or information, or those secret reports which had been given by those officers with regard to him. That was on the 20th April, and on the 27th April the Commissioner of Police replied to the effect that none of those officers knew of any other statement than those made before Grimshaw's dismissal. Surely the hon. gentleman would not go back on the evidence contained in the depositions, when the Commissioner of Police said he never knew of any other charges or reports against Grimshaw, barring what appeared at the inquiry. The officers referred to all said that no such statements had been made to them by residents of Townsville or anybody else, consequently there could not be anything else, according to Mr.

Okeden's own statement. If Mr. Okeden now said he did hear other things, there was his letter of the 27th April to prove that he was what he (Mr. Fitzgerald) always thought he was.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*): The Home Secretary said he was not prepared to discuss the report.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not say so.

Mr. McDONNELL: The hon. gentleman said that he had not had time to read it.

The HOME SECRETARY: The evidence—the whole of the evidence.

Mr. McDONNELL: The hon. gentleman gave the Committee to understand that from the portion he had read he was not prepared to accept the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not say so at all. I said I did not pledge myself to them, which is a very different thing.

Mr. McDONNELL thought the hon. gentleman would have been in a position to say he would be prepared to accept some of the recommendations, at all events. If the hon. gentleman told the Committee that he would be prepared to do so, he thought they might allow the discussion to be postponed until next session. The report of the Commission disclosed the fact that the government of the Police Force at the present time, and the Police Force itself, were in a rotten condition; it disclosed that a system of tyranny had been carried on in the force for years, and that the force right from the top had been badly governed, badly ruled, and badly managed; and the hon. gentleman should have been in a position to give the Committee an assurance that he would be prepared to accept some of the principal recommendations of the Commission. The report had cost the country a large amount of money, and they had with the report evidence which had appeared in the Press from day to day disclosing the state of the Police Force; and though the hon. gentleman had the advantage of being behind the scenes, and being in a position to get information on that account—as he admitted in the case of Grimshaw—yet the hon. gentleman practically told the Committee that he was not prepared to deal with the report yet. If the hon. gentleman had not read the report—

The HOME SECRETARY: I have read the report.

Mr. McDONNELL: If the hon. gentleman had not read the evidence he thought it might be as well for hon. members to go through the whole of it, because people were crying out that the question should be dealt with, and it ought to be dealt with promptly. They ought to be able to deal with the matter within the next two months, and the sooner the question was grappled with and settled on the lines recommended in the report the better it would be for the Police Force and for the citizens of Queensland. What was the present position of affairs? He was aware that the hon. gentleman had a lot to do, and that he had a very difficult department to manage; and he would give him the credit of saying that no Minister had a better grasp of his department. But he was surprised to hear the hon. gentleman saying, at that stage, and after having been, as he was given to understand, in consultation with a certain member of the Commission.

The HOME SECRETARY: With whom?

Mr. McDONNELL: With the chairman of the Commission, I am informed.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have not exchanged a word with him since he was appointed a member of the Commission.

Mr. McDONNELL accepted the hon. gentleman's denial. What he did expect was that the hon. gentleman would have been able to state

definitely how far he was prepared to go on the lines of the report made by the Commission. Instead of that, all the hon. gentleman had told him was that in the case of Detective Seymour, he was favourably disposed towards him.

The HOME SECRETARY: With the information I have at present.

Mr. McDONNELL presumed that that information was the report of the Commission, and the evidence on which it was based.

The HOME SECRETARY: The report: I have not had time to read the evidence bearing upon it.

Mr. McDONNELL: The hon. gentleman must at all events have read the evidence as it appeared in the daily Press. However, they were in a most unfortunate position with regard to the whole matter. They had postponed the Estimates for the purpose of discussing the report, and hearing the decision the hon. gentleman had come to with regard to it, and they were still in the same position they were in a month ago. The hon. gentleman was no more prepared now than he was then to proceed with the subject. He wished the hon. gentleman would tell the Committee how many of the recommendations of the Commission he was prepared to accept. Surely the hon. gentleman must have some notion of the evidence—sufficient, at all events, to warrant him in expressing an opinion as to some of the recommendations of the Commission. If he would do that they would be in a better position to discuss the matter. The Commission had taken a very large amount of evidence, and some of the members of the Commission, especially the chairman and Mr. Dickson, deserved the highest appreciation of all who were desirous to see the truth come out. He would again ask the Home Secretary how far he was prepared to accept the recommendations of the Commission. The hon. gentleman laughed, but it was no laughing matter. If the hon. gentleman would be a little less sarcastic he would get through his business better. If the hon. gentleman would not give them the information he had asked for it might be as well to read the report and the evidence, and then to discuss it, to show the necessity for the acceptance of some, at all events, of the recommendations made by the Commission, particularly those made by the Commission as a whole. He would defer any further remarks he might have to make until the Home Secretary informed the Committee how many of those recommendations he was at present prepared to accept.

At fourteen minutes to 5 o'clock,

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

Quorum formed.

The HOME SECRETARY: He might say that, so far as his personal feelings went, he should be prepared to adopt almost all the recommendations which were set out under the head of "Organisation." He would not say the whole of them, because there were some with regard to which, before pledging himself to anything, he should like to have more time at his disposal to digest the evidence upon which the conclusions had been based. He had no desire not to deal with the matter, but it was impossible for him to consider carefully the evidence while the session was going on at the present rate of high pressure—when they were sitting sometimes twenty-four or twenty-five hours a day, to use an Irishism. But he might say that a great many of those recommendations commended themselves to him very strongly.

Mr. FISHER: Are you prepared to carry out any of them?

The HOME SECRETARY: What did the hon. member mean? Did he mean that he (the Home Secretary) did not mean what he said? He had said he was prepared to carry out a good

number of them, and he was asked if he was prepared to carry out any of them. Hon. members opposite spoke about his manner towards them, but he was sure he had very seldom done anything so rude as that.

Mr. JACKSON: I think the hon. member for Gympie could not have heard what you said.

Mr. FISHER: I ask, What are you going to do with regard to recommendation No. 19—barrack accommodation?

The HOME SECRETARY: He was not prepared to say with regard to any one of them—

Mr. FISHER: I am going to press it.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member might press. If he found that the police barracks were in a disgraceful condition, his attention having been called to the fact, he would of course naturally attend to it.

Mr. McDONNELL: There are far more important matters than that.

The HOME SECRETARY: He knew that. With regard to the question of organisation, there were several recommendations which commended themselves to him; but he would be sorry to pledge himself in any way until he had read the evidence bearing on each matter—to blindly adopt all the recommendations as they stood, without any modification. With regard to section 19 of the report, dealing with the barrack accommodation, which read—

We inspected the dépôt at Petrie terrace, and the barracks at Roma street. At the dépôt the beds are execrable. There is no provision for mosquito nets nor any locker or other convenience for keeping clothing in. The lavatory and sanitary arrangements are disgraceful.

The Roma-street barracks are entirely inadequate, and should immediately be enlarged. There is abundant evidence that throughout the colony there are many instances of very deficient quarters. We recommend immediate attention to these details.

To these matters he would give careful attention as soon as the House rose. He had gone through the barracks some time ago, and he could not say that the sanitary arrangements then were in a disgraceful condition, although they might not be all that might be desired. He had also seen the beds in the barracks, and they were distinctly better than those supplied to the Queensland contingent that had gone to South Africa; yet the members of that contingent were satisfied with them, and it was said in the Press that these men had excellent accommodation. If there was anything to be remedied, he would feel himself very much to blame if he did not take steps in the matter; but, possibly, his intervention would not be required, because the Commissioner of Police would probably take steps to remedy anything of that sort when his attention was called to it.

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*): The hon. gentleman was very illogical. He first said that he would not venture to decide on any matter until he had read the evidence.

The HOME SECRETARY: Nor will I.

Mr. FISHER: But in his last sentence he said that he thought the Commissioner would carry certain things out.

The HOME SECRETARY: After he has inspected the place for himself.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. gentleman said that he had inspected the barracks, and he did not find what the Commission reported.

The HOME SECRETARY: A long time ago.

Mr. FISHER: If the hon. gentleman's argument was worth anything, it was that his opinion was worth more than that of the Commission. He (Mr. Fisher) contended that the first consideration after public safety was public health, and if the quarters of the Police Force—which was a body to protect the public—were in such a bad condition as the Commission reported they

were, how could they be expected to guide or protect the public in sanitary concerns? He felt strongly on the matter. He knew a young gentleman who had joined the Police Force—a young man of culture and ability—and he told him (Mr. Fisher) that the barrack accommodation was such as described by the Commission—such as to degrade and debase the men there.

The HOME SECRETARY: Who is he?

Mr. FISHER: A young man he knew very well, who had tried twice to give evidence before the Commission, but he was not called, and he left the force with a good discharge. He was perfectly prepared to give evidence on the point. Another matter was, that at the barracks there was no place where a man could receive his friends except in the boot-room. What kind of recruits would it be possible to get under those conditions? The Commission said immediate action should be taken in these matters, and he thought so too. There was an understanding that the report of the Police Commission should not be fully discussed this session, though he should like to see it so discussed, but, out of deference to the wishes of the leader of the Opposition, he would not go into the matter fully at present. The Government should lose no time in doing justice to the number of officers in the force, who, according to the findings of the Commission, had been injured in their position. It was awful for these officers to be suffering under a proved injustice and to continue suffering under it. Take the case of Sub-Inspector Nethercote; he had read the evidence, and it showed that if there was an officer who showed a thorough knowledge of discipline and of his work, it was Sub-Inspector Nethercote. He had been wilfully injured and deprived of his rightful position, and his case had not been fully and truly put before the public until the Commission took evidence on the matter. Then, Sergeant Henders, now of Gympie, when doing his duty, came into contact with his chief, and Henders would not work under him, owing to his temperament—he would rather take lower wages outside the Criminal Investigation Branch than work under such a man. Very probably, had these men been kept in that office, many of the criminals now at large would be in gaol. How long was that sort of thing to continue? These men would rather take lower wages than work under a man who was totally unfitted to manage the Criminal Investigation Department, and, after the strong report of the Royal Commission on the matter, the Government would be seriously to blame if they did not take prompt action. Regarding the matters of inquiries into misconduct and record sheets, he thought [5 p.m.] they should be amended also. It was intolerable that these inquisitorial sheets should be sent round from officer to officer. The brilliancy of an officer, because of his initiative, might be destroyed by a report of this kind going behind his back, and he knowing nothing of it. Such a system as that could not prevail in any force and give satisfaction to the country and credit to the officer commanding. He admitted that these were minor matters as compared with the injustices which had been suffered by some people by dismissals; but he should leave them and proceed on general lines. It should be the duty of the Government not to lose a single moment in dealing with the matters he had referred to; and their next duty should be to tell Parliament and the country that they intended to carry out the recommendations of the Commission on those points.

Mr. JACKSON (*Kennedy*): It was a pity the House had not more time to discuss the report;

but, at the same time, he was not prepared to endorse the sweeping statement made by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley—that the report of the Commission disclosed that the Police Force was rotten.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. McDONNELL: I said the government of the Police Force.

MEMBER on the Government side: The hon. member said Police Force.

Mr. McDONNELL: No, I did not say the force.

Mr. JACKSON: The hon. member explained that he said government of the Police Force; but he (Mr. Jackson) understood him to make a sweeping charge, not against the men, but against the officers.

Mr. McDONNELL: That is right enough.

Mr. JACKSON: He did not profess to have read the whole of the evidence; but he had read a little here and there as it was published in the papers, and it was rather a relief to the people, reading the report and the evidence, to find that the force generally came out so well. When they thought of the investigation which was made into the condition of the Police Force in New York a few years ago, and the disclosures that were made as to its condition, it was a relief to find that the force in Queensland had come out so creditably. It would be within the memory of hon. members that the disclosures in connection with the New York police showed that there was a system of blackmailing owners of property and others by both officers and men, and that there was a system of purchasing appointments. It was shown it was customary to pay 300 dollars to get an appointment; in fact, as much as 10,000 or 12,000 dollars were paid for captaincies.

Mr. JENKINSON: Stated sums for different positions.

Mr. JACKSON: Yes. Hon. members would also remember that they had the "spoils" system in America, not only in connection with State government, but in connection with municipal government. That system, in his opinion, was very much to blame for the state of corruption in connection with the police force of New York and other American cities. He did not intend to take up much time in considering this matter, as it was desired by the leader of his side and the Home Secretary to postpone the principal discussion on the report of the Commission until next session.

Mr. McDONALD: It will be dead.

Mr. JACKSON: He did not think it would be dead. If, as the Home Secretary said—and he believed he would do as he said—a great many of these suggestions were taken into consideration, and the more important matters left over for further consideration, the report might very well come up next session. From what he could see, the efficiency of the force was not quite as good as it ought to be; but, as regarded honesty, the force had come out very creditably indeed.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. JACKSON: There were one or two matters that he wished to draw the attention of the Home Secretary to. One was the recommendation of the Commission that a deputy commissioner should be appointed. The Commission had pointed out that it was necessary that every police centre should be inspected. That was a recommendation that he perfectly agreed with. He thought the Government ought to introduce a system of decentralisation in connection with the Police Force just the same as they had done in connection with many other departments, and as he had suggested should be done in connection with the Railway Department. It would be a very great improve-

ment. He saw from the report that every application for appointment to the service had to come to the Commissioner in Brisbane; it did not matter whether a man was in the Gulf country, or at Charters Towers, or in the West, his application had to come there. Surely some better system than that could be adopted! Then, if an application was approved, the man had to come to Brisbane for drill and training. It was called drill and training, but it seemed to him that all the apprenticeship he had to undergo was three months' drill and training. Mr. Heaton, who held a high position in connection with municipal government in New York, advocated that there should be proper training schools for the police, just in the same way as there were proper training schools for the army and navy. He did not mean that in a colony with the population of Queensland they could afford to establish extensive and very elaborate training schools for the police, but the idea was well worth keeping in mind by the Government or the Commissioner, whether it was Mr. Okeden or—as Mr. Dickson recommended—someone else. There was no doubt there should be some better system of training for the police—at any rate for the officers. He did not mean to say that there should not be an opportunity for the rank and file to drill; but he thought the two systems could be combined—that there should be a training school for the officers, and that opportunities should be given to the men of getting promotion. Another point to which he desired to draw attention was in connection with the franchise. He did not suppose the Home Secretary would make up his mind on that without further inquiry, or, as the Commission said, without seeing how it worked in New South Wales and Victoria. The American experience showed that it was not wise at all to allow the police to be connected with politics.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have had some experience myself.

Mr. JACKSON: Owing to the existence of the "spoils" system in America, the custom was for appointments to the police to be made according to the politics of the applicants. He did not think that would happen here, even if the police were allowed the franchise under our different system of government. Still, after reading Mr. Heaton's book, he was not so eager to give the police the franchise as he had formerly been. It was a matter well worth consideration.

The HOME SECRETARY: Most of them would rather be without the franchise.

Mr. JACKSON: He had not met a single member of the force who disapproved of the police getting the franchise. It was not that they wished so much to have votes, but they felt it a slight that other Civil servants should be given the franchise, while it was not given to them too.

Mr. FISHER: In Great Britain the police have the franchise.

Mr. JACKSON: He was not aware of that. However, as they were not going to get an Elections Act before next session, there would be ample opportunity between now and next session for the Government to seriously consider the question.

Mr. LEAHY: I am pretty sure the police have not got the franchise in England.

Mr. JACKSON: He did not think they had, but, as the hon. member for Gympie said they had, he was not in a position to contradict him on the point. At any rate, it would do no special harm if they had the franchise, because, in the absence of the "spoils" system, there would be no inducement to appoint men to the force on account of their politics, and the police

might fairly be trusted, if they had the franchise, not to interfere unduly at elections. He hoped the Home Secretary would see his way to adopt many of the recommendations of the Commission.

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*): The Home Secretary had expressed his willingness to do something with regard to the 19th recommendation of the Commission, but he had given no promise with regard to the 36th recommendation, in connection with the Criminal Investigation Branch. The number of undetected crimes in Queensland—such as the Gatton murder—had made the colony of Queensland notorious throughout Australia; and, if there was no change made in the Criminal Investigation Branch, was there any hope that better results would be obtained by the department in the future? Were they going to suffer such a black mark against the Police Force of Queensland to continue? The 36th recommendation of the Commission said—

We recommend the removal of Inspector Urquhart, Sergeant Shanahan, and First-class Constable Fowler from the Criminal Investigation Branch, because the evidence discloses the fact that the want of cohesion and disorganisation in this office has been largely brought about by a feeling of mistrust amongst the men, engendered by what they considered too great intimacy between Sergeant Shanahan, First-class Constable Fowler, and the inspector. We recommend that each of them should in future serve in different districts.

Following that was another very important recommendation—

We recommend that the Detective Force be strengthened by the re-transfer of Sergeant Henders, Acting Sergeant King, and First-class Constable Stringer to the Criminal Investigation Branch at Brisbane.

