

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 30 AUGUST 1900

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

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1900-1.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor forwarding the Estimates-in-Chief, 1900-1.

The TREASURER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) moved that the paper be referred to Committee of Supply.

Question put and passed.

QUESTIONS.

MESSRS. VERNON AND MARSLAND'S REPORT
ON NEW LANDS OFFICES.

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*) asked the Premier—

Will he lay on the table of the House copies of all correspondence relating to and including the report of Messrs. Vernon and Marsland on the new Lands Offices.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) : I lay on the table the correspondence referred to.

THE GOVERNOR AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN
STATE SCHOOLS.

Mr. KIDSTON (*Rockhampton*) asked the Premier—

1. Has he seen the report of the speech made by His Excellency the Governor at the meeting of the Sunday School Union, in which His Excellency discusses the advisableness of introducing religious instruction into our State schools?

2. Did His Excellency on that occasion speak on behalf of the Government?

The PREMIER replied—

1. No.

2. No.

REGISTRATION OF JOINT STOCK COMPANIES.

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*), for Mr. Higgs (*Fortitude Valley*), asked the Attorney-General—

1. Is it true that the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies has been instructed that he has no power, under section 7 of the British Companies Act of 1886, to insist on companies registered under the said Act filing their annual list of shareholders in accordance with section 25 of the Companies Act of 1863?

2. Do British companies registered under the British Companies Act of 1886 file their annual list of shareholders with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge, *Maranoa*) replied—

1. Yes; he was so instructed in 1894, as the result of an opinion upon the construction of section 7 of the first-mentioned Act given by the Solicitor-General, which opinion was concurred in by the then Attorney-General.

2. Some of these companies file their annual list of shareholders, but others do not.

DR. MAXWELL'S ENGAGEMENT.

Mr. COWLEY (*Herbert*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

1. Has Dr. Maxwell, of Honolulu, been engaged as manager of sugar experiment test stations?—and, if so, on what terms?

2. Has he been authorised to engage and bring with him an assistant?—and, if so, on what terms?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. J. V. Chataway, *Mackay*) replied—

1. Yes; £3,000 per annum for five years.

2. The following extract from a letter written by Agricultural Department to Dr. Maxwell, under date 2nd June, 1900, is a sufficient answer:—"With respect to your query as to the engagement of foreigners, I am directed to inform you that while Mr. Chataway always favours the employment of British subjects, and of Queenslanders particularly, where possible, he thinks it would be unwise to restrict you in any way in your choice of competent assistants. He believes that in time your staff may be composed exclusively of Queenslanders, but that meanwhile, in the interests of the experimenting stations, the very widest range of selection would be advisable. You are therefore at liberty to make whatever arrangements you think desirable in this direction, and will not be called upon to make the success of the stations subordinate to the question of the nationality of those whom you appoint."

LOGAN DOWNS RESUMPTION.

Mr. LORD (*Stanley*), for Mr. Bell (*Dalby*), asked the Secretary for Lands—

Can he give the House any information as to the date upon which the papers in connection with the Logan Downs resumption case will be printed and circulated?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. B. H. O'Connell, *Musgrave*) replied—

The Government Printer states that the papers will be ready for distribution to-morrow.

ASSISTANT LAND AGENT AT DALBY.

Mr. LORD (*Stanley*), for Mr. Bell (*Dalby*), asked the Secretary for Lands—

Is it a fact that he proposes to appoint a probationer of the Civil service to discharge at Dalby the duties of assistant land agent at a total remuneration of £70 per annum?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

A probationer at a remuneration of £70 per annum has been recommended by the Public Service Board for appointment as junior clerk in the Lands Office, Dalby, and the necessary action is being taken accordingly.

LAND PURCHASE AT TOWNSVILLE.

Mr. STEWART (*Rockhampton North*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

1. Is it true that the Government has purchased a property from Mr. P. F. Hanran in Townsville for alleged public purposes?

2. If such purchase has been made, what are the "public purposes" to which the property is to be put, and what price has been paid for the same; and is it one of the conditions of purchase that Mr. Hanran is to be permitted a life use of the same?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

1. Yes.

2. Purchased as part of site for new Custom-house. Price, £1,000. No.

PAPERS.

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

- (1) Report on properties of Lawn Hill Silver Lead Company, Mended Hole, North Queensland.
- (2) Schedule to Estimates-in-Chief for 1900-1901.
- (3) Schedule of proposed resumptions from runs in the unsettled district of Burke.
- (4) Tables relating to the Treasurer's Financial Statement for the year 1900-1901.

PETITION.

CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION BILL.

Mr. W. HAMILTON (*Gregory*) presented a petition from certain residents of Kynuna praying for the introduction of a Conciliation and Arbitration Bill similar to the Act in force in New Zealand.

Petition read and received.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*) asked the Premier, without notice, when the Auditor-General's report for this year would be presented?

The PREMIER replied: The Auditor-General's report will be presented as soon as it is ready.

Mr. BROWNE: We generally have it about the time the Estimates come on.

The PREMIER: I dare say it will be here before we go on with them.

THE FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT
OF 1896.

SPECIAL WAGES BOARDS.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*), in moving—

That, in the opinion of the House, it is desirable that the Factories and Shops Act of 1896 be so amended as to provide for the establishment of "Special Wages

Boards," and other provisions, now in operation in Victoria under the Victorian Shops and Factories Acts, 1890-1900—

said: I placed this motion on the business paper for discussion, hoping that the information I shall be able to place before hon. members may induce them to agree that it is desirable, if not absolutely necessary, that our present Factories Act should be amended in order to alter the present conditions which obtain in this colony in factories and shops. I am prepared to admit that since the introduction of the Factories and Shops Act of 1896 there has been much improvement in the conditions of factory workers. This is particularly noticed in sanitary matters, ventilation, over-crowding, restrictions as to child labour, and, to some extent, protection against dangerous machinery; also with regard to the inspection of boilers. But in those matters there is still much room for improvement. It is generally admitted that the Act is very deficient, even with regard to those questions. When we come to the questions of wages, the regulation for overtime for females and young persons of tender years, the condition of outside workers, the suppression of sweating, the wages of apprentices, and the limitation of the hours to be worked, we fully recognise the defects in the Act—how powerless the Act is to deal with those important questions. That has been pointed out in the reports of the factory inspectors, and recommendations have been made for the amendment of the Act. There were 1,284 breaches of the Act in 1889, and yet only two prosecutions were instituted, and in both of those cases only a nominal fine was inflicted. Inspectors complain that the proper returns were not furnished, and in not giving that information the factory-owners were over-riding the department and the law. Three hundred and eleven failed to register their premises last year, and 709 failed to forward records, and yet there was only one prosecution recorded against the law-breakers, most of whom simply sneered at the Act. I ask why all this should be? Are our factory inspectors not doing their duty—are they not enforcing the Act? I think the reports of the inspectors will bear out that they find themselves in such a position that they cannot properly perform their duties, unless the Act is amended in such a way as to make it more effective. Is the blame to rest on the Minister in connection with the administration of the Act? I am not prepared to make such a serious charge as that against the Minister. From time to time I have had bitter discussions with that hon. gentleman with regard to the administration of the Act, and I believe he is desirous of administering it fairly. But the Act is in many respects ineffective, and the inspectors' hands are tied, because it is so loosely drawn up that it is very risky to undertake a prosecution under it. I was speaking to a lawyer who takes a great interest in this question, and he said that it was a very risky thing to attempt to undertake a prosecution under the present Act. The hon. gentleman who has charge of this department, I believe, makes himself fully conversant with the laws he is charged with administering, therefore I think the hon. gentleman has not been doing his duty, because he recognises that the Act is faulty and inoperative in many respects, and has not attempted to remedy it. The amendment I propose would rectify many of the defects in it, and it would also place in the hands of the inspectors more reliable machinery than they are at present obliged to work under. I know there are many persons who deprecate any haste in a matter of this kind, and perhaps to some extent it is prudent to wait until experience has been gained in the working of such

an Act; but I am of opinion that after four years' experience, after the reports that have come down to this House year after year from the Factories Department, after the disclosures that have taken place as can be seen in those reports, even the most cautious, even those who resent any interference with the liberty of the subject, must come to the conclusion that the Act, to be of any substantial benefit to the workers, should be amended without delay. It should be made more definite in many respects, and its scope should be enlarged so that it would embrace many subjects which at present it is powerless to deal with; it is because I believe that the Government contemplate, according to the statement of the Home Secretary, bringing down an amending Bill this session, that I am desirous beforehand of raising this discussion in order to impress upon the Government that it should be one of a comprehensive nature which can successfully deal with those questions for which the present Act does not provide. To support my case for the establishment of special wages boards, and other provisions which are embodied in the Victorian Act, it will be necessary for me to compare the workings and the conditions in Victoria with those in Queensland at the present time. The establishment of a special wages board in Victoria has minimised, to a very large extent, the cut-throat competition which existed there amongst employers; in fact, it has regulated, and I think it has regulated very successfully, this cut-throat competition. I know that in Queensland there are a number of manufacturers who desire to do what is fair towards their employees; but in their own protection they are often compelled to observe conditions that they are opposed to. I was present last Saturday at a picnic got up by the employees of a certain factory, at which 250 were gathered together, and the employer addressed the men, pointing out to them that it was the desire of his firm as far as possible to afford the best conditions to their employees, but that it was impossible for them to do what they desired, owing to the cut-throat competition which existed in that trade. He urged on them that in order to remedy that state of things it was necessary that there should be on the Queensland statute-book some such legislation as now exists in Victoria. This is only one employer, and there are many more who hold the same views. Last year a deputation waited on the then Premier, Mr. Dickson, with the request that this legislation should be introduced that session, and amongst those who formed that deputation I think there were one or two employers. The employer to whom I have just referred, Mr. Davey, of Messrs. Davey and Halliday, who employ 250 hands, was present, and he urged Mr. Dickson to introduce this legislation. As far as I can gather, employers would welcome any legislation of this nature, because at the present time they are simply at the mercy of a number of unscrupulous employers, who are careless as to how business should be conducted so long as they can make a profit out of their trade. If we take our factories reports, and read there the revelations as to the miserable wages earned in Queensland, the unfair advantages taken by a number of the employers in the working of overtime, the employment of apprentices and learners who receive no payment for the first six, twelve, or eighteen months, the large number of apprentices that are employed in proportion to the adults, and the increase each year of outside workers, which is the truest illustration of the growth of the sweating evil in our midst—these reports show that the conditions in Queensland in many respects are to be deplored and need to be remedied. Before the year 1896, the state of

things that existed in Victoria was as bad, if not worse, than in Queensland to-day; but previous to that year the Government of that country grappled with the evil by the appointment of a commission, and legislation in accordance with the recommendations of that commission was introduced into the House of Assembly in that colony. It was, undoubtedly, of an experimental nature, but after three years' trial it has been proved that that experiment has been a success, and that the conditions of employees have been very much improved. Not only have the conditions under which the employees have to work been improved, but the position of employers has been better. Competition has been placed on fairer and more equitable grounds, and after three years' experience, when the Act came up for review, not a single objection from the employers of Victoria was presented to the Victorian Parliament in opposition to the re-enactment of that Act. The Government did not undertake the responsibility of regulating the wages of employees; they did not enter into the wages question; and in my motion to-day I do not advocate that the Government should come in and deal with the wages or other questions in which factory employees and factory owners are concerned. What we ask is that the Government should bring in legislation providing that machinery should be placed in the hands of employers and employees similar to what exists in Victoria, whereby the rate of wages, the number of apprentices, and other questions could be dealt with. It will be just as well to state that the provision in existence in Victoria provides that the Governor in Council can at any time appoint a special wages board, consisting of not less than four and not more than ten persons. Of that number an equal number represent the employees and the employers. The election of those representatives is by ballot.

4 p.m.] The employees in a given trade elect their representatives, and the employers, on the other hand, elect their representatives. From both parties a chairman is chosen. He need not necessarily be either an employee or an employer. If the representatives do not elect their chairman within a given time the Governor in Council has power to choose a chairman outside. The duties of the board are—first, to fix a minimum rate of wages for all those engaged in the trade—either a weekly wage or a piecework rate. They have also to fix the number of apprentices and improvers in proportion to the number of adults, both male and female; to provide for the maximum hours that can be worked; to provide for the rate to be paid for overtime, and other matters dealing with employees. The determination of the board is published in the *Government Gazette*, and has all the force of law. When this legislation first came into force only six trades were brought under the provisions of the special wages board. The experiment proved such a success during the three years it was in operation that when it was again brought under review three more trades were added to the number, and any trade was given the right, by a resolution of either House of Parliament, to be brought under the operations of this portion of the Act. Some people may contend that the rise of wages which took place in the trades which were brought under the special wages board would have the effect of reducing the number of employees in those trades, but I am glad to say that the contrary has been the result. The trades that come under the special wages board are the bakery trade, the boot and shoe trade, the tailoring trade, the shirt trade, the under-clothing trade, and the furniture trade, and since they came under the operation of that

portion of the Act there has been a large increase, not only in the wages paid, but in the number of employees. In 1896, when the special wages board provision was introduced, the number of factories in Victoria amounted to 3,370, and the number of employees to 40,814. Every year since that time the number of factories and the number of employees have both increased, until to-day we have an increase of 525 factories since 1896, and an increase in the number of employees of 8,732. Those trades which are affected by the special wages board show, amongst other trades, a large proportion of those increases. The benefits of the provision were most effectively shown in 1897. According to the factories report, which is based on the sworn figures supplied by the manufacturers, 10,135 persons were employed in the trades that were affected by the special wages board. In that year there was an increase in wages in those trades over the preceding year of £100,644. In the bakery trade 714 employees received an increase in wages over the preceding year of £15,000; in the clothing trade 4,484 employees received an increase of £32,000; in the boot trade 3,659 persons received an increase in wages of £40,000; in the furniture trade 679 employees received an increase of £11,857 19s. 8d. The increase of £100,000 in that year in those five trades was solely due to the provisions under the special wages board, and the increase during 1897 was followed by a still further increase in 1898. I mentioned that when the Bill was passed in 1896 it was only enacted for three years. During those three years all the information possible was gathered and presented to Parliament, and, though during that time the Turner Government—in which Mr. Peacock, the introducer of the Bill, was Chief Secretary—was defeated, the feeling in Victoria was so strong that the first measure which was brought down by the McLean Government—which was not looked upon as so advanced on these questions as the Turner Government—was the amending Factories Bill. The benefits of the Act were so great, and the feeling was so strongly in favour of the continuance of the Act, that the McLean Government dared not relegate the measure to the waste-paper basket, but immediately introduced it, and passed it into law. Indeed, it was liberalised, as I have said, by the addition of some trades to those already working under the operation of the special wages board provision, and it was provided that any trade in Victoria could approach either House of Parliament and be allowed to come under the provisions of the Act by a resolution of the House to which it applied. The result has been that at the present time a large number of trades have approached Parliament on the question, and I hope that before long, instead of there being only nine trades, at least treble that number will be affected by the provisions of the special wages board. It may be contended that the adoption of the minimum wage and the regulation of the hours of labour and the proportion of apprentices and improvers has been effected at the cost of the old and slow worker. When here the minimum wage has been advocated from this side of the House, the strongest argument brought against the principle has been the way in which it would affect the old workman; and it has been pointed out that, while the young and vigorous worker may be worth the minimum wage fixed, the old worker, from infirmity or some other reason, would not be worth the same price to the employer, and would have to go. Well, what has been the result in Victoria? These provisions affected 11,000 persons from 1896 to 1899, and I take this from the *Hansard* report of the remarks of the then Chief Secretary