It appeared that those three men could not do their duty properly in consequence of the intimacy existing between the three men referred to, and they distinctly declined to work with them. The question of the reorganisation of the Criminal Investigation Branch was the most important in the report, and the Home Secretary should give the Committee some guarantee that he would act on those recommendations of the Commission. It was too important a matter to be left over till next session. The Government might not call Parliament together till July or August, and, as the consideration of the report of the Royal Commission would not be among the first business of the session, it would be nearly twelve months before anything could be done. He did not see why they should not go fully into the report. There was plenty of time. What was a month? They had got over their Christmas holidays, and were in good going order, and he did not see why they should not sit for another month or six weeks and go through the report and recommendations. He did not suppose it would be necessary to read through all the evidence, as it had been condensed in the recommendations. The Commission had cost the country a considerable sum of money; experts in that particular line of business had been employed; they had given their time and intelligence and experience to the matter, and it would be a most regrettable thing if it was shelved for eight or nine months.

* Mr. McDONNELL: The Home Secretary had assured them that he was prepared to accept a number of the recommendations under the head of "reorganisation," but there were a number of others under the head of "personal" that he should like the hon. gentleman to give an opinion upon. They were equally as important as the others. There were the matters of the appointment of a Commissioner, a Deputy Commissioner, and the dealing with Inspector Urquhart, as well as the cases of a number of men who had been grievously wronged for a long time past. He might men-

tion the cases of ex-Constable Seymour, Sub-Inspector Nethercote, Sergeant Edward Johnson, Constable Weatherhead, Constable Roche, and Inspector Fitzgerald. He should like to hear the hon. gentleman's opinion upon those cases. He had been taken to task by a member of his own side for making a sweeping assertion that the government of the Police Force was rotten. The hon. member for Kennedy got up to defend the heads of the Police Force, but the hon. gentleman should read the whole of the report and evidence. If he did he would come to the conclusion that the government of the Police Force was rotten; the report disclosed that fact fully. What did the Gatton, Oxley, and Woollongabba murders disclose? Who was responsible for the government of the Police Force? Not the ordinary constable who walked the streets. As far as the evidence went it proved that Queensland possessed as fine a Police Force as was to be found in Australia, but the great fault was bad management on the part of those who had been placed at the head of the force.

Mr. JACKSON: Is that not rather a strong expression to use—to say that it is rotten?

Mr. McDONNELL: He contended that it was rotten to the core. Perhaps he had a way of expressing his opinions somewhat different to that of the hon. member. They on that side had again and again drawn attention to the tyranny that had been practised in the Police Force, and they had had to submit to a great deal of hostile criticism from the other side, especially from the Home Secretary. When it was proposed to appoint a Royal Commission, the hon. gentleman was not favourable to the idea.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not oppose it, surely?

Mr. McDONNELL: The hon. gentleman at the time expressed the opinion that a Royal Commission was not required, and that an inquiry into the Criminal Investigation Branch was all that was required. He was sure the hon. gentleman must now admit that the evidence taken by the Commission disclosed the fact that matters pertaining to the Police Force were not in as good a position as he thought they were. He would not go so far as to say, "I told you so," but he would say that the report of the Commission was the fullest justification for all that had been said about the Police Force by hon. members on that side. There was no doubt that the loyalty of the force had been sapped and undermined by the tyranny that had been practised.

Mr. FISHER: Secretly.

Mr. McDONNELL: It had not been altogether secret. Tyranny had been carried on in the most open and barefaced manner, and those who considered it their duty to expose it had been most severely criticised. He need only mention the case of ex-Detective Seymour, who had been treated in a most unfair and unjust manner. He remembered, when the case was brought forward, the late Premier spoke most strongly upon it, but since then the matter had been thoroughly sifted, and the whole of the Commission had to come to the conclusion, on the evidence placed before them, that it would be only a mere act of justice to restore ex-Detective Seymour to his former position. He would like to know if the Home Secretary would give a pledge that he would reinstate ex-Detective Seymour?

The HOME SECRETARY: No, I cannot.

Mr. McDONNELL: The ex-Home Secretary, Mr. Dickson recognised at the time [5.30 p.m.] that an injustice had been done to ex-Constable Seymour, and though he did not reinstate him, he was instrumental in getting him employment in the Railway Department, where he had been working ever since at a rate

of wages which was only sufficient to pay his board and lodging. Seymour was now in Brisbane on leave, and it would save trouble to him and to the Railway Department if the Home Secretary would state now that he was prepared to carry out the unanimous recommendation of the Commission, and reinstate him in the force. With regard to the position of the present Commissioner of Police, after reading as much of the official evidence as he had been able to go through, and after reading the evidence as reported in the newspapers, he was of opinion that any unprejudiced person must come to the conclusion that in order to thoroughly reorganise the force and place it on a better basis than it was at the present time, it was necessary that there should be a change right from the very top. He believed that they could never have a complete reorganisation of the force until the present Commissioner, who was responsible for the disorganisation of the force, was removed from his position.

The HOME SECRETARY: Oh, no.

Mr. McDONNELL: Well, the hon. gentleman must admit that the Commissioner was responsible for the working of the force, and as he was the head of the force he was primarily responsible for the present condition of the force. Judge Noel, who in his good nature seemed to desire to let Mr. Parry-Okeden down easily, said—

I concur with much that the majority say with regard to the Commissioner, but I think that it would be unfair that his subordinate officers should bear the greater part of the blame of those matters which we have found fault with. Most of their actions came directly under his notice; and, although he may have been misled by incorrect representations, I think he should have exercised more caution.

I am absolutely convinced of the Commissioner's sincerity of purpose, but gather from the evidence that he looked upon the police rather as a military than a Police Force. A soldier has to render unreasoning obedience to his superior officer, and has practically no responsibility, whereas a policeman, although he acts under general instructions, has to use his own discretion in the carrying of them out.

It was unfortunate that both sides of the House had not agreed to go fully into the report of the Commission, because the want of such an understanding placed hon. members in a peculiar position, seeing that to fully discuss the report they would have to go into the evidence. Mr. F. W. Dickson had arrived at a conclusion which was, he believed, generally acceptable to the great majority of the people of Queensland, because they could not close their eyes to the fact that the evidence disclosed a very bad state of things in the Police Force, which had altogether arisen since the present Commissioner took office in the force.

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Mr. McDONNELL: Yes.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The Commission do not say so.

Mr. McDONNELL: He thought the hon. member would find that out if he read the report and the evidence of ex-Inspector Lloyd and other ex-inspectors who were examined. Anyone reading those must come to the conclusion that, for the mismanagement of the force, and particularly for the mismanagement of the Criminal Investigation Branch, the Commissioner of Police was primarily accountable. The Commissioner organised the Criminal Investigation Department, and removing from its head the man under whom it had worked so well in previous years, put in his place an officer who, as the evidence conclusively proved, was not fitted for the position. Some of the best men in the department, who had proved their efficiency as detectives, were removed to other parts of the colony, where their services were not of as great value to the country as they

would be in the Criminal Investigation Branch. And all that had occurred since the present Commissioner took office.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Were there no undiscovered crimes before his time?

Mr. McDONNELL: Yes, and there were undiscovered crimes in every country of the world, but the percentage of undiscovered crimes in Queensland was very great. The efforts to detect those crimes had been so muddled that he was surprised that the Government had tolerated the present Commissioner of Police so long, particularly as, as was shown by the evidence, Mr. Parry-Okeden had no practical knowledge of the management of the Police Force. Mr. Dickson certainly deserved the thanks of the country for his straightforward, manly action in that matter. What had been the whole result? The Commission, with the exception of Mr. Dickson, had recommended that a deputy commissioner should be appointed.

The HOME SECRETARY: And that Mr. Okeden be retained.

Mr. McDONNELL: And that Mr. Okeden be retained. He was still to be Chief Commissioner, and the deputy commissioner was to be under his government and jurisdiction. What that amounted to practically was this: They were to have a captain of a ship, and appoint, as his first mate, a practical man who was to navigate the ship, and though the captain knew nothing at all about navigation, he was to be still boss of the practical man on the ship. They were to get a man of practical experience, able to benefit the force, and reorganise it on different lines, and they were going to still keep in command the man who it had been clearly shown was deficient in all organisation and in the management of the force.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Commission did not say that.

Mr. McDONNELL: Some of the Commission said it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Only one.

Mr. McDONNELL: The Commission on that point was divided, but he was inclined to think that the gentleman who had expressed those opinions, had expressed the opinion of a great number of the people in Queensland. They could not blind their eyes to the fact that the head of the force was responsible for its working. Why, in the present war, they saw that generals had been superseded, and others had been sent out to take command over their heads when they had made a mess of things. Suppose one of those generals sent out had been sent out to take up the position suggested now for the practical man of experience who was to be deputy commissioner, under the men who had made such a bungle and such a failure?

The HOME SECRETARY: It very often works very well. I could give you a striking instance of that.

Mr. McDONNELL: He could not see that himself. It would be far more satisfactory for the force, and for the whole colony, if Mr. Okeden was appointed deputy commissioner, and subject to the man of experience, who should be appointed Chief Commissioner. There would be some reason in that. The proper step to take was to appoint as Chief Commissioner a man with sufficient force of character, and one who had practical experience in other more advanced countries in such matters; a man who could bring to the task of reorganising the force on different lines and a different basis to those on which it was worked at present fresh methods and up-to-date information on the subject. Mr. Okeden could take place as second in command, and could learn from such a man as that; but they should not have over the practical man, and in command of the ship, the man who had

made a mess of things up to the present time. The Home Secretary thought Mr. Okeden was not altogether directly responsible for the present condition of the force. He had given his own opinion on the point, and that was the great objection he had to that piecemeal discussion of the report, because he believed that a fuller discussion of it, in a fuller House, would lead to an expression of opinion from the Committee which would induce the Home Secretary to take action, which now, perhaps, the hon. gentleman was not prepared to take. He was sure that if hon. members went through the whole of the evidence they could come to no other conclusion than that, for the benefit of the force and of the whole colony, Mr. Okeden should be removed from his present position, and a man of more experience—a man, say, from the old country—with better methods, placed at the head of the force. It was unfortunate that they should have that discussion now, as it would have practically little result, and they would be giving the Government a free hand in carrying out the recommendations of the Commission; and when they came to discuss the report later on next session it might be too late then to take exception to the action taken. It had been admitted that Mr. Okeden's only experience as a police officer had been in connection with the border patrol, in the far out districts of the colony. Though they recognised that as an under secretary, doing clerical work and that sort of thing, Mr. Okeden was a good officer, it had been shown that he had not enough backbone for the Police Department. He had allowed himself to be run by his officers, in some cases unscrupulous men. He had depended too much on his officers, and had practically given the whole show away, and had allowed a system to be carried out in the force which had undermined the whole loyalty of the force. In his opinion the only possible solution of the whole question was the removal of Mr. Okeden, and the appointment in his place of a practical, experienced man, who could reorganise the force on lines different to those on which it was being worked at present.

The HOME SECRETARY: He would say one or two words in reply to the hon. member. He wanted to point out to the hon. member that the men upon whom the strictures of the Commission principally fell were men who had been in the Police Force long before Mr. Okeden joined it, and that that gentleman practically inherited the state of things which had existed since his appointment four years ago.

Mr. McDONNELL: And he allowed those men to run him.

The HOME SECRETARY: Possibly to a certain extent that might be so; but if the hon. member thought Mr. Okeden was not a man of firmness, strong will, and strong character, he made a great mistake. He was a man, as the Commission said, who was imbued with a keen sense of justice and honour, and he was quite sure that Mr. Okeden would lend himself to nothing whatever which would savour of either favouritism or injustice in any shape or form. That was the sort of man that was wanted at the head of affairs. The hon. gentleman said that his opinion was endorsed by the opinion of the Commission, and the fact that Mr. Okeden, up to the time of his appointment, had not much experience of police matters; but it must be apparent that a man who had gone through what Mr. Okeden had gone through during the last twelve months had learned a great deal in connection with police matters. He thought it would be difficult to find a man at this moment who, having all the other qualifications of Mr. Okeden, would still have that intimate knowledge of Queensland and the Queensland Police Force possessed by that gentleman.

Mr. HARDACRE: It is not a question of knowledge; it is the character of mind. The same character of mind would produce the same evil results.

The HOME SECRETARY: If Mr. Okeden had committed errors—to call them by the strongest possible term—the errors he had committed in the past—

Mr. McDONALD: You admit that he committed errors.

The HOME SECRETARY: He did not admit anything of the sort. Perhaps Mr. Okeden had trusted too much to others.

Mr. HARDACRE: Is not that a weakness?

The HOME SECRETARY: It might be a weakness in some cases, but it was a great source of strength to some men. Even if Mr. Okeden had not the experience which he had gained during the last four or five years he would still say that the recommendation of the Commission that he should be retained was a good one, and that someone with technical experience should be placed under him. There was a striking instance of that in the Sydney Government Printing Office, which was the model printing office in Australasia, because the gentleman appointed to take charge, Mr. Gullick, was not a practical printer.

Mr. McDONNELL: He was managing a large printing office before he was appointed.

Mr. TURLEY: John Sands and Co.

The HOME SECRETARY: He was simply manager of the commercial part of the business, not the printing office at all, and he occupied towards the printing office very much the same position as that occupied by Mr. Okeden towards the Police Force when he was Under Colonial Secretary. Without pledging himself to that, or to anything else in the report, he believed the recommendation of the Commission with regard to Mr. Okeden was probably about the best that could be made. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley wanted him, with regard to Seymour, to pin himself down to the recommendation of the Commission, but with regard to Mr. Okeden the hon. member wanted him to pin himself down to something in direct opposition to the recommendation of the Commission.

Mr. McDONNELL: The recommendation with regard to Seymour is unanimous.

The HOME SECRETARY: The other was four to one; and without saying anything disparaging of the gentleman who was the dissident, he might say that both the addendum and the tone of it caused him a great deal of astonishment. Without pledging himself to any particular line of action with reference to the recommendations of the Commission, he could only say that they would receive the best consideration, and that he would endeavour to do ample justice to everybody as far as was possible. Some hon. members seemed to be under the impression that because the whole question of the recommendations and the evidence were not to be gone into now, it followed that nine or twelve months would necessarily be lost before anything was done, but that was not so. There seemed to be some confusion in their minds between executive functions and legislative functions. It must fall to the Executive to take action with regard to the recommendations of the Commission; and if the action they took did not meet with the approval of the House, or a section of the House, the Executive would very soon hear of it. Though the discussion was to be postponed, it by no means followed that the time would be lost or that the question would have to wait till Parliament met again, and he pledged himself to deal with it at the very earliest possible time.

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*): The hon. gentleman in his first speech on this question said something about the incompleteness of the inquiry, and

he agreed with the hon. gentleman in that. He thought there were a good many things that had happened in connection with the Police Force during the last ten years that might very well have been inquired into. The hon. gentleman was not prepared to say what he would really do, or whether the inquiry was going to stop where it was at the present time. If there was to be an extension of the inquiry he thought it would be wise to say nothing about the matter till next session, but if there was going to be no further inquiry he thought it ought to be dealt with now, because next session the thing would be practically dead. He mentioned some matters to the hon. gentleman when it was said that the inquiry was to take place, but he did not see that any attempt had been made to inquire into those matters. Both in the strike of 1891 and in the strike of 1894, things happened that ought to have been inquired into to see who was in the right, and who in the wrong. Some outrageous charges were made against certain people in the community; and he referred now especially to the attempt made to saddle upon certain people the poisoning of a tank of water in the Western part of Queensland. It was proved by the Government Analyst that the arsenic supposed to be in the water could only have got there by being put into the bottle sent for analysis, because the quantity of arsenic which water would dissolve or absorb was well known, and there was a certain quantity of arsenic found at the bottom of the bottle.

The PREMIER: Mr. Grimes.—I move that [7 p.m.] you do now leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again. Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and leave was given to the Committee to sit at a later hour of the day.

NEW MEMBER.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF ENOGGERA.

The SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that, pursuant to a resolution passed by the House on the 7th December instant, declaring that the seat of James George Drake, member for the electoral district of Enoggera, had become vacant, I issued my writ for the election of a member to serve in this House for the said electoral district; and that such writ has been duly returned, with a certificate endorsed thereon of the election of Matthew Reid as member for the electoral district of Enoggera.

Mr. MATTHEW REID thereupon took the oath, and subscribed the roll. On taking his seat he was loudly cheered by members of the Labour party.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

POLICE

Question—That £173,698 be granted for police—again stated.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): It was most unfortunate that that important Estimate was being discussed at the very end of the session, when it could not be treated in anything like an adequate manner. In fact, they could not deal with it at all, and the result would be that the report of the Commission would be almost useless as far as the guidance of the Committee was concerned, and that they would be prevented from taking that action in regard to it which both the House and the country so much desired. It was also rather unfortunate that the Commission, or a section of the Commission, did not travel through the country districts and find out many of the facts that were there available—as some of the Commissioners themselves recognised in their separate

reports. He wished briefly to mention one or two matters before the question was put. He would ask, first, whether it was the intention of the Minister to do anything with regard to the question of a "Police Manual"? As a matter of strict fact the police had a "Manual," but it was over thirty years old. It dated back to the separation of the colony, and the law contained in it was not the present law of Queensland. Indeed, in many instances if police officers were to act upon that ancient "Manual" they would be locking men up for actions which were not offences against the criminal law of the colony. That was certainly a matter the Minister ought to take into consideration between now and next session. It was absolutely necessary that police officers should study the common elements of our criminal law either before they entered the force or very shortly afterwards. They would then know whether persons were breaking the laws of Queensland or not. With regard to the *Police Gazette*, referred to in the report, it was very desirable that those should be sent broadcast to every member of the force. It was all very well to say that they should be sent to head centres; they should be sent to the individual officers scattered throughout the colony. Then there was the matter of transfer allowances. He was surprised to learn that when police officers were transferred from one district to another, and had to travel by boat, their wives and families were only allowed a steerage passage. The department might be sufficiently liberal to allow the wives and families of these men to travel in the same class as the officers themselves. According to the report, the Commissioners thought that the system of promotion had been established on a fairly reasonable basis, but if they had been able to travel over the country districts he did not think they would have come to that conclusion. The outside districts were altogether neglected. The police officer who was sent to such places as Longreach, Barcaldine, or Winton was utterly lost sight of by the department, and men in the town districts were promoted, to the neglect of many men who had served in outside districts for many years. With regard to the question of giving the franchise to members of the Police Force, he was sorry to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Kennedy. He had evidently been half converted to the old conservative idea that they should not have the franchise.

Mr. JENKINSON: It is only a case of suspended judgment.

Mr. HARDACRE: Yes, but the hon. member was evidently undergoing the process of conversion, and he hoped he would return to his old faith. The hon. member based his judgment on what had occurred in America, and there might be some objection to members of the Police Force having the franchise in America, because there the forces were massed together in great numbers, and they might have a great influence on an election. But in Queensland it was altogether different. The whole number of the force here was not very considerable, and they were scattered over a wide area.

Mr. GLASSEY: It is not a question of numbers; it is a question of right, and I think these men should have the franchise.

Mr. HARDACRE: Yet they had to put side by side with it the evil that might possibly result from the operation of that right. In the old country they did not give soldiers the franchise.

Mr. GLASSEY: That is another matter altogether.

Mr. HARDACRE: He did not see why a soldier should not have the same rights as a policeman, based on abstract principles. They all had to obey the laws of the country, and the reason they did not give soldiers the franchise

was because they were massed together in barracks in numbers, and if they had that right they might be able to exercise a great influence over any election.

Mr. GLASSEY : That is not the most important point.

Mr. HARDACRE : But in Queensland that objection could not exist. The members of the Police Force here were so isolated that they could not turn or influence an election anywhere; and he was of the opinion that if they had the franchise it would allay a lot of the dissatisfaction which had existed, as the men thought they were not placed on the same equality as other citizens in the colony. He regretted that the time was inopportune to fully discuss the matter, because a full discussion would lead to a better organisation of the force.

Mr. GLASSEY (*Bundaberg*) : He was not going to discuss the Commission's report, or whether policemen should have a vote or not, because he understood that by arrangement the discussion on the whole matter would take place next year, all being well; but he would draw the Minister's attention to one recommendation made by the Commission. That was with regard to Mr. Seymour—a gentleman on whose behalf he had had occasion to say a word or two before. He believed that that gentleman had been wrongly treated, and he trusted that the Minister would see that it would be a wise and prudent thing to reappoint that gentleman: that would only be an act of grace, and certainly an act of justice. On the whole, he thought Mr. Okeden had come out of the inquiry very well, inasmuch as he had had very little previous training. But from the information he had gathered during the inquiry, and having gone through the ordeal so well, he thought Mr. Okeden would be able to equip himself better for his work in the future.

Mr. DAWSON (*Charters Towers*) : He would like to say a few words on this matter. His own opinion was—and he tendered the advice to hon. members on both sides—that the present was not an opportune time to discuss the matters referred to with any idea of doing justice to the report of the Royal Commission. He did not think any hon. member had read through the whole of the report and evidence, and consequently no real justice could be done by discussing the several matters at the present. He thought it was utterly impossible, even if hon. members had read the evidence right through and understood the whole of the recommendations, to hope to do any other business than to discuss the report of the Commission for a week. If they were going to discuss it, they must have a thorough discussion. A half-hearted discussion would do more harm than good; and he would earnestly urge hon. members on both sides to debate the Police Estimates in the ordinary way and leave the report of the Commission over until a more favourable opportunity. That would be better for them, much better for the force, and certainly much more satisfactory to the people of the colony.

Mr. McDONALD : He understood that when the Estimates were postponed the principal argument which was advanced by members on both sides was that they had not the report of the Commission, and it was advisable to postpone their discussion until after the general Estimates so that they might get the report, and discuss it then. Another reason was that the actuarial report in connection with the police superannuation fund would be ready, and that that would also come up for discussion on the Police Estimates. Now, after asking the House to postpone the Estimates for some weeks, it was proposed to adjourn the discussion for twelve months, for that was practically what it would mean.

A MEMBER on the Government side: No.

Mr. McDONALD : They were not going to discuss it as soon as Parliament met; they would have to wait until the Estimates came on, probably in the Christmas week, the same as this year, and there would be the same excuse that there was not time to discuss them. Hon. members knew what the consequence of that would be—the thing would be lost; nothing would come of it. In his opinion, all these reports—especially when the country paid a large sum of money for them—should be brought before the House, and it should be asked to adopt them or otherwise. By that means a direct discussion would be got on the reports themselves. However, it was not the rule of the House to deal with reports in that manner, and the consequence was that valuable reports, which cost a considerable amount of public money to obtain, were laid aside and little or no notice taken of them. He certainly thought that if this thing were left over until next session it would be practically dead. He understood from the hon. gentleman in charge of the Estimates that there would be an attempt on the part of his department to carry out such of these recommendations as they thought should be given effect to: but there might probably be other clauses which would not be touched which others might think should be carried out. In the report itself there was a lot of valuable evidence that he thought could have been gone on with and discussed at present. He did not think there was any special hurry now. The Christmas holidays were over, and in the ordinary course of events the House would adjourn from Friday till Tuesday, and hon. members could go on and discuss the whole thing right through. What matter if it took a week or a fortnight to discuss it? The more discussion given to it the better. The hon. member for Lockyer was one of those who asked for the postponement. He said he had a great deal of information to give to the House with reference to this report.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: No—I had a good deal to say.

Mr. McDONALD : Now it appeared that that hon. gentleman would be deprived of that privilege at present. Of course, now that the report was out, the hon. member might have found that the Commission had put right what he was going to speak about, but there was not the slightest doubt that one matter that the hon. gentleman might be interested in had been gone into very fully by the Commission. However, as it was the desire that there should not be a general discussion, he should not delay the House long. He should, however, like to point out that a number of men who had given evidence and a number of men holding responsible positions in the force seemed to have been very severely handled. They had been told by the Commission that, while giving them credit for intelligence and that sort of thing, they had no right to hold the positions they held at present; and it was necessary that something should be done at the earliest possible moment—either that they should be removed to some other part of the colony or to some other position—so as to allow a better state of things to exist in the department, and the sooner it was done the better it would be for the department. There was not the slightest doubt that a great deal of the bungling which had taken place during the last year or so was due to the attempt at organisation of the Criminal Investigation Department by Mr. Okeden. Some hon. gentlemen seemed to think that Mr. Okeden had come out of this pretty fairly. That might be so; but there was no getting away from the fact that the Commission had recommended the appointment of a deputy commissioner. What was that for? To his mind, that seemed to show that the gentleman now in the position of

Commissioner was not able to cope with the work he had got ; and, if he was not able to cope with the work, it was no wonder there had been the amount of bungling which had taken place. The report showed—and it was admitted in the evidence—that the present head of the department had had little or no experience in connection with the department. He thought that in cases like that, instead of making the appointments merely of a political nature, they should be appointments of men thoroughly capable of performing the duties they were called on to perform. If that were done there would be a better state of affairs. He knew that a year or so ago there was a number of inspectors appointed, and it was a well-known fact that those appointments caused a considerable amount of trouble and a considerable amount of talk. The general idea was that a number of men had been appointed over the heads of men who were certainly every bit as capable—if not more capable, to put it mildly—as those who were appointed, and who had this merit behind them—that they had been much longer in the service than those who were appointed. In some cases men were made inspectors who had never seen any service in the department at all. That in itself gave a very considerable amount of trouble. However, he was not going to follow the matter any further. He should merely like to say that if the Hon. the Home Secretary, as he had hinted, contemplated further inquiries, especially in the North-western portions of the colony, he hoped there would be some attempt to clear up some little abuses in connection with the Police Force during the strikes of 1891 and 1894. At that time the case to which he had been alluding before tea occurred. He

[7:30 p.m.] was up to the point where a number of men were accused by the police of attempting to poison the water in a tank. A bottle of the water was taken by the police, sealed, and sent to Brisbane for analysis. He believed it was a sergeant of police who instructed another member of the force to take the sample of water. When the bottle was opened, it was found that there was more arsenic in it than the water could hold in solution, showing clearly that the arsenic must have been put in before the water, because hundreds of people drank of the water afterwards, and stock were watered there, without any evil effects. In proportion to the amount of arsenic found in the bottle, those two or three men would have had to carry about three tons of arsenic to poison the tank. They had never heard that there had been any inquiry made into that matter. It was a diabolical thing to do, and the department should have made a full investigation at the time so that whoever was responsible might be promptly punished. Yet, instead of those people being punished, they found that a number of them were promoted. If there was going to be a further inquiry, those things should be inquired into, and there were many other things in connection with industrial troubles that also required investigation. They might even go further back and inquire into many things which happened in Brisbane in 1890 which were not a credit to some of the officers of the department. He was not blaming the Home Secretary, because the hon. gentleman was not then in office. In fact no hon. gentleman at present on the Treasury bench was then in office. There seemed to be a general impression that they should not discuss the report now, although he thought it would have been wise to do so even if they took a fortnight over it.

Mr. DAWSON did not wish hon. members to misunderstand him. His reason for wishing that the report should not be discussed until they reassembled next session was because the adminis-

tration of the department was such a serious matter that hon. members should be given time to thoroughly digest the report of the Commission and the evidence before attempting to deal with it. He felt very keenly with regard to the 1891 and 1894 strikes, to which the hon. member for Flinders had referred, and he thought there would be some startling revelations when they had an opportunity of getting at them ; but they could not do full justice to any of those things at the present juncture. One strong reason which weighed with him for wishing the discussion to be delayed was because he was on the track of a certain amount of evidence in connection with the 1894 strike which would startle Australia, if he found that there was any truth at all in the matter after a thorough investigation. It certainly would demand another police inquiry, and would not be very creditable to the police when it was done with. He did not want matters hurried, as he wanted to do full justice to it before any verdict was pronounced. Although they had had the report of the Commission in their hands for several days, most extraordinary circumstances had prevented them from making themselves fully acquainted with the contents of the report and the evidence. There had been a political crisis and a change of Government. There had been all-night sittings, and there had been elections. The bursting up of the Empire absolutely depended upon the fate of the Enoggera election. All those things had prevented hon. members from going thoroughly into the report, and he ventured to say there was not a single member in the Committee, including the Home Secretary himself, who had read the evidence and the report. He confessed that although he had read the report he had not read the evidence, and he was not prepared to discuss the question in all its bearings that evening, and he ventured to believe that that was the position of every hon. member, and he therefore suggested that they should postpone the discussion in the meantime. When they did come to discuss it, they would have something to deal with of a peculiar nature outside what was between the two covers of the report of the Commission.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Burke*) desired to call the attention of the Home Secretary to the fact that the police who were sent to the North-west portion of the colony were said to be only fit for street duty. What was wanted there were men who were good bushmen and trackers. Another matter he wished to direct the Minister's attention to was the condition of the police horses in the North-west. As a rule they were mere frames, and when a new inspector came into the district he took any decent horses he found at a police station for his own use, leaving them nothing but screws which were unfit for a day's work. Some time ago, when the inspector in charge of that district was appointed, the first thing he did when he went to inspect the district was to send all the best horses down to Normanton, and several of the police in charge of stations complained bitterly that they had not a horse that was fit to do a journey. A matter which was referred to by the Commission in their report was in connection with policemen with families being kept in places where they had no opportunity of sending their children to school. The Commissioner said that every time he got a chance he put those men where there were schools ; but there was one place in his electorate, called Percival, where a constable with a family had been stationed for some considerable time, and it was only justice to his family that he should be transferred to some place where his children could go to school. In another place in the same electorate there were a couple of single men stationed, but he thought it was only fair that the single men

should be placed in the out-of-the-way places. It seemed to be the general desire to let the report of the Commission stand over until a more favourable opportunity. Probably they would then come back brimming over with enthusiasm and go in for a few all-night sittings.

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*): It had struck him very forcibly during the discussion that it was the Opposition side that was passing all the strictures on the Police Department, and he was surprised that some hon. gentlemen from the other side had not got up and refuted some of the charges that had been made. Last year he unfortunately made a mistake, but very soon rectified it by aplogising to the gentleman concerned; and he thought that those hon. members who had that night passed strictures on the head of the Police Force would find out by-and-by that they had been in error. From what he had heard from members of the Police Force they had nothing whatever to say against Mr. Parry-Okeden, although one of the members of the Commission had thought fit to bring in a report of his own to some extent condemning that gentleman. The fact that there was a majority of four to one on the Commission in reference to the Commissioner ought to be sufficient vindication of that gentleman. To some extent, perhaps, he had committed errors of judgment, and probably by this time he saw his error and had rectified matters. He had not read the whole of the evidence taken by the Commission, but from what he had read he had come to the conclusion that it would be unfair to condemn the whole administration on account of a few faults that had been committed. He agreed with the recommendation of the Commission in reference to ex-Detective Seymour, and he trusted that the Home Secretary would be kind enough to see that that man was placed in his proper position.

Mr. DUNSFORD (*Charters Towers*) thought delay in discussing the report of the Commission might possibly do some good if in the meantime the report was made complete. Charges had been made against the Commissioner and the police, but he thought it was about time that charges were made against the Commission itself. They were appointed to inquire into the Police Force throughout the colony, but, instead of that, they had only inquired into the Police Force in and around Brisbane, and on that they had based certain verdicts which in his opinion were very unsatisfactory. They knew nothing of the Police Force outside of Brisbane. If things were wrong and corrupt in Brisbane, they assumed that they were wrong and corrupt all over the colony. If the Commissioner made a few mistakes in Brisbane they assumed that everything he had done outside of Brisbane was a mistake also. That was the basis they had gone on. He was pleased to notice that the Chairman of the Commission, with the special legal training that he had had, was able to dissect the evidence, and had not come to the same conclusions as certain other members of the Commission. In order to do justice to the whole of the force throughout the colony it was essential that the Commission should travel both in the North and the interior. Let them have the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. During the proceedings of the Commission it came out that one man, ex-Detective Grimshaw, had been condemned merely on suspicion, and if it was only to clear that one man, and find out the whole truth, he would be a strong advocate for the Commission visiting Townsville, and making inquiries on the spot. What did Judge Noel say on the question of travelling?—

If the Commission had travelled to some of the centres in other parts of the colony there is every probability that evidence of a valuable nature would

have been obtained. Four members of the Commission at the first meeting passed a resolution, which is duly recorded, that it would be necessary for the Commission to travel. For some reason not apparent to me, two of those members altered their opinions.

He supposed private reasons influenced those members. Christmas was approaching, and they wanted to complete their work, which they did in a very incomplete manner. Judge Noel went on to say—

The Chief Secretary declined to express an opinion as to the meaning of the Commission, on the ground that it would be dictating to the Commissioners, but offered to give every facility if it was decided by the Commission to travel.

So that the Commission had every facility offered to them, and all that was wanted was willingness on the part of the majority to do their duty. In reference to the case of ex-Detective Grimshaw, he wished to draw particular attention to a remark by Judge Noel, who said—

Owing to not having visited Townsville to take evidence, I am unable to form an opinion as to whether or not substantial justice was meted out to ex-Senior Sergeant Grimshaw, nor do I see how anyone can profess to form a conclusion after having heard a portion only of the evidence in a case.

The majority of the Commissioners said—

From a strictly legal standpoint the evidence may not be all that was required, but we think the evidence disclosed grounds for grave suspicion, and under the circumstances the Commissioner was warranted in recommending the senior sergeant's dismissal.

He thought that statement was very unjust, especially in view of the fact that the evidence was very incomplete, and that if they had visited Townsville they might have got evidence which would have upset the evidence submitted to the Commission. Then Mr. F. W. Dickson said—

I wish to strongly represent my opinion that the sphere of usefulness of the Commission was greatly minimised by the fact that the sittings of the Commission were, by the resolution of the majority of the Commissioners, confined to the Southern portion of the colony, and that no investigation of the matters into which we were directed to inquire can be considered complete, as relating to the whole force of the colony, until an opportunity be given to the members of the force and the public generally resident in the Central and Northern portions of the colony to assist the Commission by their evidence.

The duty of the Commission was to inquire into the whole Police Force in Queensland, and not simply in Brisbane, and they had failed in that duty. He therefore hoped the Minister would see his way clear to have a thorough investigation made between the present date and the time when the discussion of the report would be taken, and get two or three members of the Commission, if they were willing, to go and complete their work, so that hon. members might be in a position to fairly discuss the condition of the force.

Mr. MAXWELL would like to ask the Home Secretary again if he intended to see that the police were decently mounted?

The HOME SECRETARY did not know whether the hon. member really asked that question seriously.

Mr. MAXWELL: Yes.

The HOME SECRETARY: It seemed to him that on the hon. member's own showing the horses were good enough, but the food was bad.