in Victoria, Mr. Peacock, in introducing the Bill in 1899—

Those boards have been in operation for over two years, and during that period the total number of cases (out of 10,000) in which the department refrained from proceeding on account of the failure of manufacturers to pay the minimum wage to either old or slow workers does not exceed eighty altogether. This is shown by the records of my department. In other words, if the full effect of those wages boards determinations had been carried out, and every person working in a factory had received the wages fixed by the board, there would have been only eighty old and slow workers who would have lost their employment in the administration of the Act. I gave notice that persons in respect of whom we were perfectly satisfied that advantage was not being taken by the manufacturers to reduce wages could be employed at less than the minimum wages fixed by the board. Virtually a permit was given, and those persons have all been employed, and never in one single case have we found, after the fullest investigation, that such persons have been deprived of the wages to which they were fairly entitled. It never was the desire of Parliament that those persons (the old and slow workers) should be deprived of their means of livelihood; but it was the desire of Parliament that their infirmities should never be taken advantage of in order to bring down the average wages of the workmen employed in our different factories.

There we have it shown that, so far as the old and slow worker is concerned, the problem has been very successfully solved in Victoria. But in the new Act passed in Victoria in 1899 more definite provisions are laid down to deal with the old and slow worker, and it is there provided that—

Where any person by reason of age or infirmity is unable to obtain employment at the minimum wage fixed by any special board, the chief inspector may in such case grant a license for twelve months to work at a less wage, to be named in such license, and the same may be renewed from time to time.

Under that provision you see that the chief inspector is empowered to give a permit to the old and slow worker to work for a lower rate of wages than the minimum fixed. To my mind, following this question up as I have done very keenly, that is about the most successful solution of the question of the old and slow worker that could be found. At all events, the establishment of such a provision in Victoria has had the result that the old and slow worker has not suffered, while the wages of 11,000 employees have been largely increased, better hours have been secured for both males and females, and the proportion of apprentices to adults has been regulated. What do we find in Queensland at the present time? We find that, under our factory system, a very large proportion of boys and girls are employed to adults. In fact, in some of the trades the boys and girls seem to be taken in preference to the parents, and some of the employers seem disposed to squeeze the labour of the adult out of the toil of the child. Under our present Act we have no power to stop that sort of thing; and, further, a large number of those children are induced to enter our factories, and for the first twelve months, and in some cases for longer, they receive not one penny for their labour. In Victoria that state of things does not exist. From the day a boy or girl enters a factory there a minimum wage of not less than 2s. 6d. a week has to be paid. In the shirtmaking and under-clothing trades there, trades in which in Queensland the worst form of sweating has been carried out, apprentices must receive for the first six months not less than 2s. 6d. per week, for the second six months not less than 4s. per week, and for the second year not less than 6s. per week. If that provision alone existed in Queensland it would be a great benefit, not alone to the children who are obliged to go into the factory at an early age, but also to their parents, who, of

course, are under the expense of feeding and clothing them, and who, in many instances, have to pay their fares by train and otherwise to and from their work. I have gone to some trouble to compare the rate of wages paid in Victoria in trades coming under the provisions of the special wages board with the rate of wages paid in the same trades here in Queensland. The figures for Victoria have been compiled from the official report of the Factories and Shops Department of Victoria for the year 1899, published in 1900, and the figures relating to Queensland have been compiled and handed to me by the Factories Department in this city. The averages for Victoria are made upon a week of forty-eight hours, and they do not include overtime. So far as the Queensland figures are concerned, I understand that the averages do not include overtime in the case of the wages paid to females, but I cannot get any reliable information that the averages for adult males and male apprentices are not made up to include overtime. Take first the bakery trade: The minimum wage adopted in Victoria under the special wages board provision is 1s. 0½d. per hour for a forty-eight hour week, and that is £2 10s. per week of forty-eight hours. In Victoria, in 1899, 463 bakers received wages at the rate of £2 10s. per week. In Queensland the bakers worked from forty-eight to seventy-two hours per week. A fair average would be sixty-four hours per week, and 136 bakers got an average wage of £2 8s. per week. In other words the bakers of Queensland have to work two extra days per week above the Victorian bakers, and receive 2s. a week less in wages. I would like here to say that in all cases in which trades come under the wages board in Victoria, the minimum wage has been increased. Take the boot trade: The minimum adopted for adult males in Victoria is £2 2s. a week, but the wages earned by 1,510 adult males amount to £2 4s. 5d. per week, or 2s. 5d. over the minimum. In Queensland 529 adult males average £1 19s. 5d. per week. Eight hundred and ninety-seven apprentices and improvers in Victoria average 15s. a week. Here I would like to point out that in Victoria a boy or girl may enter a factory at the age of thirteen, whereas in Queensland they may not enter before fourteen. In that respect only is Queensland in advance of Victoria. Taking the total number of males employed in the boot trade in Victoria, 2,756 average £1 13s. 4d. per week, whilst in the same class in Queensland 938 averaged £1 8s. 1d., an advantage in favour of the Victorian employees of 5s. 3d. per week. Take, again, the adult females. In Victoria the average is £1 1s. 1d. for 575 females. In Queensland 149 females average only 12s. 10d.; so that in Queensland the rate of wages is 8s. a week less than that earned by adult females in Victoria in the boot trade. Take, again, the female apprentices and improvers. In Victoria 588 average 8s. 8d.; in Queensland 225 average 7s. 9d. The total number of females employed in the trade in Victoria is 1,666, averaging 14s. 11d. per week, but in Queensland 374 average only 10s. a week. Taking the average of the whole boot trade, 3,923 persons employed in Victoria—men, women, boys, and girls—average £1 7s. 10d. per week, whereas 1,312 in Queensland average only £1 3s. In every single point the males, females, apprentices, and improvers of Victoria average more than they do in Queensland. But in the other trades the difference is even more marked. For instance, in the tailoring trade in Victoria the minimum for adult males is £2 5s. per week. The average wage earned is £2 12s. 7d., or 7s. 7d. over the minimum fixed; 492 workers average £2 12s. 7d., whereas in Queensland 314 adult males average only £2 2s. 10d., or nearly 10s. a week less than

the wages earned in Victoria. Take, again, the male apprentices and improvers; 350 in Victoria earn £1 0s. 2d. per week, whereas in Queensland 168 average only 12s. 8d. per week; 1,024 males, including apprentices and improvers, in Victoria average £1 19s. 5d., whereas 482 in Queensland average only £1 13s. 8d. Now, dealing with the tailoresses, we find in Victoria 1,778 average £1 2s. 1d. per week, whereas in Queensland the average was only 17s. 1d. for 940. Here, again, we find that though the minimum wage is fixed in Victoria for female employees in the tailoring trade at £1 per week, yet the average earned is 2s. over the minimum. So that in no case in that trade did the minimum fixed by the wages board become the maximum. As to female apprentices, the Victorian rate is 9s. per week for 958, and 7s. 4d. in Queensland for 665. The average rate for 3,940 females in Victoria is 18s. 6d. per week, whereas in Queensland 1,605 earn only 13s. per week. Taking the whole trade, 4,964 in Victoria average £1 2s. 10d., and 2,297 in Queensland average 17s. 9d. So that in this trade men, women, boys, and girls average 5s. a week more than persons in similar positions in Queensland. Even that sum of 5s. per week is a very big consideration to the average working man or woman. It means a difference of £13 a year paid in the same class of trade for the same number of hours. Take again the furniture trade, and here the comparison is even more marked; 497 male adults in Victoria average £2 9s. 2d. per week, whereas in Queensland the average is only £2 1s. 10d. In the male apprentices and improvers, 257 in Victoria average 18s. 11d., and in Queensland 168 average 12s. 8d. Taking the whole of the males engaged in that trade in Victoria, the average is £1 18s. 10d. for 754, whereas the average in Queensland for 350 is only £1 9s. 3d. per week. Among adult females the average in Victoria for 41 amounts to £1 2s. 4d. Here, again, I would like to point out that the rate fixed by the special board is £1 a week, so we find the earnings are 2s. 4d. per week over the minimum wage. In Queensland there are only fourteen females employed in the furniture trade, and their average earnings are £1 0s. 9d. per week. In one branch, that is in the female improvers and apprentices, the rates of wages in Victoria are lower than those in Queensland. Forty-seven female apprentices and improvers in Victoria average 9s. 1d. per week, whereas 5 in Queensland receive the higher wage of 11s. 7d. per week. Taking the whole of the females employed in that trade in Victoria, the average for eighty-eight is 15s. 3d., while the average in