Mr. MAXWELL: The horses were not good enough. The hon. gentleman tried to misconstrue everything said in that House when it did not suit him. He (Mr. Maxwell) pointed out that the inspector came along and took away the good horses, leaving the useless screws; and he believed that the same thing would apply to the Northern and Western parts of the colony. When he was up North he happened to get hold

of a police horse to take a little ride out of him. As soon as he got on, the horse started to buck, but after he had gone four miles he knocked up. He should like an answer from the hon. gentleman as to whether he intended to see that the police had decent horses to ride.

The HOME SECRETARY: When he rose to reply to the hon. member he was unable to do so owing to the hon. member's interruptions. He then sat down, and the hon. member then rose and began to abuse him. That was not the way to get answers to questions. All he could say was, that he would inquire into the matter, and that was about as much as the hon. member would get.

Mr. KERR (*Barcoo*): The hon. member for Burke had asked a very pertinent question.

Mr. McDONALD: And had got a very pertinent answer.

Mr. KERR: And had got an answer which was not satisfactory to the Committee. In the Central district the police had been very badly horsed, and had in consequence been unable to fulfil their duties properly. Even in Blackall the police were not properly provided with horses, and they had had to borrow horses from a publican. The Commission stated that—

The horses, as far as Brisbane is concerned, are satisfactory, but, judging from the correspondence and evidence, this cannot be said of the whole colony.

The hon. member for Burke had not overstated the matter when he said that when an inspector was appointed to a district he visited the various stations and took away the best horses, leaving only the old screws which were not fit for duty. Some time ago a man was lost between Blackall and Tambo, and neither the police in Blackall nor the police in Tambo could go to look for the man, as they had not the necessary horses, and the result was that the man perished, and his swag was subsequently found hanging on a tree a short distance from the main road. The officer in charge of the police station at Blackall at the time informed him that he had no horses on which to send his men out on duty; he had to borrow horses from hotel-keepers and storekeepers. Was it a proper thing that the police of the colony should be under a compliment to publicans or business people for horses to do Government duty? He held that it was not, and he agreed with the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. McDonnell, that the government of the Police Department was rotten. As had been stated by the hon. member for Burke, many of the horses they had might buck with a man in the morning and then knock up after they had gone four miles. What was the use of a horse if he would not carry a man fifty or sixty, or even seventy miles a day if occasion required? If the Minister thought that by passing that matter over lightly, and ignoring the question which had been asked, he was going to expedite the passage of his Estimates, he was very much mistaken.

The HOME SECRETARY was sorry the hon. member had imported so much [8 p.m.] warmth into the matter. He had endeavoured to reply to the hon. member for Burke as courteously as he possibly could, but as the hon. member persistently interrupted him he had resumed his seat. He was saying that, so far as he could learn from the department, and from the hon. member's own showing, the horses were all right, but the feed was scarce, and the horses were necessarily poor. He intended to go on to tell the hon. member that the horses referred to as having been taken to Normanton had been taken there practically to save their lives, as they were good horses, and it would cost less to take them to Normanton, where they could get good feed, than it would have cost

to take feed right away up the country to where they were, and there was no feed where they were. With regard to the statement of the hon. member for Barcoo that horses had been borrowed at Blackall, he understood that that was so. He understood also that when it came to the knowledge of the Commissioner, the officer in fault had been severely reprimanded. It was only discovered by the fact that a claim was sent in for the use of some horses. He understood that this man was in the habit of taking horses for the purpose practically of breaking them in.

Mr. KERR: No.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was what he was given to understand. When it was discovered that that officer had placed himself under an obligation to a storekeeper or publican, he was reprimanded for so doing.

Mr. KERR: He could not allow a police officer, since deceased, to rest under that stigma. He knew as much of Blackall as any man in the Chamber, and he could say from his own personal knowledge, that whoever reported that that man had been in the habit of taking horses to break had reported a falsehood to the department. He had seen the police horses there, and knew they were unfit for work. He would not have worked such horses himself. He wanted to say also that that officer had not been in the habit of using other horses privately either.

The HOME SECRETARY: I never said that.

Mr. KERR: He knew the hon. gentleman had not said so, but he wanted to make it plain that that officer did not even use them privately. He knew the whole circumstances of the case, and if that officer had lived he would have brought up his case, and some of those who had been in authority over him would have heard how he had been treated.

Mr. MAXWELL did not know where the hon. gentleman could have heard that the horses he had referred to had been taken to Normanton to save their funeral expenses. It was during the months of February and March, when the grass was at its very best in the whole of that district, that those horses were taken away to Normanton so that they could be fed cheaper. Surely before the hon. gentleman made statements of that sort in the House, he should take into consideration the fact that it was possible that other people had been in the district, and had been there at the time these horses were removed, and could speak as to what they had seen with their own eyes! He would like the hon. gentleman to answer the question now, as to whether it was the intention of the Government to see that the police were properly horsed?

Mr. BROWNE: This was no new thing. Every year since he had been a member of the House the question had been raised about the horsing of the police in the outlying districts. He had brought it up on two or three occasions himself, and had given good reasons for doing so. In the Gulf country men's lives and property often depended on the horsing of the police. They had as good bushmen and riders amongst the police there as in any part of the colony, but owing to the way in which they were horsed—to use language which was not quite Shakespearean—they were often "hopelessly left." They felt bitterly the fact that they could not cope with their work because they had not horses fit to carry them. Amongst the paltry little economies that were attempted to be made, there was another he might refer to, and that was that instructions had been given to the police in those districts to cut bush hay to feed their horses. The man who gave that order could never have been in that part of the country,

or he would know, as some hon. members knew, that they might as well feed the horses on paper or shavings or sawdust. Another injustice the police in those districts suffered was in connection with the allowance for increased cost of living. In 1893 the allowance was reduced, and though since then all the other Civil servants in those far distant places had restored to them the rate of extra allowance paid prior to 1893, it was not so with the police, who now got 1s. or 1s. 6d. a day instead of 3s., which they used to get. There was not a very large number of them, but they had arduous duties to perform, and when everything was reckoned up, as he had had it reckoned up for him, they found that there was not more than 1s. a day difference between the police at Croydon and the Gilbert and those outside places and the men who walked up and down Queen street doing their little beats here. When they took into account the extra risks and danger, the increased wages paid to everyone else in the community in which they lived, and the higher price charged for everything they used, it was only common justice that the police in those districts should at least have restored to them the allowance paid to them prior to the retrenchment of 1893, the same as the Civil servants of all other departments in those districts.

The HOME SECRETARY said there was a good deal of difference between the position of a member of the Police Force and an ordinary Civil servant. To say nothing of the question of the pension, there was the fact that most of them—in fact, he supposed all of them—were provided with quarters, while the ordinary Civil servant, as a rule, had to provide his own quarters. Instead of costing £3,500, the amount put down here, it would cost something over £10,000 to put them on the same footing as Civil servants, as the hon. member suggested. He thought that under the present system the police were very well paid, and a proof of that was to be seen in the large numbers of men constantly desiring to get into the force.

Mr. BROWNE: That information was most extraordinary, whoever gave it to the hon. gentleman. He did not think there were over 100 men in the outside places to which he referred, and how it was going to cost £10,000 a year to allow what he asked he could not understand. He admitted that there was a difference between those members of the Police Force and ordinary Civil servants, and he would take the case of the Civil servants at Croydon as an instance. Croydon was the terminus of a railway where living was comparatively cheap, yet the ordinary Civil servants there received from 2s. 6d. to 3s. a day for extra cost of living; on the other hand, there were policemen stationed in outside camps from twenty to 100 miles from Croydon, where the cost of living was consequently greater, and those men were not getting anything like the same allowance. It was true that there was no comparison, but it was the opposite way from what the hon. gentleman supposed. As to so many wanting to join the police, he agreed that a great number were anxious to join, but he reckoned that was one of the worst things that could be seen, and it did not speak well for the opportunities given to the rising generation when so many strapping intelligent young fellows were to be seen day after day hanging round the Police Department in order to get into the force. But seeing that there was a Police Force and that men were stationed in outside places, he saw no reason why they should not be treated at least the same as other Civil servants. About two or three years ago there was a certain night allowance made, but that did not benefit the men in the outside stations to which he referred.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. gentleman was wrong as to the number of men to whom this would apply. Instead of 100 it would be over 200, and taking the difference between the allowances made to members of the Police Force, and the allowances made to members of the public service, the amount required to place the police on the same footing as members of the Civil Service, at the same rate as they got, would be over £10,000.

Mr. BROWNE: What would it cost to allow them the same rate as they received prior to 1893?

The HOME SECRETARY: Perhaps he misunderstood the hon. member. He thought the hon. member was comparing the allowances paid to the police with those paid to other Civil servants. The allowances varied now from 6d. in places not far distant to 2s. in places far distant. The question had not come before him personally, but he would inquire into it, and see if he could recommend any alteration.

Mr. McDONALD: The hon. gentleman had not given any very satisfactory reply about the horses. He could bear out what had been said by other hon. members as to a number of the horses used by the police being anything but creditable to the department, and he saw a paragraph in a paper the other day in which it was stated that police horses seemed to be bought more with the idea of winning a flutter than for doing any useful work. Some of the horses were no doubt good, but the general complaint in the North-west was that they were very inferior. Certainly there should be some better supervision in the purchasing of horses for the police. It was not at all uncommon in that part of the colony for constables to borrow horses, and in some cases the borrowed horses had been lamed or come to an untimely end, and claims had been sent in to the department by people who had lent horses to the police. The borrowing of horses by the police ought not to be allowed. It was said to be a not unusual thing to buy a certain number of horses at a certain price. One or two of these might be exceptionally good, while the majority ranged from middling to inferior; and it was merely to get hold of the few very good ones that the high average price was paid. That also wanted looking into. He hoped the hon. gentleman would give them an assurance that an inquiry would be made into those matters.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have already done so.

Mr. MAXWELL said it would appear that in the North they had fast policemen and slow horses, whereas in the South they had slow policemen and fast horses. He wished to protest against the system of allowing policemen to serve for years in the North without a change, while others spent the best part of their service in the South. He knew of one case where a policeman had been stationed in the North for twenty years, and had only just got a change to a better climate. Was it the intention of the hon. gentleman to see that those changes were more frequently made?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. MAXWELL hoped the hon. gentleman was listening to him, because if he wanted to get his Estimates through he would have to answer questions.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have already answered it.

Mr. MAXWELL: For cool audacity he did not think the hon. gentleman could be beaten anywhere.

The HOME SECRETARY: Oh, yes; he can. Some of the new members can walk rings round him.

Mr. McDONALD: At different times the question had cropped up of the distribution of rations to the native trackers, for which there was down a sum of £4,000. It was doubted whether in all cases they got their proper allowance, and a promise was made a year or so ago that a better system of distribution would be introduced. He wanted to know if that had been done.

The HOME SECRETARY: In places where there was a considerable number of trackers the stores were got from the nearest available township and sent up in bulk to the officer in charge. Where there was only one tracker that, of course, could not be carried out.

Mr. McDONALD: On a former occasion he had instanced a number of cases where the trackers had not received the proper amount of rations. The black trackers did valuable service to the State, and the least the department could do was to see that they were properly fed.

The HOME SECRETARY: It must be apparent to everyone that in these matters the officer in charge had to be trusted [8.30 p.m.] to a great extent. The rations must go to the trackers through the officer in charge.

Mr. McDONALD: That's what they don't do.

The HOME SECRETARY: The difficulty was to check that sort of thing—to ascertain whether the rations were properly supplied to the trackers or not. Unless another officer was appointed to watch the officer in charge, he did not see how any failure in that respect could be discovered. However, he would look fully into the matter and endeavour to see that justice was done. He could assure the Committee that no one took greater interest in these trackers and the blacks generally than he did.

Mr. KERR asked for a little information with respect to the item £150 for the police band. He thought that was going to be an expensive toy. Brisbane people were getting a good deal of the public funds spent in their town, and he did not see why they should not have police bands in Rockhampton, Townsville, Normanton, Tambo, Gympie, and Blackall, as well as other places. If it was right to spend this sum in Brisbane, it was equally right to spend it in other parts of the colony. He would like to know if this sort of thing was going to continue from year to year?

Question put.

Mr. KERR thought he was entitled to an answer. If the hon. gentleman was going to ignore members in that way, he would have to put up with the consequences.

The HOME SECRETARY was very sorry he could not satisfy all hon. members on the other side. He had been asked by an hon. member on the other side to stop talking, and it was promised that, if he did so, hon. members on the other side would also stop talking. He was in sympathy with the hon. member for Barcoo with regard to his remarks on police bands, and if other towns could raise sufficient numbers for a police band and an instructor—at Barcaldine, Tambo, or any other place—he would have no objection. As the representative of an outside district, he would even like to see a band of this kind at Goondiwindi, but there were only three men there.

Mr. KERR said he had asked the hon. gentleman whether it was intended to continue this vote year by year; because this was one of the grievances of the Police Department. Men who were good musicians were kept in Brisbane, while men who were equally as good officers otherwise were sent into country districts and kept there for many years.

Mr. STEWART (*Rockhampton North*): He had no intention to discuss the matters dealt with in the report of the Police Commission

fully this session, as they could be very wisely left over till next session. He had advised that some time ago, but he had been laughed at. No doubt the Police Force cost a great deal of money—something like £180,000 per annum—and from the Royal Commission report it appeared that the force was very badly organised. Anyone who took any interest in the criminal annals of the colony could see that the force was most ineffective. They had had the Gatton murder, the Oxley murder, the Woolloongabba murder, the Winton murder—these and many other crimes of a lesser degree had gone undiscovered. All that pointed to inefficiency somewhere, and where did the inefficiency come in? His opinion was that the system of promotion in the Police Force had not been what it ought to have been. Was the Commissioner a trained officer? No; he had been pitchforked into his position through some political or social influence without any training; and when that was the case inefficiency was certain to result. They should have a better system of promotion—promotion according to ability and merit. Far too much attention had been paid to the grievances of particular officers, and far too little to the general efficiency of the force.

HOME SECRETARY and HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEWART: The general efficiency of the Police Force was of far greater importance than whether Grimshaw was going to get a billet in the force, or whether Seymour was to be re-appointed, or Parry-O'Keden dismissed. These remarks referred not only to the police, but to every other branch of the Civil Service. He said a few nights ago that the Civil Service was a seething hotbed of intrigue. The same might be said with truth of the Police Force. Anyone reading the report of the Police Commission and the evidence could not fail to have seen that every policeman who appeared to give evidence was much more concerned about his own particular personal grievances than about the efficiency of the force; and he regretted to say that the commissioners appeared to encourage them. In fact, the commissioners, as far as he could gather, had a most delicate ear for scandal. Whenever they heard of a dispute between Urquhart and Shanahan they immediately pricked up their ears, and began to put questions innumerable; but when some matter which had reference to the efficiency of the force came before them they were almost as dumb as oysters, and not a single one of them had a word to say. There was one other matter he wished to refer to, and he would leave the report alone, for this session at any rate—that was, that the administration of the affairs of the Police Department appeared to be suffering, just as the administration of the affairs of the other departments were suffering, from excessive centralisation. He said this advisedly—that the Government in Queensland was in danger of a breakdown for no other reason than this excessive centralisation in Brisbane. The strings of every mortal thing in the colony must be held by Brisbane. The smallest affairs of the most outlying portions of the country must be referred to Brisbane. Everything must have its source, its origin, and its foundation in Brisbane. This was having its effect on the administration of the colony.

Mr. LEAHY: The Brisbane people say it is Townsville.

Mr. STEWART: The leader of the Government, or one-half of the leader of the Government, was a representative of Townsville; the other half was a representative of a place near Brisbane. In any case, he thought it must be apparent to everyone and anyone that, in the Police Force, as in every other department, they

were suffering from excessive centralisation. The trail of centralisation was over every department of the State. Where was the remedy? They could not get separation. They were done as far as that was concerned; but if they could not get separation, let them have decentralisation. Let them have the colony split up into three or more divisions for police purposes, and make the head in each division responsible direct to the Minister. Then they might possibly get something like decent legislation. Until then, they must just be content to go on in the same old blundering, incompetent fashion they had done hitherto.

Mr. MAXWELL asked if it was the intention of the Minister to allow the same system with regard to the defaulter sheet to go on, or did he intend to remedy it in accordance with the recommendations of the Commission?

The HOME SECRETARY: He had already said he was not prepared to commit himself to any of the recommendations of the Commission. He had said in a general way that he agreed with the recommendations—or a majority of them—with regard to organisation, of which this was one; and that they commended themselves to him most strongly. This particular recommendation seemed to him a good one.

Mr. MAXWELL: What he wanted to know was whether the hon. gentleman would take action on it at once or wait until—

The HOME SECRETARY: Not just immediately. Question put and passed.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES. EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. R. Dickson, *Bulimba*) moved that £399 9s. 9d. be granted for Executive and Legislative. There was His Excellency the Governor—salary, gate-keeper, Government House, 1st April, 1899, to 30th June, 1899, £21 7s. 9d. Executive Council—contingencies, £63 15s. 8d. Legislative Assembly—gratuity to Mrs. Henderson, house cleaner, on retirement, £50; gratuity to T. J. Woosley, late messenger, on retirement, £175; gratuity to John Doran, late junior clerk, on retirement, £75. Council and Assembly—gas, Parliamentary Buildings, £7 6s. 4d.; salaries, reporting staff messengers, day and night, £7.

Mr. STEWART: What about the schedules? There is this gratuity of £1,000 to the widow of Mr. Drew?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They were not taken. The schedules were never voted.

Mr. STEWART: I want to discuss them. You will not get the Estimates through this week if you don't. You are not going to rush them through. I want a vote on them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member need not threaten.

Mr. STEWART: You will be here till New Year's Day.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. gentleman wanted information, and he was going to give it. The gratuity to Mrs. Drew arose in this way. Mr. Drew was a public servant under the 1863 Act, and under section 22 of that Act—

If any public servant, without his own default, and in the discharge of his public duty, shall receive such severe bodily injury as to incapacitate him from the discharge of his duties, or if he shall die while in the service, the Governor in Council may grant—

Mr. GIVENS: "May" grant.

The CHIEF SECRETARY:

to such public servant, or to his widow or to his children, a gratuity not exceeding two months' pay at his then rate of salary for each year of service. Provided that such gratuity shall not exceed one year's salary.

Mr. GIVENS: It says "may," not shall.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It was the invariable rule.

Mr. GIVENS: Then we may grant it or not? Men getting seven bob a day do not get a gratuity.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Drew was a contributor to the superannuation fund.

Mr. McDONALD: Do they all get the same treatment?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. The late Registrar-General's widow got it, and the late Under Secretary to the Post Office, who had retired, being over the age, was getting the same. He wished to disabuse the minds of hon. members of the idea that there was any special favour being shown to Mrs. Drew. It was a right which was always claimed by retiring Civil servants who were under the Act of 1863—or their widows or relatives, if they died—after a prolonged term of service, and it was always granted. That was the form in which gratuities had always appeared on previous Estimates. It was a right, although the word used in the Act was "may," and was paid in consequence of the officer's contributions to the superannuation fund.

Mr. McDONALD wanted to know how the amount was placed in the schedules? He was opposed to the vote; and although he was not questioning the power of the Government to place such a gratuity on the Estimates, he had an idea that it should be placed on the Estimates to be discussed in the ordinary way, and not in the schedules. By placing it in the schedules, the Government practically took it out of the power of the Committee to either omit or reduce the amount. The Act stated that the Government "may" grant something, and that implied that they might refuse to grant it. Therefore, being permissive, he maintained it should come before the Committee for review. If it was placed on the ordinary Estimates, it would be open to full discussion and even to reduction.

The PREMIER: These gratuities have always been placed in the schedules.

Mr. McDONALD: It might always have been done, but what he had said should show that it was not a wise thing to do.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is a contract.

Mr. McDONALD: There was a difference between that gratuity and the retiring allowances which appeared in Schedule B in the Estimates-in-Chief. The retiring allowances in Schedule B were amounts fixed by the Act of 1863, based upon the salaries drawn by those officers at the time of their retirement, while the Act only said that in case of the death of an officer under the Act of 1863 his widow might be given a gratuity not to exceed one year's salary. Supposing the Committee did not want to grant that £1,000?

The PREMIER: They cannot get out of it.

Mr. McDONALD: It was not a contract, because the Government had power to grant any sum not exceeding one year's salary, or they could refuse to grant anything at all. Seeing it was purely permissive, the correct thing would have been to put it on the ordinary Estimates, and he would ask the Chief Secretary to remove it from the schedules, so that a vote could be taken on it.

The PREMIER: It has been paid already, under the authority of the Governor in Council. They have the power.

Mr. McDONALD maintained they had not the power. The Act did not say they "shall" do certain things, but that they "may."

The PREMIER: It has never been discussed before.

Mr. McDONALD knew that, and he contended that they had been wrong in not discussing such votes on previous occasions,

The PREMIER: On last year's Estimates there was a gratuity to the widow of the late W.

[9 p.m.] T. Blakeney, and the year before a gratuity to Mrs. Cullen. This year the widow of Mr. Wells received a gratuity in an exactly similar way. After a man had been six years in the service the Act provided that the Government might grant a gratuity to his widow of two months' salary for every year of service, but the whole must not exceed one year's salary.

Mr. TURLEY: How many more are there under the 1863 Act?

The PREMIER: Not many, he was glad to say.

The CHAIRMAN: It is my duty to point out that this discussion is irregular, the vote before the Committee being £399 9s. 9d. for "Executive and Legislative." The discussion can only be continued if that is the pleasure of the Committee, but it could be taken in a more regular way on the motion for the Speaker to leave the chair.

Mr. GIVENS: It seemed a very curious thing that they could not discuss that item. The Premier told them that the money was paid under Act of Parliament, and that they were bound to vote the money. He denied that *in toto*, for the reason that the Act only said that the Executive Council "may" grant a gratuity. The Committee had a perfect right to say whether the money should be granted or not. He thought the amount was improperly included in the schedule, and he would point out that there was no mandate to grant the money. The Act did not say "shall" but "may."

The HOME SECRETARY: It means the same under the Acts Shortening Act.

Mr. GIVENS was surprised at a gentleman possessed of the legal acumen of the Home Secretary saying that "shall" meant "may." At all events the 1863 Act was passed before the Acts Shortening Act, and therefore the latter did not amend the former. The word "may" was evidently inserted in the Act with a view of allowing future Parliaments to exercise some discretion in those matters.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: All cases under that Act have been treated alike.

Mr. GIVENS: If a wrong had been perpetuated for a thousand years that was no argument in favour of its being continued when it was discovered to be a wrong. The late Mr. Drew had occupied a splendid position for many years, and was in a thoroughly good position to provide for his wife and family. Compare his position with that of the poor Civil servant drawing less than £100 a year. What chance had that man to provide for his widow as compared with the man at £1,000 a year? He found that hon. members on the other side were always most reluctant to grant aid to the widow of a poorly paid Civil servant, yet they tumbled over one another in their eagerness to give gratuities to the widows of highly paid men.

The HOME SECRETARY: All are treated alike.

Mr. GIVENS: Would the hon. gentleman tell him that in every case the widow of Civil servants received a year's salary.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, under the 1863 Act.

Mr. GIVENS: There were not 2 per cent. of the Civil servants under that Act. What was the use of the hon. gentleman interjecting that they were all treated alike, when he was perfectly aware that they were not all treated alike? If such treatment was meted out to highly paid Civil servants, was it not equally good for the lower paid officials?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They are not under the Act of 1863. It has been repealed.

Mr. GIVENS: The Act of 1863 did not compel the Government to give gratuities to the widows of Civil servants under that Act. Its provisions were entirely permissive. But as a matter of fact large gratuities had been granted to the widows of other highly paid Civil servants who were not under that Act, while the Government had set their faces against the granting of gratuities to the relatives of men who had been killed while in the public service, possibly through the negligence of their fellow employees. He entered his emphatic protest against the unfair treatment meted out to the general body of Civil servants, while large gratuities were paid to the widows and orphans of highly paid officials.

The PREMIER: I find that there are sixty-nine persons under the Act of 1863.

Mr. COWLEY: With regard to the remarks of the last speaker, he would point out that there was a gratuity in that vote of £50 to Mrs. Henderson on her retirement from the position of house-cleaner in connection with the Parliamentary Buildings, and one of £175 to Mr. Woosley on his retirement from the office of messenger to the Assembly. When those persons retired he recommended that they should be granted twelve months' salary, and it was immediately agreed to by the Government.

Mr. McDONALD pointed out that on the same Supplementary Estimates there was a sum of £295 for gratuities to the widows of the crew of the Channel Rock lightship. That amount was considered sufficient in such a case, but the widows of highly paid Civil servants were treated very differently. He was altogether opposed to the granting of gratuities to the widows of public officers. The proper course, as had been pointed out time and again, was for the Government to establish a State life insurance, and to give Civil servants to understand when they entered the service that there was an opportunity for them to provide for their families, and that if they did not like to take advantage of it, they would have to put up with the consequences. Only the other day a motion was submitted asking for a gratuity of £1,000 to the widow of the late Crown Solicitor, and the Premier stated that if the amount were reduced to £800 he would agree to the proposal. In nearly every case where a highly-paid official was concerned a large sum was granted by way of gratuity, and yet in the case of the junior clerk of the Assembly, who had caught a cold in that Chamber while performing his duty and had become almost invalidated for life, the magnificent sum of £75 was granted. It would have been far better if the Government had provided him with some light employment than to have given him that gratuity. He held that all those gratuities should be placed on the ordinary Estimates, so that the Committee might have an opportunity of saying whether they should be granted or not.

Mr. FISHER wished to contrast the gratuity of £1,000 paid to the widow of the late Mr. W. L. G. Drew with the gratuities paid to the widows of some other men in the public service. On those Estimates he found a gratuity of £100 to the widow of the late H. Reiners; gratuities to families of the men lost on the ketch "Dudley" £307, that was about £100 to each of the three widows; a gratuity of £50 to the widow of the late lengthsmen Bremner; and a gratuity of £50 to the widow of the late line repairer Leigh. Why was there such a disparity in the gratuities paid to the widows of public servants, that in one case the amount was £1,000, while in another it was the ridiculous sum of £50?

Mr. J. HAMILTON: One is a gift, and the other is a payment by virtue of a contract, and to refuse it would be repudiation.

Mr. FISHER: In the case of the widow of the late Mr. Drew it was a gift, because under the Act there was no binding duty on the Executive to pay her any specific sum. They might under the Act grant one month's salary or twelve months' salary, or they might not grant anything. By habit and custom the Executive put those amounts into the schedule simply because it was a very convenient way of getting rid of a difficult question. Admitting that it was fair to allow the widow of the late Mr. Drew that sum of £1,000, the Government should give some advice to those who put the other amounts of £50 on the Estimates for the widows of other public servants, that would lead them to increase their to something like a decent sum.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The position of that matter should be clearly understood. If it was, hon. members would not raise the objections they did. Thirty-six years ago an Act of Parliament was passed under which certain privileges were conferred upon officers then enrolled in the public service of the colony. It so happened that Mr. Drew was one of several who had the benefits of that Act conferred upon them. As hon. members now knew, that Act was repealed some time ago, but the contracts entered into under it, with public servants, had been maintained, and to deprive persons of rights accruing to them under the Act would be repudiation. Under that Act the public servants had to pay, and some of them still continued to pay, 2 per cent. of the salary they enjoyed. He was not prepared to state the amount of the late Mr. Drew's contributions; but as he paid for thirty-five years 2 per cent. per annum on what was always a very respectable salary—to his knowledge not less than £1,000 a year for the last twenty-five years—hon. members would see that the amount the Treasury received could not be much less than what Mrs. Drew was entitled to claim under the Act, and with compound interest added it would probably more than cover the £1,000. The fact remained that a contract was formally entered into by Parliament, and where a public servant paid his contributions under the Act as regularly as he would have done to an insurance or guarantee fund, his widow at his death was entitled to certain benefits under the Act. That was not an isolated case, and the Estimates for past years would show that similar payments had always been placed in the schedules, because they were considered as payments under an Act of Parliament. If it was a payment of an unprecedented character he could understand the objections raised, but it was carrying out just what had been done by previous Governments, from whichever side of the House they had been formed. There had never been any repudiation of such a claim under the Act. The number of those under the Act was gradually diminishing, but in the fulness of time other similar claims would no doubt arise, and they would be presented to the House in the same way. That was not a grant made out of favour or affection for any one person, but was an amount to which the widow of a public servant was entitled under the Act of 1863, and as such he could not understand why there should be any demur to it.

Mr. STEWART: The hon. gentleman's contention was that that was a payment made as part of a contract entered into between the late Mr. Drew and the State, but he could not find that in the 1863 Act at all. Clause 17 provided for a contribution of 2 per cent. of the salary received, and that an officer who was retired through incapacity or illness, or upon reaching the age of sixty years, "shall" receive a certain

pension. That was obligatory and part of a contract, and payments made under that section could rightly be placed in the schedule. But section 22, which had been read by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government, was simply permissive, and that clause appeared to him to have been inserted for the purpose of providing for the widows and families of Civil servants who had lost their lives in the service or who had died prematurely while in the service. It certainly had never been intended for the benefit of the widow of a man who had drawn the magnificent sum of £32,000 and some odd hundreds from the public purse. He thought that sum had been improperly placed in the schedule, because it was not paid under an contract. Custom did not make law, and he went back to the Act, under which he found that the Governor in Council had power to make certain payments or not to make them. The Government need not have paid the widow of the late Mr. Drew a single farthing, and they would have been within their rights according to the bargain made with Mr. Drew. If the Government had refused to give Mrs. Drew anything, could she have sued for that sum in a court of law?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. STEWART: On what clause of the Act would she have founded her claim? Not upon clause 22, for there it was left to the discretion of the Governor in Council, which meant the Ministry of the day. If the Ministry cared to make a payment it could do so [9.30 p.m.] within certain limits; if it did not care to do so it could legally refuse.

Mr. Drew could have retired at sixty, and perhaps he ought to have retired at sixty, but it might be said by some hon. members that by not retiring he saved the country his pension. There might be more than one way, however, of looking at that. He did not see where the contract came in, and he thought the Government had acted improperly in including this payment in the schedule. He did not object to them making the payment, though if he were in their position he would not have made it. The intention of the section was to provide gratuities in cases of necessity and hardship; but there could not be, or, at least, there should not be, any claim of that kind made in connection with this case. This officer received an amount of nearly £33,000 from the Government, and it could only be by want of thrift if the widow was left in indigent circumstances. The item ought to have been placed on the ordinary Estimates, so that it might have been discussed fully, and a vote might have been taken on it if the Committee desired.

Mr. FISHER believed that under the Railways Act the Commissioner had power to grant a certain amount as a gratuity.

The TREASURER: He can only recommend.

Mr. FISHER: Why not place the gratuity to Mrs. Drew in the same category? The money had been paid, and it would not mend matters to put it into the schedule. He submitted that it would be inadvisable to continue the practice.

Mr. McDONALD did not know whether it was intended to have a general discussion covering the whole of these Estimates.

The TREASURER: Take them as they come.

Mr. McDONALD: It was difficult for him to do that, because he wanted to point out the large amount of money spent year by year without the authority of Parliament, and if that was to be done on every item there would not be much in it when it came to an increase of £1 or £2. In the year 1896-7 the amount was £94,849; in 1897-8, it was £120,944; and this year it was £216,146.

The TREASURER: I will explain the increase in each department as we go along.

Mr. McDONALD: There had been no explanation with regard to this department so far. In connection with the vote he wished to know whether the Government were prepared to do anything in the case of the late junior clerk, Mr. Doran.

The TREASURER: He received six months' leave of absence on full pay before he retired.

Mr. McDONALD: He did not retire; he was forced to retire.

The TREASURER: He was promised that if he got fit for work some other work would be found for him.

Mr. FISHER: Was he not informed that he would not be required here any more?

The TREASURER: I have told you the facts.

Mr. McDONALD said that Mr. Doran was taken ill with pneumonia or bronchitis. He saw him some months before the federal session, and was very sorry and very much surprised to see that such a fine, strong young fellow had become such a physical wreck. He understood that this young man got six months' leave of absence, and at the end of that time he was told that his services would not be required any longer. Then another appointment had been made. The least the Government could have done would have been to put someone in the position temporarily, in order to see if he could pull round. Everyone would be pleased to learn that there had been a vast improvement in his condition lately, and he hoped the Government would make some effort to give him some light employment.

The PREMIER said he would be very glad to accede to the request made; and if the young man called upon him, he would endeavour to get him some light employment.

Mr. FISHER understood that the Press reporting staff had no means of obtaining refreshments during late sittings of the House, and he suggested that the Refreshment-room Committee or the Speaker would make some arrangement, so that the Press reporters could get some refreshments served in their own room.

Question put and passed.

CHIEF SECRETARY.

LAND DEFENCE, MARINE DEFENCE, AND MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

The CHIEF SECRETARY moved that £5,574 1s. 7d. be granted for the Land Defence, for the Marine Defence Force, and for miscellaneous services. The item £145 16s. 8d., for the salary of the officer in charge of military works, had been placed on these Estimates because the designation of that officer had been changed. He was formerly termed instructor in submarine mining. No one could object to the salary of Colonel Blaxland in the Northern Military District. Then there was the amount of £210 11s. 4d. for two adjutants—Carroll and Webb; the latter was at present in South Africa. There was a sum of £16 19s. 3d. for the salary of the clerk to the paymaster, who was on probation, and £475 18s. 11d. for pay. That sum had been placed on the Estimates to make up two additional days. The amount of £263 19s. 8d. to the Queensland Rifle Association was to make up the loss on ammunition sold to rifle clubs. The amount of £342 8s. was also necessitated by the two days' extra encampment. The sum of £400 had been expended in connection with the Federal Rifle League meeting. With regard to the Marine Defence Force, the salary of £75 was that for the relieving gunnery instructor. There was also £40 to the navigating lieutenant, and an allowance of £12 10s. to the gunnery instructor. The fitting out of the "Paluma" was put down at £484 0s. 6d. It would be remembered that, when there were rumours of war, it was deemed advisable to put both the "Gayundah" and the "Paluma" into

commission. Then there was £600 for the drillshed at Maryborough. That was a matter which the Marine Defence Force there thought of great importance, and he had seen the building, and he thought it would be a very commodious building for the purpose. It had cost nearly £2,000 to build. Under the head of "Miscellaneous Services" there was the sum of £66 9s. 6d. for the "Catalogue Scientific Literature," which had been highly appreciated by scientific bodies in England. The amount £313 2s. 5d. for "Expenses Criminal Code Commission" was the total amount in connection with that work.