[4.30 p.m.] Queensland for nineteen is 15s. 4d.

In those two instances the average wage in Queensland, where a smaller number of persons are employed, is greater than it is in Victoria. But the average for the total employees engaged in that trade in Victoria is £1 16s. 4d. per week for 842 persons, whereas the average in Queensland for 369 persons is £1 8s. 6d. per week. From these figures it will be seen that as far as those four trades are concerned there is a very great difference in the rates of wages for the two colonies. I shall now refer to the shirtmaking and underclothing trades, which are the two trades in which the lowest rates of wages have been paid in Queensland. In Victoria the minimum wage fixed by the special wages boards for regulating those trades is 16s. per week for adult females, and the minimum for apprentices is regulated in proportion. As I mentioned before, no apprentice is allowed to work for less than 2s. 6d. for the first six months, and 4s. for the second six months, and there is a rate fixed for overtime. Eighteen males are engaged in the trade, in shirtcutting, I presume, and their average wage is £2 1s. 7d.

per week. In Queensland we have four males so employed, who receive an average of £2 2s. 4d. per week, a little more than the average in Victoria. In Victoria fifty-one males engaged in the trade receive an average wage of £1 6s. 2d. per week, and twelve males in Queensland get an average of £1 6s. per week. It is when we come to the female workers, who are the large body engaged in this trade, that we find the difference. In Victoria 161 females average 18s. 8d., or 2s. 8d. a week more than the minimum fixed, whereas in Queensland 115 earn only 15s. 3d. per week. The average wage paid to 142 apprentices and improvers in Victoria amounts to 7s. per week, while in Queensland the average rate for 125 apprentices is 8s. 7d. per week. Taking the total number of females employed in the trade, we find that 778 in Victoria average 15s. 4d. per week, whereas in Queensland 240 persons average 11s. 9d. per week. The average of the whole of the persons engaged in that trade in Victoria—that is, 829 persons—is 16s. per week, while in Queensland the average for 252 persons is 12s. per week. In this trade in Queensland longer hours are worked than in any of the other trades I have mentioned. The work is very largely done outside the factories, and the inspector has not the same opportunity of finding out the hours worked as he has by entering a factory. A great number of the workers work in their own homes, and of course in that case the supervision of the inspector cannot be so close as it is in factories. In the underclothing trade in Victoria there are five adult males employed, and they receive an average of £1 17s. per week. In Queensland we have no adult males employed in that trade. But we have two apprentices who receive 8s. 9d. per week; whereas, four in Victoria average 13s. 10d. per week. In Victoria 232 adult females average 19s. 11d. per week, or 3s. 11d. over the minimum fixed; whereas in Queensland the average for twenty-four adult females is 15s. 11d., or 4s. per week less than the Victorian operatives receive. In Victoria 548 apprentices average 7s. 4d. per week, while forty-nine in Queensland average 7s. 3d. Looking at the matter as a whole, 1,128 females in that trade in Victoria average 12s. 4d. per week, while seventy-three in Queensland average 10s. 4d.; or 1,137 persons in Victoria average 12s. 6d. per week, while seventy-five persons in Queensland average only 10s. 1d. per week. If the number of apprentices engaged in those trades in Queensland, who receive no payment at all, were included in the figures, the average for this colony would be very much lower than I have indicated. Unfortunately the Act in Queensland does not provide, as the Act in Victoria does, that apprentices shall not receive less than a certain amount. There are ninety-seven apprentices employed in this and other trades in Queensland who receive no payment for their labour. The present condition of things in this colony calls for some interference, and for some remedy of the nature that has been so successfully applied in Victoria. Mr. Crowther, in his last report, says—

In female labour the number employed receiving no wages was ninety-seven, as against 172 the previous year, and 104 in 1897, which, considering the increased total number of employees, must be considered a step in the right direction, although by no means a state of things upon which we can afford yet to congratulate ourselves.

The number receiving 10s. per week and under was 1,512, as against 1,427, being an increase of 6 per cent., as against an increase of 15½ per cent. in the total number of female workers, which may be taken as an indication of an improving condition of things in this class of labour. On the other hand, it must be noted that, while the increase in male labour in Brisbane amounts to 5½ per cent., the increase in female labour is nearly three times as great, and it seems to me a very

doubtful subject for congratulation, from a social point of view, which indicates such a preponderance of increase of female labour.

No doubt some explanation of this may be found in the pressure of excessive competition in those trades where female labour is capable of being substituted for male. This pressure manifests itself in different ways, more or less pronounced, in different industries; in some, as suggested above, in an increase in the less highly-paid female labour; in others by reduced wages, long hours, or the introduction of youthful or less-skilled workers.

The paragraph which follows is one which supports me very largely in the position I have taken up in connection with this matter. It says—

This excessive pressure is common throughout certain industries, and is only slightly influenced by local conditions, so that lessons may be drawn from the efforts that have been made in older and more advanced communities to relieve the sufferers therefrom by the enactment of provisions fixing the conditions of labour—viz., by fixing a minimum wage, fixing the proportion of apprentices who may be admitted, fixing the number of working hours, and fixing an official log of prices to be paid for piecework; and no doubt some, if not all, of these expedients will have, in time, to be seriously considered here.

Another subject of perhaps quite as much importance is the question of the proper training of apprentices to their trades. In the pressure of competition every consideration is subordinated to the main issue—viz., to produce cheaply; and all considerations of a humanitarian nature go to the wall.

Now, I think in that line, and in that line alone, we have the whole kernel of the situation. The desire seems to be to produce cheaply, and any considerations of a humanitarian nature are quite out of the question. If this state of things exists, as it largely does in Queensland—though in many cases, as I have always said, there are employers who are not favourable to these conditions—if this state of things exists, if employers are powerless to rectify it, if competition places them in the position that they are obliged to do what the unscrupulous employer does, then I say that it ought to be the duty of the State to step in, and regulate by machinery, or rather afford the persons engaged in these trades the machinery to regulate these trades, and to prevent the present system which has been growing up, from flourishing in our midst. Miss Smith reports that—

Out of 521 employees in dressmaking establishments at the close of the year, 10 per cent. were receiving no wages, and 25 per cent. of the remainder were receiving from 2s. 6d. to 5s. weekly. The average weekly wage of 160 of these girls is 2s. 10d. Apprentices serve from six to twelve months before they are paid. At present there is nothing to prevent unpaid apprentices, if over eighteen years of age, from having to work overtime, and this is a point deserving of attention. Out of 520 females employed in order tailoring workrooms, only 5 per cent. were unpaid apprentices, and less than 10 per cent. of the remainder were receiving 5s. or less weekly. The average wage of eighty of these girls is 3s. 3d.

Reading that paragraph with the one that is to follow, we see how in some cases employers are inclined to, and do, treat their employees fairly, and on the other hand how some employers take an undue advantage of their employees, and do not treat them as fairly as their fellow-employers treat theirs. That is the position in which employees are placed owing to trade competition. One buys his goods or his material as well as the other man, and the margin of profit generally comes to about the same thing, but the rate of wages that are paid are not fixed, and competition becomes keen. One employer desires to pay what is fair, and he is inclined to pay the boy or girl who works for him some recompense from the start; but the other man, in some kinds of trade, takes advantage of the fair man, and in the first place gets as many in his employment as he can who receive no wages; and on the other hand he pays the same class of

employee, for the same class of work, as is done by the other man, a much lower rate of wages than the fair employer pays to his employees. Miss Smith further says—

In one of the largest tailoring workrooms, out of 63 employees, 21 receive an average weekly wage of just under 2s. 6d. This employer pays his apprentices nothing for the first three months, 2s. 6d. weekly for the next nine months, 3s. 6d. for the next nine months, and 6s. 6d. for the next six months—an average weekly wage, extending over three years, of 3s. 9d.

That is one point which shows the necessity of some power greater than the option of the employer himself to come in and regulate this state of affairs. Here is one tailoring manufacturer paying an average rate of 3s. 8d. per week for three years, while other men in the trade pay almost from the beginning 2s. 6d. a week, and increase it year by year. Now, Miss Smith again points out in connection with the manufacture of men's clothing—

For men's slop clothing trousers different employers pay prices varying from 9s., 8s. 6d., 7s. 6d., down to 6s. 6d. for moles, and 9s., 8s., 7s., 6s., down to 5s. for tweeds, though in a few cases a higher price is paid for tweeds. These are the prices for "making" only, and do not include "cutting and pressing." An average worker can make about two dozen pairs weekly, but that quantity cannot always be obtained.

In many cases the machining is done inside the factory, and the "finishing" is done by outside workers, 4s., 3s. 6d., and 3s. per dozen being given for this part of work, which sometimes includes making the button-holes. Some employers, however, give out "part finishing" at 2s. or 1s. 6d. per dozen, when the band lining is machined on and the button-holes have also been made by machine. For the class of work at 4s., 3s. 6d., or 3s. per dozen, about one dozen daily are often finished by an outside worker, but they have to work long hours to do this quantity.

In connection with the manufacture of men's clothing, a number of employers act as middlemen, receiving work from warehouses, factories, or shops, and reissuing it either to factory occupiers or outside workers.

In some cases a large proportion of the price paid by the firm issuing the work in the first instance goes to the middleman.

One man receives work chiefly from shops, and is paid 12s., 13s., to 15s. per dozen for trousers (he having to provide the trimmings and cut and press the work); to the women who make these garments he pays 5s., 6s., and 7s. per dozen, out of which they have to supply the thread.

This man was also receiving work from a large clothing factory and reissuing it at 5s. 6d. per dozen; whereas, had the women got the work direct from the factory they would have been paid 7s. per dozen, and a good worker could have made 17s. 6d. per week instead of 13s. 9d., the character of the work being, of course, the same. The work performed by this man consisted of having the materials brought to his factory and returning it, when finished, to the establishment from which it was issued.

Another man was receiving juvenile suits—tweed, ready cut, at 12s. and 13s. per dozen—from a large factory; these he reissued at 8s. per dozen, his share of the work consisting in having the button-holes made by machine and pressing the work.

From the same factory another sub-contractor was receiving large quantities of mole trousers, and paying her workers 3s. per dozen for machining and 2s. per dozen for finishing, whereas in the factory 4s. per dozen was paid for machining the same work, and 3s. 3d. per dozen for finishing, exclusive of button-holes, and the machines are here provided and run by mechanical power.

In this respect, the lowest and most miserable rate of wages is paid to outside workers. Now, the provisions in the Victorian Act embrace the outside workers just as well as those who work in factories. Wherever a worker is employed at a trade to which the wages board refers or affects, that worker, whether a middleman or the direct manufacturer, is paid a rate of wages fixed by the board. If we had this provision in Queensland, a middleman getting work from a factory, and receiving 12s. or 15s. a dozen for that work, and reissuing it to a lot of unfortunate women who have to take the work at any

price, would not be allowed to pay 8s. per dozen making a profit of practically 5s. a dozen on the labour of these people. I say that that state of things would be prevented if a provision such as that in existence in Victoria were in operation here, because in fixing the minimum rate, the wages board deals not only with those employed in factories, but the other persons engaged in that particular trade in the district where the Act is in operation. I think, myself, that that is the only possible way in which this state of things can be prevented. The chief inspector points out that the records are a most important feature in connection with this outside work. He admits that he took legal opinion on the fact that a number of people were not furnishing the department with records, and the opinion he received was to the effect that it practically was useless to prosecute those persons. It is one of the most serious points in connection with our factories, that practically we have no power to compel these people to send in records. At all events, the Act is drawn up in such a faulty manner that it is considered risky to undertake prosecutions under it.

MR. ANNEAR: Certain hours are in force.

MR. McDONNELL: Yes, the maximum hours in Victoria in these trades, are eight per day and no more. In cases where more hours were worked, special permission had to be granted by the factories department. Under the present Act overtime is allowed on ten occasions in the year, but when further overtime is desired to be worked, the employer has to forward to the department the particulars in connection therewith. There is this advantage in the Victorian Act, that 6d. for tea money must be provided, and in no case is overtime allowed to be worked unless the employee receives 8s. per week. In this respect, in Queensland, it is the unorganised workers, and the females, and young workers who are taken advantage of by their employers. These people, who need the most protection, are the ones that suffer in the matter of overtime. There is a provision in the Victorian Act that a suspension of the Act may be granted by the Minister; but before it is granted it has to be proved that labour in the particular trade is not available outside. If there is such labour available outside, the Minister has power to refuse a suspension of the Act, and one of the conditions in allowing overtime is the consent of the employee. His consent must first be obtained before such a suspension is granted, and in no case is overtime allowed to be worked unless the employee is receiving 8s. per week. Now, overtime as far as it affects Queensland is simply a revelation. I tried to have amendments inserted in our Act some little time ago. We allow 150 hours' overtime in the year in any trade: that is, where females and young persons are employed. In Victoria there is a rate of pay to be fixed for overtime in the case of male adults as well as females, in the trades that come under the provisions of the wages boards, and in all cases a rate greater than the ordinary rate of one and a quarter has to be paid for overtime. I would like to know what is the intention of the Government in this matter, or can we hope that this provision, which has been so successful in Victoria, will be embodied in the amending Bill, which I hope to see brought down this session. I think that the matter of the establishment of special wages boards has been so freely discussed in Victoria and other places that the Government of Queensland should have no hesitation in adopting the same class of legislation. In South Australia at the present time a Bill of the same nature is going through the legislature there; and South Australia is more inclined to freetrade than protection. The conditions with regard to factories and shops in

South Australia are much better than here. A great amount of sweating is going on in Queensland. Most of the wages in this connection are low, and the overtime worked in several factories here does not obtain in South Australia. Still the Government of that colony recognised the benefit to the employee and the employer through the introduction of this wages board. A similar Bill was introduced in South Australia last year, but it was so late in the session that it could not be passed. Then, in Great Britain, in the English Parliament, Sir Charles Dilke, has this year introduced a Bill providing for the establishment of wages boards there. We are told that inquiries have been made from all parts of the world with regard to the working of these boards in Victoria. At the end of the period—three years—when that Act expired, employers had an opportunity of voicing their opinions against a re-enactment of it, yet not a single petition was presented against it. On the contrary, you will find from the reports in Victoria that a great majority of the employers welcomed that Act. It placed trade on a better footing, and many other advantages resulted from it. There is one other point I wish to deal with, and that is with regard to waitresses and others engaged in restaurants and such like places. One of the most deplorable things revealed in the Factories Report for Queensland, is the long hours and the miserable conditions afforded to this class of labour. In some cases these employees work eighty hours a week, and they receive a very low rate of wages indeed. I have been informed, on good authority, that in one case the girls in a certain establishment of this character have not only to work long hours, but that in the night they have to attend social functions, balls, parties, and other gatherings, and that they only receive 1s. per night as a remuneration for their labour. In many cases they have to spend four or five hours performing their duties at those places.