Mr. JENKINSON: Who was that paid to?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There were certain fees paid.

Mr. JENKINSON: Who to?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Members of the Commission.

Mr. JENKINSON: The Chief Justice?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No; certainly not to any of the judiciary. That was the whole of the amount, and he did not think hon. members could grumble at it, seeing that the Commission not only revised the work of the Chief Justice, but also, by doing so, had created a fuller amount of confidence in the public mind concerning the value of the Code.

Mr. FISHER: We are only sorry they did not revise it more.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He believed the Code formed a very valuable feature of the legislation of the year. The item of £24, Government Printing Office Commission, was the balance of the vote. The item of £496 8s., expenses Commonwealth Bill, was for printing circulars, etc. Then there was £91 1s. 5d. for European telegrams, and the sum of £837 7s. 2d. for miscellaneous and incidentals, of which he had not got the particulars.

Mr. FISHER: That is very large.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He mentioned several of the items that would be required in going through the Estimates.

Mr. BROWNE: The Chief Secretary had explained that the item of £475 18s. 11d. was for two days' additional pay for the Land Defence Forces. The Marine Forces put in two days' additional in camp, but no provision had been made for extra pay for them. When the Estimates were under discussion he brought up the question of the treatment of the Naval Forces, and the hon. gentleman said something should be done. It was only fair that they should be placed on the same footing as the Land Forces.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member's remarks were not disregarded. The reason the two days' additional pay for the Naval Forces did not appear was because he had satisfied himself that they might, with deferred and efficient pay, receive a larger amount of pay than the Land Forces.

Mr. McDONALD: There was an increase in this vote, as compared with last year, of £2,367. In every one of these votes the expenditure was getting larger every year, and that had been going on for a number of years. There should be some attempt on the part of the Government to stem the gradual increase in unauthorised expenditure. Of course the money had been spent, and all that members had to do was to vote it. They were placed in this position—they did not know when the Estimates were under consideration what amount was included on the Supplementary Estimates, and could not get a fair estimate of the amount which had been spent in any particular department for the previous year. Then, again, they were told of the magnificent surplus the colony had; but when they deducted this £216,146 19s. 6d., the surplus became very small indeed.

Mr. BROWNE: There is a deficiency of £76.

Mr. McDONALD: They were told by one of the late Treasurers, Sir Hugh Nelson, that an effort would be made by the Government to cut down this expenditure to the lowest possible minimum. In fact, he believed that in one year Sir Hugh brought it down as low as about £60,000, or, if his memory served him rightly, even lower. Now in the last three years it had increased to £94,000, then to £120,000, and now to £216,000. It was alarming to find it increasing at this enormous rate, and it pointed out this—that for years past the Government had been starving the various departments, and had starved them to such an extent that they found themselves compelled by force of circumstances to spend these large sums to make them efficient. He should like an explanation as to why there had been this increase in this item this year.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that the principal increases were in the land [10 p.m.] and marine defence votes, and were due to the debate in the Committee at the time the Estimates-in-Chief were going through last year. This year the expenditure on the Estimates for the Chief Secretary's Department was £140,000, whereas last year it was only £104,000, to which had to be added the £5,500 now asked for. It was inevitable that unforeseen expenditure should arise. It was very easy for hon. members to decry it, but the Government could not possibly foresee all the exigencies that would arise during the course of twelve months. The hon. member talked of the Supplementary Estimates reducing the surplus on 30th June last, but all the money appearing on the Supplementary Estimates had been paid before the close of the last financial year. The hon. member wanted to subvert the whole financial system of the Treasurer. As a set-off against unforeseen expenditure, there was always a large amount of the money which was voted on the Estimates-in-Chief which was not expended. The hon. member for Flinders was really complaining of expenditure which was due to the opinions expressed last year by hon. members, and he was very pleased that they had been disposed to increase the vote for defence purposes, because until lately Parliament had not been very generously disposed to the Defence Force. The vote for the Marine Force in particular had been so economical as to interfere with efficiency.

The TREASURER: As the hon. member for Flinders appeared to be going right through the Estimates, he would just mention several items to show that the expenditure was unavoidable. The endowment to marsupial boards was £5,600. That would have to be paid, but it was impossible for the Treasurer to tell beforehand what amount would be required for that purpose. Last year the Government gave £4,000.

Mr. McDONALD: When was this money paid?

The TREASURER: On 30th June. After paying all that money they had a surplus of £150,000. The Home Secretary had to find £13,000 extra for hospitals. Of course the Government had to give £2 for £1 collected by subscriptions, and, as money had been plentiful last year, the subscriptions to the hospitals had been larger. Another item was £3,000 for repairs, etc., to the Exhibition Buildings for a museum. Then the prosecution of the Queensland National Bank directors entailed an expenditure of £5,600. For some land in William street for the extension of Queen's Wharf, the Treasurer had to give £5,000. Then there was an amount of £5,048 for the defalcations of the late paymaster to the Treasury, and £4,662 for the Admiralty survey, final claim—that amount had been owing for three or four years. Customs required £1,800 additional. The Customs revenue

last year had been larger, which necessitated a greater expenditure for collection. In the Marine Department, the repairs to the "Albatross" involved an outlay of £1,500, and the expenses in connection with the pearl-shelling disaster £1,497. No one could possibly have foreseen that expenditure. Buoys and beacons entailed an expenditure of £4,800, and the survey of land, special account, £5,000. For the purchase of mineral specimens £35,000 had been spent, of which amount £30,000 had already come back this year. Then there was £5,000 for the London mining exhibition. The railways involved the largest amount—£40,000. The estimated railway revenue last year was £1,158,000, while the actual receipts were £1,352,000, and it cost more to collect that amount, because if they had to run more trains they had to employ more men. Of course, there was always more unforeseen expenditure in a good year than in a bad year.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Treasurer how much money was paid away during the first three months of this year which was chargeable to last year? There was always a large amount that was so chargeable to the preceding year's expenditure.

The TREASURER: The amount this year was £273,000. Last year it was £280,000.

Mr. FISHER asked the Chief Secretary how it was that the miscellaneous expenditure and incidentals had increased from £169 7s. 6d. last year to £377 7s. 2d. this year? It was an extraordinary increase. He would like the hon. gentleman to give a number of the items that made up that amount.

Mr. JENKINSON (*Wide Bay*) must enter his protest against the unauthorised expenditure which appeared under the headings of miscellaneous, contingencies, and incidentals. On the Supplementary Estimates there was an amount exceeding £8,000, the details of which should certainly be given unless there was some reason for cloaking the items.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In reply to the hon. member for Gympie, he might say that the Estimates for 1898-99 were framed when there was a division of offices. The Chief Secretary's department was established as a separate department, and there was an apportionment of the item incidental expenses. £2,000 was only taken for the Chief Secretary's department, whereas it was found that the expenditure considerably exceeded that amount. There were some large items of a special character. For instance, representation at the Federal Council cost £473.

Mr. FISHER: Why not state it?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It was all included in the one item. In addition to that another item was funeral expenses and doctor's fees for the late Mr. Byrnes, and a variety of other items. It was found that the vote of £2,000 last year was insufficient, and this year £3,000 was asked for.

Mr. FISHER: No amount of explanation would do away with the fact that there was an amount of £400 not set out in detail, while there were small sums such as £12 10s., £16, and £24 which were mentioned. He saw no reason why the specific items in connection with the expenditure of £400 should not be stated.

Mr. STEWART asked whether any payments had been made under that heading since 30th June?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I understand not.

Mr. STEWART: How did the hon. gentleman explain the difference between the Auditor-General's report, which gave the amount of unforeseen expenditure at £146,000, and the Supplementary Estimates, which made the amount £216,000?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The explanation given by the Treasurer was that the £180,000 represented the Orders in Council authorising expenditure on account of the year 1898-99 to the 30th June, but that the expenditure on account of that year went on to the 30th of September for certain services, which were connected with the preceding financial year.

Mr. STEWART: There was an expenditure of nearly £70,000 which had not come before the Auditor-General, and he supposed the same thing had gone on for years and years. It was not a clear statement of accounts. On those Supplementary Estimates they had a sum of £216,000 for unauthorised expenditure, and in the Auditor-General's report the amount put down for unauthorised expenditure was £146,941.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: £180,000.

Mr. STEWART: The sum the hon. gentleman referred to was for the previous year. The amount voted for 1898-99 was £3,697,120, and the unauthorised expenditure for that year was £146,000.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the hon. member would turn to page 14 of the Auditor-General's report he would see that the unforeseen expenditure for 1897-98 was £180,107, and that the unforeseen expenditure up to the 30th of June, 1899, was £146,941; but from the 30th June to the 30th September there was £60,000 additional, or close up to £60,000. The payments in the month of September were generally heavier, as they were made in order to terminate the accounts for the preceding financial year.

Mr. STEWART: The whole thing seemed to be very much mixed. As a matter of fact they did not get a true account of the unauthorised expenditure in any year. The £69,000 which had been paid since the 30th of June would not appear as unauthorised expenditure, but under the heading of expenditure for the year 1898-99, and if they deducted that amount from the surplus they would have a surplus of only £80,000.

Mr. JENKINSON hoped the hon. gentleman would give a little more information about the item of £837 for miscellaneous and incidental expenditure. The hon. gentleman had accounted for about half of it by the federal spree at Hobart, but he ought to give the Committee some more of the larger sums included under that heading.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Auditor-General has satisfied himself about them.

Question put and passed.

HOME SECRETARY.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £20,348 16s. 2d. be granted for the Home Secretary's Department. The first items [10.30 p.m.] for the department and the Electoral Registrar explained themselves. The salary of the Electoral Registrar did not appear on the Estimates until as from the 1st July of this year, and he had been appointed earlier in the year. "Labour Bureau Relief, unrepaid expenditure, £559 13s. 9d.," was a rather peculiar item. Where advances had been made by the Labour Bureau to men seeking work and so on, the amounts were paid out of a cash credit which the Immigration Agent was authorised to draw against. Amounts had been paid in that way for the last eight or nine years during which the proceedings of the bureau had been going on, and amounts repaid, by persons to whom the advances had been made, had been paid by him into the same fund. He was not receiving as much from year to year as he paid out, and there came a time when he had a debit balance of £559 13s. 9d. The whole of the accounts had

been strictly audited by the Auditor-General and found perfectly correct, of course; and the Auditor-General recommended that in future the account should be treated on a different footing, and that all amounts repaid should be paid into the consolidated revenue. That sum of £559 13s. 9d. was for the purpose of wiping off that debit balance. That amount, or so much of it as would come in, would be paid in future into the consolidated revenue. The amount for contingencies, £547 7s. 11d., meant that the amount of £5,000 voted last year for relief had been found to be that much short. The vote for leper stations was due to alterations and improvements which had cost something more than had been anticipated.

Mr. STEWART: How many additional lepers are there?

The HOME SECRETARY: As against last year there were, he thought, five or six additional lepers on Friday Island, and the number on Stradbroke Island was about the same, there having been two deaths and two admissions, he thought; but there were two there who would be removed to Friday Island when the opportunity offered. The items under the heading "Registrar-General" spoke for themselves—they were simply under-estimates. In connection with the item of £689 6s. 10d., when the management of the Police Force was talked of it might be admitted that it was a pretty close estimate to come within that sum on a total vote amounting to over £173,000. For the Government Printer there were two items—extra hands and overtime, £199 14s. 4d.; and paper, machines, type, etc., £2,948 13s. 6d. That included new binding machinery the necessity for which had not been anticipated when the Estimates for the year were being framed. The Advertising Board had been short by £1,332 16s. 5d. Under the heading "Lunatic Asylums" there was £50, which was an agreed-upon increase to the medical superintendent at Goodna. In connection with prisons, provisions, stores, and incidentals required £801 7s. 8d. more than had been voted. Under the heading "Reformatories" there were two items—Industrial School for Girls, Yeronga, £423 18s. 9d.; and for boys, at Riverview, £284 2s. 6d.

Mr. JENKINSON: Those are kept by the Salvation Army?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, and both were very successful institutions. They were easily accessible by rail, and any hon. member who visited them would be very much pleased with what he would see.

Mr. JENKINSON: On what conditions do they get the money. Do we exercise any supervision?

The HOME SECRETARY: Eight shillings per week was paid for each inmate, and the only control exercised was by way of inspection. They were excellent institutions, and in Victoria he found they were largely going in for those institutions in lieu of State reformatories. The vote for the Dunwich Asylum was one they could not control, and £1,547 3s. 8d. more was required than had been estimated. The vote for charitable allowances was the largest under the Home Secretary's Department—for hospitals generally—amounting to £13,037 17s. 1d. They had no control over that, as they had to pay £2 for £1 on the subscriptions received. In a good year that meant additional expenditure, but it was expenditure which hon. members would not grudge. Included in the amount for charitable allowance was the sum of £250 for benevolent societies, which were very excellent institutions. The next item was six months' salary of the medical officer at Port Douglas, where it was now deemed advisable to pay a salary instead of paying the medical officer by fees. The first item under the heading "Miscellaneous Services," was a grant

of £200 to the Lady Musgrave Lodge in consideration of the reserve at Milton. This was a reserve which was granted by way of endowment to the lodge some years ago, and had been of no value to the institution.

Mr. JENKINSON: Has it been utilised by the Government?

The HOME SECRETARY: Not yet, unless it had been used temporarily by the Defence Force. Then there was £1,450 for the purchase of a site for courthouse at Townsville, which, he believed, was very necessary. The next item was £1,443 5s. 9d. for relief to aboriginals; there was a sum of £120 for grants to cemeteries; and the amount for incidentals and miscellaneous expenses was £1,402 19s. 5d.

Mr. BROWNE: That seems a large amount. How is it made up?

The HOME SECRETARY said he would read some of the items. Relieving police magistrates, expenses of visiting, amounted to a good deal more than was expected. The vote last year was £3,500. The expenses of visiting amounted to £940, and the amount for relieving police magistrates travelling expenses, £350; police force, firewood, etc., £205; clerical assistance, £320; removal of police magistrates and clerks of petty sessions, £560; stamp account, £845; typewriting, £150; subscription to "Queensland Law Journal," £100; sending twenty-seven Chinese from Townsville to Port Darwin, £150; and there were several small items.

Mr. BROWNE: The reason he asked for some of the details was because several small items were put down separately, and £1,400 seemed a large amount to put down for incidentals and miscellaneous expenses when such an item as £25 for the medical officer at Port Douglas, for instance, was made a separate item.

The HOME SECRETARY explained that, when the expenditure during the year in connection with any particular item on the Estimates-in-Chief exceeded the amount voted, the extra amount was placed separately on the Supplementary Estimates; in the same way, when the vote for miscellaneous services was exceeded, the extra amount paid during the year was put under the head of "Miscellaneous Services" in the Supplementary Estimates. The vote for miscellaneous services in the Home Secretary's Department was a sort of *omnium gatherum*, which included whatever could not be conveniently included in any of the numerous sub-departments. When the revenue increased, the expenditure must also increase. Many of these miscellaneous items fluctuated.

Mr. BROWNE understood the explanation of the hon. gentleman; but he thought that it would be very much better if all these items were given more in detail.

The HOME SECRETARY: A number of these items it would be impossible to forecast, and if they were separated it would cause a good deal of trouble, as transfers would be necessary from one account to another.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. Murray, *Normanby*) moved that £12,327 6s. 2d. be granted for the Department of Public Works. Hon. members would see that £291 15s. 1d. was put down for temporary assistance; £3,000 for furniture and fittings; £528 5d. for Defence Force buildings and repairs; £1,600 for purchase of land for the Custom-house at Townsville; repairs, etc., and annexes to the Exhibition Buildings, £3,000; repairs and incidentals, £1,122 10s. 11d.; painting public buildings, £272 9s. 3d.; additions to the Postmaster-

General's Department, £1,500; and £335 9s. for the Chief and Home Secretary's Department.

Mr. JENKINSON asked for a little more information about the repairs and incidentals.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They were repairs and incidentals that could not be foreseen. The Postmaster-General had authorised the expenditure of £1,500 for additions in his department. The same thing applied to the Home Secretary's Department. Then there was £613 4s. for roads and bridges.

Mr. BROWNE asked whether the item £1,600 for the purchase of the land for the Custom-house at Townsville had not been charged twice over? It appeared in the Loan Estimates and on these Estimates.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is the same item.

Mr. BROWNE wished to know if the amount had been paid twice over.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No.

Mr. JENKINSON: It appears twice.

The PREMIER: The amount had been first charged to loan, and it was afterwards found that there was enough money to pay for it out of current revenue. Loan account would be credited with the amount.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

* The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge, *Maranoa*) moved that £8,974 8s. 2d. be granted for the Department of Justice. He would draw hon. members' attention to the fact that, not including the amount mentioned under the heading of "Crown Solicitor," the difference between the amount voted on the general Estimates and the amount expended was only £189 10s. 5d., so that the Estimates for last year had been tolerably accurate.

Mr. BROWNE: Could the Attorney-General give any information with regard to the item of £5,661 7s. 5d., cost of Queensland National Bank prosecutions?

* The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: A return had been laid on the table showing the [11 p.m.] amount of fees paid to counsel.