THE HOME SECRETARY: I understand it is usual to give 2s. 6d.

MR. McDONNELL: I have been informed that in one case they got 1s., but I don't know that they receive any overtime as a rule. At any rate, if they do receive overtime their rate of wages at the present time is so small and their hours of work so great, that I think some provision should be brought down in the amending Bill to reduce the hours of those people. In Victoria, regulations are made fixing a maximum week of sixty hours for those persons, and I hope that in the Early Closing Bill—if the Home Secretary cannot see his way to insert it in the Factories Bill—some such provision will be made in relation to the waitresses in restaurants in Brisbane and other parts of the colony. Not only is there a maximum week in Victoria, but provision is made granting those people a half-holiday every week. Waiters, billiard-markers, bar attendants, and others engaged in hotels, come under the same provision. Not only in regard to the establishment of wages boards, and the regulation of overtime and in other respects, is the Victorian Act worthy to be followed, but in this respect also; and I think it is a crying shame that such a state of things should exist as exists in connection with the waitresses and those people in Brisbane at the present time. I am satisfied that hon. gentlemen on both sides would be desirous of altering the present state of things, because I am satisfied that any man with any humane feeling at all would desire to see the state of things altered for the better in Queensland, particularly in relation to the weaker sex; and, unfortunately, it is the weaker sex that suffers most in connection with these matters. I have made no reflection

on the Government; I have made no reflection on the Factories Department for the ineffectiveness of the Act. What I have said is that the Act is so faulty and so loosely drawn that there is no power even to compel people to do their duty under it. But, as I said before, I think that the Home Secretary should have long since introduced an amending Bill making our present Act more definite, more clear in its interpretations, improving it not only in that respect but also in other respects—in widening its scope and liberalising its provisions. The Act has proved so ineffective right through that I hope the Government will come down early in the session with an amending Bill, not only to remedy the defects, but also to provide for those provisions which I advocate in this motion. I am sure that if such a Bill was brought down, a lot of other information could be produced which would support the case I have tried to make out to-day. I do not believe that this question will be treated as a party question. I believe it is one of the questions that should not be treated as a party question in this House.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Or in the country either.

MR. McDONNELL: I have heard hon. gentlemen who support the Government advocate as strongly as I am advocating legislation of this kind.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You never accuse the Government.

MR. McDONNELL: I think if the hon. gentleman had been here when I made my opening remarks he would have heard exactly what I said. I say that I accuse them again and again of not administering the Act, but I say I have come to the conclusion that neither the Factories Department nor the Minister can administer the present Act, because it is so faulty and so loosely drawn that it is impossible, if a case was tested, to get a conviction under the Act—that, in fact, the proverbial coach and four could be driven through every session.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That was true of several Acts of Parliament in O'Connell's time.

MR. McDONNELL: That may be true; but I know it is true in this case, and we have it on the testimony of the gentleman who is administering the Act—namely, the chief inspector—that the Act is very faulty, and that it is risky to undertake a prosecution under it. I have said sufficient, I think, on this matter at present, and I will simply move the motion standing in my name, hoping that the Government will consider this question. The Chief Secretary stated last year that there was no time to bring down a Bill, but that the matter would have the consideration of the Government. They have had a good time now to consider the matter, and I think flesh and blood deserve a lot of consideration. I hope the Government in considering this question will come to the decision that, not only in the interests of the factory employees, but also in the interests of the fair factory owners, legislation of this kind is absolutely necessary.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

THE HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carmarvon*): The hon. member for Fortitude Valley is undoubtedly very much in earnest in everything which affects the welfare and wellbeing of factory wage-earners and persons who are employed generally under the terms of the Factories and Shops Act; and though we cannot possibly all agree with him, nevertheless one cannot feel the less that he is thoroughly in earnest. I suppose we are all in our different ways seeking after pretty much the same thing—namely, the greatest good for the greatest number; and it is in the means by which we seek to attain this end that we really differ, not in

regard to the end which is our ultimate goal. The hon. member, in opening his speech, made reference to the maladministration of the present Factories and Shops Act in this colony; and he said—at least, so I understood him—that he was divided between the alternative of indicting, so to speak, the officers of the Factories and Shops Department for neglect of duty and being unsympathetic with the legislation, or believing that the Minister was failing in his duty.

MR. McDONNELL: I said that I would not accept either of those reasons as an explanation.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Well, the hon. member certainly went on, as I understood him, to level certain complaints or accusations against the Minister for not having properly administered the Act.

MR. McDONNELL: No.

THE HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member was good enough to qualify that in some way by saying that he thought I was doing my best, or something of that sort.

MR. McDONNELL: I said that you were desirous of administering the Act fairly, but the Act was so faulty that you could not administer it.

THE HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member came in with that about an hour later.

MR. McDONNELL: No; you were not in the House at the time I said it first. You will see it in *Hansard*.

THE HOME SECRETARY: I had to go out for some papers, and it is possible that the hon. member said it in my absence then. In that case the complaint I had to make as to the unfairness of his criticism of myself falls to the ground, and I have no more to say on that subject. But I have something to say with reference to his complaint that I have not taken any steps to remedy the defects in the Act. Now, as a matter of fact, I took steps to introduce a Bill to amend the Factories and Shops Act last session. I had not been very long in office in the Home Secretary's Department, but in the short time that elapsed after I took office before the session began I formulated certain amendments in the Act, knowing the defects which existed in it, and if it had not been for the extraordinary course of political events last session, I believe we should have had an amended Factories and Shops Act on our statute-book at this moment as part of the legislation of last year. Hon. members know full well, and the country knows full well, what led to the complete dislocation of all legislation last year. Certain hon. members, for the purpose of satisfying their vanity by sitting for a day or two upon these benches—

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: For four hours.

THE HOME SECRETARY: For four hours, probably—upset the whole legislative business of the session, and, instead of a fertile session, so far as legislation was concerned, we had an almost absolutely barren one, and, if it were not for the Criminal Code—which takes up a very large proportion of the volume of statutes for last session—you could put the whole thing into your mouth. If hon. members on the other side had taken a different course, and had not brought about, in conjunction with other hon. members—who, for the time being, thought they were making game of the Labour party, or the Labour party thought they were making game of the other hon. members—a coalition which came to an end very quickly—we might have had a very different result. If it had not been for that, we should have had a fertile session, and the Factories and Shops Bill would have been one of the measures that would have been passed. But it is not merely the fact that a Bill is not passed in a particular session, when one would hope that it would be passed, that we have to deplore. It is also that each session brings its own crop of

new legislation which becomes necessary, and so you get an accumulation of deferred legislation. The list grows as each session passes without some good work done.

Mr. KIDSTON: Why not meet earlier and wipe it off?

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: You would talk more—that is all.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member knows that it is impossible to meet earlier.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Meet on the first day of the year, and continue to sit till the last.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is nonsense. I really do not know whether the hon. member was in that long-lived Ministry or not, but, if he was, he must have learned during the two or three hours, or days, or weeks, that he was there, something of administrative duties. However, I do not want to be drawn off the thread of my speech. Hon. members delight to interject in this way, and draw one off the subject matter of the debate, and then they tell him that he is talking against time and trying to talk the question out. Now I do not want to do that.

Mr. DUNSFORD: You have forty minutes yet to talk it out.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The HOME SECRETARY: I would have hoped to have had the Factories and Shops Bill before the House by now, but I would ask hon. members to look at the business-paper as it stands now. An hon. member has given notice to-day of his intention to ask whether we are going to introduce the Local Government Bill this session. Well, there are two Local Government Bills to come on, but the accumulation of legislation, consequent upon continuous talk instead of business being done in past sessions, has led to a perfect block, and any Government which attempted to cope with the arrears of legislation, as you might properly call it, would find it was quite impossible to get through anything like all the legislation that is desired in one session. The question is which Bills should be taken first. The hon. member for Gympie is most anxious that the Local Government Bill should come first.

Mr. HIGGS: No; land-grant railways first.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The HOME SECRETARY: I think we may leave the discussion of land-grant railways to another time; but, at all events, they are measures which it is thought will do an immense amount of good to this colony, and will lead to the introduction of perhaps £2,000,000 or £3,000,000, and will find employment for many people. Even if they never do any other good than that, it is perhaps a reason why they should be given such prominence; but that is a matter I leave to the Ministers more immediately in charge of those Bills. What I wish to say is that it is impossible for me, as Home Secretary, to hope to get through anything like half the measures which I feel satisfied ought to be passed by this House. My experience last night was quite sufficient evidence to me that it is almost useless to get an important Bill through committee without endless delays, which are absolutely unnecessary. I am sure we talked and talked things round and round until everybody was heartily sick of the subject we were immediately discussing. But no—the talk must go on though the heavens fall. We must talk before we come to a decision.

Mr. HIGGS: You are only talking now, and are not referring to the subject at all.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am talking about the difficulties of legislation. I am twitted by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley—the colleague of the hon. member who most unseemingly interrupts me—and I am replying to a

specific charge which he makes against me—that I have not introduced this legislation, which he admits is necessary, and which I also admit is necessary, because the hon. member is perfectly correct when he says that the present Factories and Shops Act is extremely faulty. It is almost impossible to work it. It is almost a heart-breaking business for the chief inspector, and for the other inspectors, to carry it out as it ought to be administered. If we have legislation of this kind—whether it has the full beneficial effect which some people think it has, or not, it ought to be framed in such a way that it is workable. It is my sincere desire to see the Factories and Shops Act amended in such a way as to give it—what it has not got at the present time—and that is a fair trial. The hon. member has truly said that the hands of the administration are tied by the faultiness of the Act, and our inability, in consequence, to prosecute for certain breaches. No doubt the best intentions prevailed when that Act was passed. I am speaking from memory, but I think I am correct in saying that the hon. member's then leader was one of those largely instrumental in bringing about one of the matters in that Act of which he has complained to-day as being one of its defects, and that is its failure to do justice to waitresses and barmaids. I think the hon. member for Bundaberg was one of those who resisted an attempt to deal with that very question.

Mr. McDONNELL: I do not think he did.

The HOME SECRETARY: I may be doing him an injustice, but I think that is so. All this legislation is experimental more or less even now, and after a measure of this kind has gone through the ordeal of committee you will not have the comparatively perfect measure introduced to the House, but a very much modified measure, which may be improved in certain respects, but the very improvements may by their insertion cause defects to appear in other parts of the Bill. That probably was the case in regard to the Factories and Shops Act, in which, no doubt, a great variety of opinion found expression. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley laid a great deal of stress upon a comparison he has drawn between the average earnings in trades affected by the wages board in Victoria, and the earnings in similar trades in this colony. His statement is perhaps only half of the tale after all. It is of very little use to a man to obtain an increase of 5 per cent. in his emoluments if he loses 10 per cent of his annual wages through idleness. I find that in Victoria there is a very general complaint that the effect of the establishment of a minimum wage there and of special wages boards has been that, though the average wages are increased, it has been rendered more difficult to obtain sufficient labour up to the standard required for those wages, by reason of the withdrawal from those particular trades of men who were previously able to get employment in them.

Mr. McDONNELL: There has been an increase in the numbers employed in all trades.

The HOME SECRETARY: There has been a general revival altogether, and I will give the hon. member some information as to that by and by from men who are in the trades, and who know to what the increase is attributable. They do not attribute it to the minimum wage, but entirely to other causes which they say have brought about that result, notwithstanding the disabilities cast upon the industries by the imposition of that wage. There are others, of course, who hold a different view. It is these varieties of views held upon a subject, and the high feeling engendered on both sides by the discussion, which render it difficult to arrive at a

really impartial and dispassionate conclusion as to what the effect of the provision has really been.

Mr. McDONNELL: My statements were made from the official information of the department.

The HOME SECRETARY: I hope to be able to give the hon. member some more official information. I hope we shall be able to discuss the matter without heat.

Mr. HIGGS: There was no heat last night, was there?

The HOME SECRETARY: Not from me. The question of apprentices is another very great stumbling block, but the limitation of apprentices is a necessary corollary of the minimum wage. I take it the hon. member for Fortitude Valley will admit that fact—that if you are going to stipulate that a certain minimum wage shall be paid to the ordinary worker, you must limit the number of apprentices a man has to take.

Mr. KIDSTON: It is not at all necessary.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member for Rockhampton cannot have read up the subject, or he would admit that it is necessary.

Mr. McDONNELL: It has been done.

Mr. KIDSTON: It is an old trades union doctrine, but I deny that it is necessary.

The HOME SECRETARY: It has been done, at all events. It is always well to hear what another says of one, and it is well to hear what a third person has to say about a system in vogue in a place quoted as a place where that system has worked successfully. Let us see what the Chief Inspector of Factories for New South Wales has to say with regard to the Victorian Act and its operation. He says—

The minimum wage is determined by means of representative boards, and of these five were in full operation during the year covered by this report, namely:—1. The bread-making and baking board. 2. Articles of men's and boys' clothing board. 3. Boots and shoes board. 4. Shirts, cuffs, and collars board (females only). 5. Furniture board (European males). The chief inspector frankly admits that in the boot trade, with the minimum fixed by the board, the result was that only the best and quickest men were employed. The old and slow workers had no chance at all.

Quoting Mr. Harrison Ord, the chief inspector in Victoria, he says—

The statement is made. It is notorious that some of the men who are quite able to earn the minimum wage, and are no doubt actually earning more than that sum for their employers, sign on for the minimum wage and take less. Broadly speaking, the success of the Victorian system appears, even from the official report, which naturally would not view it from the least sanguine point of view, to depend ultimately upon the workers themselves.

Mr. KIDSTON: You have a law against stealing that is occasionally broken.

The HOME SECRETARY: The New South Wales inspector, still quoting the Victorian inspector, says—

The chief inspector complains "the men are not true to themselves." How far men under the pressure of keen competition in their own ranks, having to secure the daily necessities of life under the penalty of suffering in their own person and the persons of those dependent upon them, can be expected to play the high part they are called on to play, if a minimum wage is to be upheld in its integrity, is a question that may be left to our knowledge of human nature for its answer.

Those are very pregnant words.

Mr. LESINA: It is a condemnation of our present social system to a large extent.

The HOME SECRETARY: I think our present social system is deserving [5.30 p.m.] of a little condemnation, and the further we get the more condemnation it deserves.

Mr. KIDSTON: If you would not keep in operation any law that was occasionally broken, you would not keep in operation any law at all.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not want to be put off any argument. The hon. member must recollect that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was not interrupted.

Mr. KIDSTON: Do not get out of temper.

Mr. McDONALD: It does not take much to get him out of temper, or to get his hair off.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in making repeated interjections, and certainly he is not in order in making interjections of a personal nature. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley was heard in silence by the House, and to that extent he received the courteous treatment to which every member is entitled. I trust the sense of fair play of the House will insist that the same courtesy is extended to the Minister when replying.