There were five or six counsel engaged in connection with the case, and their labours had extended over a period of five months. The amount of printing done was enormous, and it was thought proper to charge the cost of it to the Department of Justice instead of to the department to which the Government Printing Office belonged, so that hon. members would see the total cost of the whole proceedings.

Mr. McDONALD: Was the item of £112 7s. 9d. for the travelling expenses for the totalisator inspector?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is at the rate of £450 a year.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The same rate had not been maintained since. The item of £579 10s. 2d., appellants' costs, *Harding and Another v. the Stamp Commissioner*, was the amount of the costs of carrying a case to the Privy Council. It was a very important case in connection with the revenue, and his (the Attorney-General's) lamented predecessor, the Hon. T. J. Byrnes, decided it should be carried to the Privy Council. The decision was adverse to the Crown here.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURER.

The TREASURER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) moved that £30,208 18s. 1d. be granted to the Treasurer's Department. £1,661 19s. 5d., refund of border tax, was the amount that had been paid—the Government had always refunded the border tax—to the border local authorities to improve their roads to the railway

stations. The item of £5,000 was for the purchase of 132 feet of land fronting the Brisbane River and William street, and adjoining their own land.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who was it bought from?

The TREASURER: It was bought through Messrs. Cameron Brothers, and he thought one of the banks held it. It was a very cheap purchase. If it had been known the Government were buying it, it would not have been got so cheap.

Mr. McDONALD: It should be a good lesson to retain lands in the rising towns of the colony.

The TREASURER: The next item was £1,755 16s. 7d., commission and exchange, and the following item, £5,048 13s. 8d., defalcations of the late paymaster, which had to be paid for.

Mr. JENKINSON: Is that the total amount?

The TREASURER: They received £1,000 from the guarantee fund.

Mr. JENKINSON: The defalcations were £6,000 altogether?

The TREASURER: Yes, £6,000.

Mr. KERR: And he only got two years, and a man who steals a pair of boots gets twelve months.

The TREASURER: There was the item of £4,662 2s. 5d., Admiralty survey, final claim. £100 had been paid to the widow of the late H. Reiners, who had paid nothing into the fund at all. The gratuities of £307 17s. 3d. to the families of the men lost on the ketch "Dudley" represented, he thought, twelve months' salary. There was an item of £1,497 5s. 11d. for the expenses incurred in connection with the pearl-shelling disaster at Cape Melville. Two or three steamers were chartered. £295 was devoted to gratuities to the widows of the crew of the Channel Rock lightship. Some of the men were only a few months in the service, and they had not paid anything into the fund at all. £237 10s. was paid for the charter of the steamer "Lady Lamington" in search of the "Emu."

Mr. JENKINSON: How many days was she out?

The TREASURER: Eight or nine days. Another item was £4,850 18s. 7d. for buoys, beacons, moorings, etc.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. B. H. O'Connell, *Musgrave*) moved that there be granted to the Department of Public Lands the sum of £14,277 18s. 7d. The item of £62 10s., salary of office-keeper, was due to an increase consequent on a change, and the item of incidentals to additional clerical assistance being required.

Mr. McDONALD: What does this pastoral expert get?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That was the salary of Mr. Woodbine, who was engaged on the recommendation of the New South Wales Government to inspect Norley and Thargomindah runs, in the Western district. He believed he was a capital man. His salary was £1,000 per annum, and the amount of £833 6s. 8d. included his travelling expenses. The next item was £891, part of which was for the salary of a clerk in the lands office at Stanthorpe—an appointment which was recommended by the Public Service Board—and allowances and incidentals for land commissioners and land agents. The vote had been found insufficient last year, partly on account of the appointment of two new land commissioners—Messrs. Bond and Evans. The next item was £5,610, survey of land. There was an increase in salary to a draftsman, £10; instruments and postage, £450, the vote last year having proved insufficient by that amount on account of the heavy expenditure in the pre-

paration of maps, etc., for the inquiry office. The vote for the preparation of deeds and leases had proved insufficient by £150, and £5,000 was required for the survey of land. The last item had been fully explained in the Estimates-in-Chief. Under the new Land Act the selectors only paid one-fifth of the survey fees during the first year, and, in order that the surveyors might be paid, it was found necessary to create a special account of £5,000. The vote for rabbit-netting was £2,776. Then there were several amounts for compensation on the resumption of expired leases. There was an item of £73 for legal expenses, due to the inspection of the different titles when the Clifton Estate was taken over. For the cost of a special conveyance for Messrs. Hume and Woodbine, in connection with the examination of pastoral country in the Western district, £228 was paid.

Mr. JENKINSON: Did not Mr. Woodbine pay his own expenses?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was a special examination of the dry country regarding which a Bill had lately been before the Chamber, and it had been thought desirable that Messrs. Hume and Woodbine should make a special inspection.

Mr. BROWNE: Did the inspection take place between 1st September, 1898, and 30th June, 1899?

Mr. STORY: In September and October, 1898.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Hon. members must know from the Press that the inspection was made.

Mr. KERR: We want to know how much they paid per day for that coach?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said Cobb and Co. had to make special arrangements and send out relays of horses for the whole of the distance.

Mr. BROWNE had not one word to say against Mr. Woodbine, the pastoral expert, but, in answer to an interjection that £833 was a very large sum to pay that gentleman for ten months, the Secretary for Lands said that it was at the rate of £1,000 a year, and included travelling expenses. There was an item of £228 for travelling expenses for Messrs. Hume and Woodbine, and he had asked at what date the inspection took place. The Minister was not prepared to answer that question, but the hon. member for Balonne said it was in October, 1898. If it was within the period embraced between 1st September, 1898, and 30th June, 1899, then Mr. Woodbine's expenses were not included in the £1,000 a year.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That was a special inspection.

Mr. BROWNE: He knew that, but whoever provided the special conveyance received £228, which was at the rate of £114 for each inspector. So that in addition to £833 for that period Mr. Woodbine also cost £114.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Officers who were obliged to travel received various allowances from 10s. a day upwards, but that did not include coach fares. It must be obvious that if a man was sent out to Camooweal he could not pay his expenses out of 10s. or £1 a day.

Mr. MAXWELL asked what officer performed the inspection of runs in the Warrego and Maranoa districts?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That was the inspection spoken of previously, which was performed by Mr. Kellett at a cost of £144 18s., the balance being paid for incidental expenses.

Mr. STEWART noticed that the appeals in the case of Norley and Thargomindah Runs cost £1,997 4s. 7d. Could the Minister tell them what rent the Crown derived annually from those runs?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Under Secretary informed him the rent was roughly £500 from one run, and £400 from the other.

Mr. STEWART: Perhaps the hon. gentleman could tell them who received the £1,997?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Mr. Lilley and Mr. Bell were the counsel engaged in the case. The assessors' fees were also paid out of that amount.

Mr. McDONALD: Can you give us the information to-morrow?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes.

Mr. DAWSON would like to know exactly what information they would get to-morrow. Would the Minister give the names of the persons who received the money, in what capacity they were acting, and when they received it? Was that understood?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes.

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*), referring to the item £228, cost of special conveyance for Messrs. Hume and Woodbine, said he would like to know who provided the special conveyance?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Cobb and Co.

Mr. GIVENS: It seemed that Cobb and Co. must have a special representative, who had the ear of the Minister, if they were able to get such handsome fees. His experience of travelling was that two men could get all over Queensland for a very much less sum than that. He should like to know how many runs were

inspected during that tour of inspection, how many miles were travelled, who provided the conveyance, and if there was no other mode of conveyance available. In nearly every little town in the Western country there were people who could provide a buggy or a sociable to drive those officials round quite as well as Cobb and Co., but it appeared that Cobb and Co. had a monopoly, not only of mail carrying but also of conveying inspectors round the country, and that if other men were to have a fair deal they would have to send a special representative into the House to barrack for them and to earwig the Government.

Mr. STORY (*Balonne*): It was just like the hon. member to impute motives to other people that he was quite capable of acting on himself. The fact of the matter was that Cobb and Co. were applied to by the Secretary for Lands to take those gentlemen round, but they distinctly refused to do so, as the trip was off their line, and they had no coaches, horses, or grooms on the route.

Mr. GIVENS: How do you know all that?

Mr. STORY: Because he happened to be manager for the company. Cobb and Co. did not want the contract, but it was represented to them that it was impossible to get anybody else, and then, for the benefit of the district, they undertook the task, so that the inspectors might send in their report in time to be laid before Parliament. One of their road managers, who was paid £30 a month, was specially reserved to go on the trip, as they had to have a man who could buy as well as drive horses, seeing that they had to buy horses for the whole journey. Messrs. Hume and Woodbine went from Hughenden round to Urandangie, and he could assure the Committee that Cobb and Co. did not make enough out of the contract to pay them for the trouble they took. The then Secretary for Lands, Mr. Foxton, handed him a telegram stating that nobody could do it but Cobb and Co., and that Mr. Hume would not go unless he could travel in a proper conveyance. He thought the hon. member for Gregory would bear him

out that there was no other firm in Queensland at that time, or even at the present time, which could have undertaken a contract like that.

* The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: As one who had had a little experience in having to get officials round the country, he thought it was really the most expeditious as well as the cheapest way to employ people who had horses and buggies to carry out an expedition like that. He had had to arrange for the conveyance of judges in different parts of the country, and he had always found that he could do it much more cheaply and effectively by employing people who had appliances, and he had never yet been able to get anybody to manage those things so well as Cobb and Co. Considering the terribly bad character of the season prevailing at the time the trip in question was undertaken, and the difficulty in getting horsefeed, he did not think hon. members could complain of the amount charged. It would never do to go haggling with a number of different persons and arranging with them to carry out portions of the trip, as some of them might fail.

Mr. W. HAMILTON (*Gregory*): Anyone who had any knowledge of the country travelled by those officials would know that they had not sufficient time to make an efficient inspection. If they did make a thorough inspection they could not do it under the amount on the Estimates. But they travelled at the rate of seventy or eighty miles a day, and assessed the country for 100 miles on each side of their route, which was making a farce of the inspection; but they had to do it in order to send in their report before the session closed. The result was that their recommendations were not satisfactory to the members of that Committee, or to the pastoralists, or anybody else, and Mr. Woodbine was to go out and inspect the country again. He hoped that when that gentleman made a further report he would have more time at his command for the inspection. He hoped Mr. Woodbine would make a thorough inspection this time, because the legislation to deal with that country would, he hoped, be brought on early next session. Members on his side would have more confidence in Mr. Woodbine's report than they would have in Mr. Hume's, from what they knew of that gentleman's reports upon other properties. There was not much to grumble at in the expense of £228, because Cobb and Co. had no coaches on the route, and they had to make special arrangements, but all the same the value received for the money was very slight.

Mr. DAWSON agreed with the hon. member that the value received for that money had been very slight, because, according to the hon. gentleman's statement, Messrs. Hume and Woodbine simply galloped through the country, and one of them had now to go and inspect it again. It was true, as the Attorney-General had said, that it might be cheaper to deal with those who had coaches and horses when they wanted to get over that country, and probably Cobb and Co. were the only people who could supply the coach and horses in the time demanded. Still, he thought it was very unfortunate for the people of this country that they were absolutely at the mercy of Cobb and Co., and past Governments were responsible for their being in that unfortunate position. Cobb and Co. were the special favourites of the Government, and other possible competitors had been squeezed out of the market through the Government subsidies paid to Cobb and Co. When there was any special occasion for a trip like that which they were discussing, they were at the mercy of Cobb and Co., who could charge their own sweet price.

Mr. STORY: Why did not they get somebody else? We refused to do it at first.

Mr. DAWSON : Simply for the reason he was pointing out—that they were at the mercy of Cobb and Co. The hon. member knew perfectly well that Cobb and Co. were favoured and subsidised every year.

Mr. STORY : I deny that.

Mr. DAWSON : Every mail contract was given to them, and it was utterly impossible for anyone to compete with them, because they had been subsidised for years by the Government. He believed there was only one coach line in the whole of Queensland where there was any competitor against Cobb and Co., and that was between Croydon and Georgetown.

Mr. STORY : What nonsense !

Mr. DAWSON : It was not nonsense. That was about the only line. The matter had been brought particularly under his notice, and that of the hon. gentleman in charge of those Estimates, when they were on the Mines Commission. They had to bow to the sweet will of Cobb and Co., though they tried to protect the taxpayers as much as possible. It was the same all over the country, and it was a very unfortunate thing that that octopus of the West—Cobb and Co.—should have the power it had.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS : Can you do without them ?

Mr. DAWSON did not wish at all to do without them, but the Government should distribute their favours in such a way that it might be possible for some other company besides Cobb and Co. to get a living by coaching in the Western portion of the colony. He was not concerned with what the Attorney-General, or the manager for Cobb and Co., who had a seat in that House, had to say about the vote. He did not blame the hon. member for Balonne for looking after the interests of his firm, and getting the best price he possibly could, but it was their duty to see that the firm did not charge too much for the services they rendered, and in connection with that trip they wanted to know from the hon. gentleman in charge of the Estimates, what the distance travelled was, how long the trip took, and whether the department had any opportunity of getting some other firm to do the work at a cheaper price to the taxpayers.

Mr. LEAHY (*Bulloo*) said he probably knew as much about that matter as the Minister. Part of the trip was made in his electorate. He had some knowledge of what was going on at the time, as he had been consulted about the matter, and he knew that Cobb and Co. had been extremely anxious to get out of the business altogether, for the simple reason that the Western districts were in such a state at the time, and to make that trip of over 1,000 miles—

Mr. DAWSON : Could not the Minister reply ? Do you know more about it than the department ?

Mr. LEAHY knew more about the condition of the district at the time. If the trip could be done with one set of horses, and if the season was a good one the amount charged might be too much, but when they had to take sixteen or twenty spare horses, and five or six men, and had to have the feed carried along in advance in vans at expensive rates, and when they wanted to travel fifty or sixty miles a day—taking all those matters into account, the price was not outside fair limits. He would not like to do it for the money.

Mr. BOWMAN : And the work was ineffective.

Mr. LEAHY : That had nothing to do with it, but the hon. member for Gregory should know more about that than the hon. member for Warrego.

Mr. BOWMAN : He said so.

Mr. LEAHY : The hon. member for Gregory had been prepared to support a Bill founded on that trip, and that was the best proof that he thought the work had been effective. He would not have risen except that the leader of the Opposition made charges in reference to the hon. member for Balonne.

Mr. DAWSON protested against a number of apologists rising on the other side in defence of the Minister. The hon. member for Cairns asked information from the Minister in charge of the estimate, and the hon. member for Bulloo got up to answer. Did the hon. member want the Committee to believe that he was going to run the Minister for Lands ? So long as he was a member he was going to ask the Minister for the department to give any information he might require. If any private member liked to supplement the information given by the Minister, he would cheerfully accept what he had to say ; but he objected to any private member anticipating what the Minister had to say—trying by a sidewind to put words into the Minister's mouth.

Mr. LEAHY said he had the right of free speech in that Chamber, and he was not going to subordinate that right to any member or Minister if he chose to exercise it. There were certain things which a Minister knew a good deal more about than he did, but he knew a good deal more about this matter than the Minister did, and he had a perfect right to say what he knew. It was exceedingly bad taste for the hon. gentleman to attempt to badger a Minister who was new to office, and was not in the office when that particular transaction was carried out.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS was willing to give the Committee the information supplied to him by the Under Secretary. The arrangements were made largely by Mr. Hume. The Commissioners travelled about 1,000 miles, and they were travelling something over six weeks. He was not in office when the matter was arranged, and he had not the details. As the leader of the Opposition knew, when the late Mines Commission had to be coached from one place to another, he always endeavoured to make the best terms he could for the Government. In this case, he saw no reason to think that the amount was much in excess of what would have been charged if the whole of the coaching fraternity in Queensland had been asked to tender. The sum of £228 had been paid to a certain coaching firm, and the only question for the Committee to consider was whether the amount was reasonable or not.

* Mr. STORY said the hon. member for Cairns knew well who supplied the coaches when he asked the question ; but what was wanted on the other side was to get out the fact that it was Cobb and Co., also the fact that he (Mr. Story) was connected with Cobb and Co., so that the charge could be made that Cobb and Co., through having a representative in that Chamber, could get all sorts of contracts. The leader of the Opposition, as usual, elaborated his statements, and asserted that Cobb and Co. was the octopus of the North and West, and could influence the Government at their own sweet will. Not a word of that was a fact. The amount charged for the trip—which was undertaken at the Minister's earnest request—was £6 a day. There were two gentlemen (Mr. Hume and Mr. Woodbine) who went. A special driver had to be sent—a man who could purchase horses and make arrangements for a trip over roads on which the company had no representatives at all. A passenger could hardly travel anywhere in Queensland a day's trip at much less than 50s. This Commission

was charged very little more than ordinary coaching rates; and considering [12 p.m.] that Cobb and Co. left their own country and travelled at the rate the members of the Commission wanted, and that they had to purchase fresh horses along the trip, it would be easily understood that very little was made out of the bargain. He was willing to show hon. members how much Cobb and Co. had made out of the transaction. He could tell hon. members that for the last two years Cobb and Co. had been carrying mails and parcels for nothing, and they had paid £8,000 for doing it; and all that without reducing a man's wages one penny. Could hon. members find any other firm that had done that?

Mr. DAWSON said he regretted the heat that had been introduced into the discussion.

Mr. STORY: A little truth has been introduced, which is a novelty to you.

Mr. DAWSON: If the hon. member told the truth, he must have surprised himself. The hon. member for Bulloo was entirely mistaken if he thought that he (Mr. Dawson) wished to embarrass or badger the hon. member in charge of the Estimate because he was a new Minister. He had no such desire. What he wanted was that information asked for in the usual way, according to the rules of the House, should be given by the Minister without hon. members intervening in the manner they had. He affirmed that the hon. members for Bulloo and Balonne got up and deliberately tried to answer questions asked of the Minister. The hon. gentleman was a new Minister, but his Under Secretary should be able to give him all the information to enable him to answer any fair question asked by hon. members.

Mr. LEAHY: We have been told that the arrangements were made by the Land Board and not by the Lands Department.

Mr. DAWSON had always been under the impression that all matters in connection with the Lands Department were known to the Under Secretary of that department, and when any matter connected with that department came up for discussion the Under Secretary would be able to give his Minister all the necessary information. Whether the Land Board made the arrangements or not, they all filtered through the Lands Department. The hon. member for Balonne had been really ungenerous in his remarks concerning himself, because he said that he (Mr. Dawson) would not accept what he was prepared to place before hon. members in the matter. He only wanted to get at the absolute truth. When the Minister was permitted to reply, he told the Committee that Mr. Hume and Mr. Woodbine had travelled over 1,000 miles, and they took about six weeks to make the trip; and the hon. member for Balonne, who was the manager for Cobb and Co., said that the amount charged to the Government was very little over the usual fare; he also said the usual fare was £2 10s. a day.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Sixpence per mile.

Mr. DAWSON: Yes; 6d. per mile.

Mr. STORY: Sixpence per mile for a single passenger.

Mr. DAWSON: Instead of travelling seventy miles a day they travelled only thirty miles, and the fare was about £5 5s. a day. Messrs. Cobb and Co. had done remarkably well out of the matter, and it would be very interesting information to have all the papers connected with it laid on the table.

At 12:13 a.m.,

The CHAIRMAN said: In accordance with Standing Order No. 171, I call on the hon. member for Brisbane South, Mr. Stephens, to take the chair.

Mr. STEPHENS took the chair accordingly.

Mr. GIVENS: If his question had had no other effect, it had shown what an excellent firm the colony had in Messrs. Cobb and Co., who, according to the hon. member for Balonne, carried the mails for the Government for nothing, and lost £8,000 a year over it, instead of, as he (Mr. Givens) had understood, making large sums out of it. There was one statement made by the hon. member for Balonne that he should like to controvert, and he wished to controvert it by some of the statements made by the hon. member himself. The hon. gentleman said Messrs. Cobb and Co.'s charge was £6 per day, and that it amounted to only the ordinary average coaching rate.

Mr. STORY: A little more.

Mr. GIVENS: Which was 6d. a mile.

Mr. STORY: I did not say that. It costs about £2 10s. a day to do a day's coaching for a single passenger.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. member said the charge exceeded only by very little the ordinary coaching rate.

Mr. STORY: Exactly.

Mr. GIVENS: And that that was 6d. a mile.

Mr. STORY: When you are travelling on an ordinary coach route.

Mr. GIVENS: He found that the amount was £38 a week, which made the charge 4s. 6½d. a mile. If that was divided by the number of passengers—namely, two—the charge was 2s. 3¼d. a mile, or five times the ordinary coaching fare, that, as the hon. gentleman had said was 6d. a mile.

Mr. STORY: I did not on that trip. The ordinary coaching rate is 6d. a mile, and it costs about £2 10s. a day to do a day's coaching for one.

Mr. GIVENS: He was very pleased that the manager for Messrs. Cobb and Co. had given hon. members this interesting information. He did not say the trip had been done for less; but he thought that other firms should be given the opportunity of tendering for these contracts as well as that firm.

Mr. STORY: They wired to the member for the district, Mr. Corfield, to arrange.

Mr. GIVENS: He was satisfied it would have paid the Commission to have bought their own buckboard and their own horses for the trip. There were hundreds of men who travelled through this country with their own horses, and it did not cost them half that this trip cost.

Mr. LEAHY: Not in a season like that.

Mr. GIVENS: That was not the question at all, because the Western country was not nearly so bad then as it was now.

Mr. LEAHY: Nearly as bad. They had to feed all the way.

Mr. GIVENS: Even if they had to feed all the way it was a very nice contract. The hon. member for Balonne said Messrs. Cobb and Co. lost money by it—

Mr. STORY: I did not.

Mr. GIVENS: But after that he said they made very little out of it, and would have been better without it. He had asked for information because he thought he had a right to it; but he was not going to cavil at the vote.

Mr. STORY: You said that the representative of Cobb and Co. has got the ear of the Government.

Mr. GIVENS: Yes. He had said that when they found that the Government contracts were going to one particular firm like this, any other person who desired to get contracts like that would also require a representative in this Chamber who would be capable of getting the ear of the Government, and he repeated the statement. Anybody who studied the Estimates could see that those who were in the position to

get the ear of the Government were generally more favourably treated than those who were not in such an advantageous position; but he hoped that in future the general public would have the opportunity of securing those contracts whether there was little or much to be made out of it.

Mr. STORY said that Cobb and Co. were first asked to arrange the trip, but as it was off their road they refused. The late hon. member for Gregory, Mr. Corfield, was then asked to arrange the trip, but he was unable to do so. Then Mr. Hume said that he could only go if Cobb and Co. would take him, and the arrangements were made by him, and subsequently endorsed by the then Secretary for Lands.

Mr. MAXWELL said that the question was whether the country got value for the £228, and from what was said by the hon. member for Gregory and the hon. member for Bulloo, he did not think it had. The commissioners went through the country at a gallop, and yet professed to be able to tell the value of the land for 100 miles on either side.

Mr. HARDACRE: Mr. Hume, in his report, said that they travelled 800 miles—not 1,000 miles—out of the 1,500. That made the price per mile 8s. 9d., or about £6 for every twenty miles travelled. Either they travelled twenty miles a day, or the mileage rate was much higher. It appeared a very exorbitant charge, because they probably got horses and fodder on the stations. The items should be supplied to the Committee.

Mr. STORY said that Cobb and Co. supplied a coach and four for £6 per day. The Commissioners were the people who fixed the distance to be travelled each day. If they stayed four or five days in one place that was no fault of the contractors. The calculation as to the mileage rate had absolutely nothing to do with the matter. Cobb and Co. had to buy horses on the road to enable them to make the journey to Adelaide, and they had to send back the man, coach, and horses to Hughenden.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: (Hon. J. V. Chataway, *Mackay*) moved that £14,772 2s. 3d. be granted for the Department of Agriculture. There was no item that did not speak for itself, the exception perhaps being "Urgent claims, Moreton Central Sugar Mill, £2,200." He explained the other night that it was necessary for the Government to take the mill over, as it was in debt. During this season the mill had made a profit, which had gone some way towards reducing the debt which was shown in that Estimate. The agricultural and horticultural societies were endowed at the rate of £1 for £1 on the subscriptions received by those societies. If the subscriptions were greater than were expected, the Government had to find a larger amount of money.

Mr. HARDACRE: What is the meaning of this item for the travelling expenses of Professor Shelton and family to America?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: When Professor Shelton was engaged several years ago, one condition was that the Government should pay the passages of himself and his family back to America on the termination of his engagement. The same condition was inserted in the agreement which was made when he was re-engaged, and was in force when he left the Agricultural College.

Mr. COWLEY (*Herbert*) said that £1,400 for wages, house servants, stores, etc., for a small establishment like the Agricultural College seemed enormous. He would also like to know what State farms the chemical apparatus was for which cost £947?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE said that with regard to the vote for chemical apparatus, the thing was a misnomer. It was correctly described in the Estimates-in-Chief as "chemicals, apparatus, wages, implements, stud stock, buildings, seeds, plants, etc." The £947 had been spent on implements, buildings, and seeds for several of the existing State farms. None of it had been spent on chemical apparatus.

With regard to the wages, etc., [12.30 a.m.] when the Estimates were compiled last year an insufficient amount was asked for. An extra expenditure was also required in connection with the Sugar Works Guarantee Act, and the diseases in Plants Act, which had assumed large proportion, and further expenses was caused by taking over the Exhibition Buildings.

Mr. COWLEY: Did the hon. gentleman mean to say that that £1,400 had anything to do with the Sugar Works Guarantee Act. What he wanted to get at was the cost of the Agricultural College, and whether it was paying. When he saw that £1,400 was spent in wages, house servants, and stores, it struck him as an enormous amount.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE thought the hon. member had been referring to miscellaneous services. With regard to the college he might say that last year, when the Estimates were compiled, a new principal was taking over the college, and the amount required was under estimated.

Mr. COWLEY: How much of the £1,400 represented wages, and what proportion was paid to house servants.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE had not got the figures with him, but he understood that the bulk of the money was spent in stores and house servants.

Question put and passed.

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

The PREMIER moved that the sum of £2,421 1s. 4d. be granted for public instruction. That amount consisted chiefly of grants in aid of technical education, which was paid by way of subsidy of £1 for every £1 subscribed.

Mr. GIVENS: Last year the Cairns School of Arts asked for £250 in order to start technical classes. He did not see that any provision was made for Cairns, though an intimation had been received that the money would be granted.

The PREMIER: Only money which had been spent was included in that vote. If the Cairns School of Arts wanted to establish technical classes the same assistance would be given as was given to other towns.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF MINES.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) moved that the sum of £42,532 4s. 11d. be granted for the Department of Mines. The item of £1,000 7s. 8d. was for contingencies, chiefly owing to extra clerical work required. There was also a large amount of £35,895 11s. 10d. for the purchase of mineral specimens, the bulk of which had since been sold and the money refunded, the proceeds coming into the revenue this year of the Mines Department. The London Mining Exhibition also required £5,040, and had cost altogether about £17,000. He supposed that they had made the biggest show of minerals that had ever been seen in London, and they would get the money back again tenfold.

Mr. BROWNE was glad to hear that the money received for the sale of specimens would be credited to the Mines Department. He would not like it to go into the consolidated revenue without recognising the Mines Department.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF RAILWAYS.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Murray, *Normanby*) moved that the sum of £40,796 7s. 6d. be granted for the Railway Department. There had been a very considerable increase in the traffic on the lines during the year, which necessitated a large increase in salaries and contingencies. The principal increase was in the locomotive department, where something like 200 additional hands were employed, and that increase had been found necessary after the boiler explosions last year.

Mr. DAWSON regarded that as a large supplementary vote, and wished to know why a number of the items did not appear on the Estimates-in-Chief.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There were 109 miles of new railways opened, which caused a very large increase in the working expenses, and the traffic had also largely increased during the year.

The PREMIER: Last year we got £160,000 more traffic, and the working expenses were only £40,000 more than we anticipated.

Mr. GIVENS noticed that there was an item of £50 for a gratuity to the widow of the late lengthsmen Bremner, and desired to know whether there were any special circumstances in connection with the death of that man.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS understood that Mr. Bremner was travelling along the line on a trolley, and that a locomotive overtook him and upset him. The accident was in a great measure due to contributory negligence on the part of Bremner, and the £50 was given to his widow more as a gift than as a gratuity.

Mr. GIVENS: When a high-salaried official met with his death while in the service of the Government, his widow was granted a year's salary, and he thought the same rule should obtain with regard to the widows of lower-paid servants. It was grossly unfair that the widow of an unfortunate lengthsmen who while he was alive received only 7s. a day, and was not in a position to provide for his family, should get only £50 as a gratuity, when the widows of high-salaried officials received an amount equal to a year's salary.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: This accident was due principally to the man's own carelessness. The Commissioner did in some instances make an allowance of one year's salary, as was done in the case of the station-master who was killed at Brunswick-street Station.

Mr. DAWSON: The item of £2,983 5s. 1d. for maintenance of the permanent way, Southern division, was one which he thought should appear on the Estimates-in-Chief, and not on the Supplementary Estimates. Proper provision ought to be made for the maintenance of permanent way on all railways in existence.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member would surely admit that in a department where they were expending such an enormous sum per annum it was difficult to frame their Estimates to cover all items of that sort, or to foresee all the emergencies that might crop up in connection with the maintenance of the permanent way.

Mr. DAWSON said he must enter his protest against items of that sort appearing on the Supplementary Estimates. There were professional officers in the department, and they ought to be able to estimate how much they would require to keep the permanent way in order during the year, and that amount should appear on the Estimates-in-Chief.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member must not forget that there was a considerable increase in the mileage on

account of the opening of the Cunnamulla line, and that the Northern line also showed a very large extension.

Mr. GIVENS: Have not the contractors to keep the line in repair for six months after the contract is completed?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

The TREASURER pointed out that the biggest item in that railway vote was due to increased traffic. They had got £160,000 extra revenue last year, and only asked £40,000 extra to earn it. He hoped they would do as well with their railways this year, and there would be no occasion to grumble at the extra amount it would cost to meet the increased traffic. There had also the additional mileage opened to be considered, and the fact that they had always to be fixing up the curves on places like the Main Range.

Mr. DAWSON: What he was objecting to was that there should be that amount asked for the Southern Division alone for lengthsmen's wages in excess of what was voted on the Estimates-in-Chief. The officers of the department, if they knew their business, should know what it would require to keep the permanent way in repair.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In that matter on a total expenditure estimated at £237,773 the amount the department required in addition was only £2,983 5s. 1d., and he thought the estimate a very close one indeed. There was no room for complaint, as the wonder was that the Estimate had been so very close. He thought it was a splendid estimate.

Mr. DAWSON: That was an increase of £58,000 on the previous year. He did not think it was a splendid estimate, as in such a matter they should be able to calculate to the exact copper.

Mr. KERR asked for some explanation of the vote of £5,673 for locomotive wages, Southern division. It was only in the Southern division that he noticed such a vote.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There was a similar vote for Townsville for £4,425, and as he had explained before, it was due to the fact that the disclosures in connection with the boiler explosions that had occurred had forced upon the Commissioner the necessity for repairing locomotives which were at work.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

The CHIEF SECRETARY moved that £6,746 be granted on account of the Postmaster-General's Department. There was not much detailed information required in connection with that vote. In connection with the item "Tasmania-Victoria cable and New Zealand-Sydney cable," it would be seen from the departmental report that Queensland became a contributor in connection with the New Zealand-Sydney cable in July, 1897, and in connection with the Tasmania-Victoria cable Queensland had to pay a *per capita* share of the £4,000 subsidy which the contributing colonies had to pay. The other items were explained by extension of services.

Mr. BROWNE asked whether the hon. gentleman had any further information with regard to the Gulf mail service?

The CHIEF SECRETARY said that all difficulties had been arranged, and [1 a.m.] the contract was being prepared.

He believed it would be signed in the course of a few days.

Mr. GIVENS asked whether there were any special circumstances connected with the death of line-repairer Leigh, whose widow received a gratuity of £50. He intended to protest on every occasion against large amounts being granted in the case of highly paid Civil servants

and only small gratuities being given in the case of those who had been in receipt of small salaries.

The CHIEF SECRETARY regretted that he could not give the hon. member the information he desired, as he had no knowledge of the circumstances. He understood, however, that the widow was pleased that the department had treated her so liberally.

Mr. GIVENS: She would have been better pleased to receive a full year's salary.

Mr. MAXWELL protested against the granting of those gratuities. Why did not those men make provision for their families?

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL.

The TREASURER moved that £473 6s. 1d. be granted for Auditor-General's Department.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TRUST FUNDS ESTIMATES.

The TREASURER moved that a sum not exceeding £100,676 0s. 4d. be granted as Supplementary Estimates 1898-9, from trust funds. The largest item was £93,942 18s. 4d., for the purchase of land under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act.

Mr. MAXWELL asked for information regarding the various estates.

The TREASURER said the amounts paid were shown on the estimate. They were: Fitzroy Park Estate, £7,805; Seaforth Estate, £22,622; Beauaraba Estate, £12,992; Clifton Estate No. 2, £20,340; Clifton Estate No. 3, £1,132; Glengallan Estate No. 2, £21,843; and Pinelands, £7,206.

Mr. MAXWELL: What districts are they in?

The TREASURER: The Fitzroy Estate was in the Central division, the Seaforth in the North, and the others were on the Darling Downs.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLEMENTARY LOAN ESTIMATES—1898-99.

The TREASURER moved that £43,979 18s. 8d. be granted for the Supplementary Loan Estimates. The first item was £14,213 10s. 11d. for defence; then there were £4,600 for immigration; £2,679 0s. 7d. for buildings; £9,325 10s. 11d. for the Marine Department; £6,226 19s. 8d. loans to local bodies; £3,131 16s. 3d. for expenditure under the Sugar Works Guarantee Act; £399 17s. 2d., Lands Department, for rabbit-proof fencing; and £3,403 3s. 2d. for raising the line to Mount Perry. The line to Mount Perry had lately been relaid.

Mr. JENKINSON asked whether the Treasurer could not reduce this vote by £1,600, the cost of the Custom-house at Townsville?

The TREASURER said that amount had been originally paid out of loan account, but it was afterwards found that it could be paid out of revenue, and it was so paid. The loan account would be credited with the amount.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the ACTING CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again at a later hour of the day.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the resolutions from Committee of Supply were agreed to.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past 1 o'clock.