The HOME SECRETARY: The same authority goes on to say—

The Victorian Chamber of Manufactures claims that the experiment made in the Factories Act has been largely a failure on the department's own showing, and declares that the effects of the extension of the present system will be:—

1. The attraction to manufacturing centres of numbers of working country people, drawn thither, firstly, by the extension of manufacturing industries likely to follow the advent of federation; secondly, by the nominally increased rate of wages which it is assumed will be made statutory.

2. Consequent glut and disorganisation of the labour market, augmentation of the unemployed, and general distress among operatives.

3. The necessitous sacrifice of the slower worker to the quicker worker, even though the degree of difference be very slight; consequently, a diminution of hands employed in proportion to work done.

4. An injurious bearing upon country interests, by creating an aristocracy of labour in towns, by drawing population thither, and by raising the cost of commodities to the country worker without giving him a share in the increased purchasing power granted to the city worker.

An important trade association in Sydney, last year, wrote to members of a similar association in Melbourne, asking for their experience of the working of the minimum wage. One correspondent wrote: "I was, and am now, one of its staunchest advocates as a principle;" and then goes on to point out that the failure (as he regards it) of the principle is due, not to the fact that it is unsound, but because it is evaded. "Unfortunately," he says, "there is no means of enforcing it: it rests entirely with the employee, and if he likes to work for less, how can you stop him? I believe it handicaps the good employer in the trade more than ever, because he knows it is the law, and he pays it. The other sort of employer knows it is the law, but he does not pay it. That is just the difference. So, you see, it is largely a matter of character after all."

Another correspondent wrote:—"I understand you are troubled with undersellers, and you want our opinion on the working of the Minimum Wage Act. I may state that we are also troubled with undersellers, and have tried all sorts of ways to cope with the evil, including legislation and moral suasion, and we are in a worse fix than ever."

Against these statements must be set the apparent appreciation by those whom it immediately affects of the working of the system, and the recently expressed desire to extend its principle. By these it is contended that broadly speaking the operation of the minimum wage clauses has been beneficial.

Now, I say the quotations which the hon. member made were from the persons who have been directly benefited, but he leaves out of account altogether the unfortunate people who have been shouldered on to other trades and taken lower wages than they ever got before in the trades in which they have been shouldered out.

Mr. McDONNELL: The figures which I quoted were the figures of the manufacturers.

The HOME SECRETARY: Perhaps the hon. member will refer to that in his reply. I am dealing at present with the question of evasions. I was quoting from the report of the Chief Inspector of Shops and Factories in New South Wales and the remarks he made on the system as it was worked in Victoria. It is right that I should say his report was for the year

ending 1899, but the references were made to the Victorian report of 1898. Now, let us take the report from which the hon. member himself quoted—that of the Chief Inspector of Shops and Factories in Victoria. Let me say at once that Mr. Harrison Ord was a very strong advocate at all times of the principle now advocated by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, and it is not at all likely that he would say anything in his official report which would assist the arguments of those opposed to that which he has so much at heart. I will not say there is a liability on his part to colour his report in favour of his own views, but I do not think he would give away any position to his opponents. In speaking of the bread-making and baking trade, he says—

The board fixed 1s. an hour as the minimum wage. In 1896, before the determination came into force, the average wage in the trade was £1 12s. 5d. per week; in 1897, when the determination was in force for some time, it was £1 17s. 3d.; in 1898, when the determination was in full force, it was £2 0s. 6d.; and in 1899, under similar conditions, it was £2 1s. 10d. This means that as compared with 1896 the average wage of every man and boy in the trade was raised 9s. 5d. per week in 1899. As the wages of the apprentices were fixed at 5s. per week by the board (more was of course paid by employers as apprentices became more skilled) the actual increase in the wages of the men must have been much greater than 9s. 5d. per week. Such facts speak for themselves. The one drawback to the successful working of this determination seems to me to be repeated allegations by both masters and employees, that many employers are not really paying the legal wage.

The whole thing, so far as a large proportion of the employers are concerned, merely exists on paper.

I am loth to believe such a general charge against a body of employers can be true. No doubt there are individual cases of evasion, but that a large body of employers would deliberately break the law and rob their employees of part of their earnings seems incredible, and it is also incredible that a large body of men would submit to such oppression.

I think any fair-minded man would take exception to the way that is put. Mr. Ord deprecates the idea that employers would break the law, and endeavour, as he puts it, to rob their employees of part of their earnings. If the employee is willing and anxious to take less than the minimum wage, where is the robbery? An employer says to a man, "Things are cut so fine in my trade that I cannot employ you at the minimum wage; I should be very glad to do so, but I cannot do it; but if you will take so much less I would be prepared to take you on." Is that robbing a man? No; it is giving him employment.

Mr. REID: It is sweating.

The HOME SECRETARY: No, it is not sweating; it is a straight-out bargain between the man and the employer, and the employee knows before he takes the work that his employer cannot make his business pay at that particular wage. The result is that a considerable number of employers in those trades—the less reputable employers—are enabled to evade the Act in that way; while the more respectable employers, who desire to carry out the law, are to a very large extent shouldered out of the trade as manufacturers, because they are unable to compete with those who evade the law, and the less reputable class of manufacturers come to the front. Mr. Ord goes on to say—

I have never been able to get evidence which would justify such a charge. When I have heard it made, I have always pressed for particulars, and the usual reply is, "That someone told me that someone was doing so and so," but as a rule names were carefully omitted.

Of course, it is one of the most difficult things in the world to get two people who have joined together to break the law to confess that they have done so—to give themselves away. They

are particularly careful that nobody but themselves shall know anything about it. Mr. Ord further says—

Parliament appears to have now done everything that a reasonable man could ask to protect the workers in this trade, and if the men have not the courage to see that they get their legal rights, I do not see what further can be done. The idea which prevails in some quarters that expert inspectors should be appointed to watch and question the men who are alleged to be working at less than the legal wage seems to me to be unpractical. No expert in a trade can compel a man to tell the truth, and that is all that is now necessary to secure to the men their full wages.

And that will always be the case. When arbitrary interferences with the law of supply and demand take place, no matter how laudable may be the object, though some may be benefited by such interferences, it will be found that others suffer proportionately. In this connection I should like to read a letter from Mr. H. Matthews, a boot manufacturer, which appeared in the Melbourne *Argus* of the 12th of July last. Mr. Matthews is a strong supporter of this legislation, but he does not mention the fact in his letter. However, he gives his own history, so to speak, and hon. members can gather his antecedents and present feelings from the opening sentences of his letter. This is what he says—

SIR.—With your permission I should like to say a few words with respect to Mr. Harrison Ord's report on the boot trade for 1899. I do not write as an opponent of factory legislation, as, independent of the benefits intended to be conferred upon employees, it is, in my opinion, a protection to employers against the competition of the sweater. Nor do I object to the low piece-work prices, nor the minimum wage for adults. Indeed, in giving evidence before the Boot Board, I advocated the 42s. minimum in place of the 36s. then proposed. To my mind the inferences drawn by Mr. Ord from the figures in his report are not such as would recommend themselves to a person having an impartial mind, and desirous of showing the working of the Act in its true light, and as affecting both the employer and employee. In dealing with the increase shown in the number of persons employed during the year, he appears to imply that they were all employed full time, at the average wage, but it is well known to the trade, and also to the Chief Secretary's Department, that such is not the case, as Mr. Peacock, in quoting from Mr. Ord's report for 1899 to the Legislative Assembly, as to the increased amount paid for wages, qualified the statement by saying that the amount stated represented the increase, "supposing those employees worked full time," and I think it would have been only fair on Mr. Ord's part to have drawn attention to this qualification.

The increase in the total number of persons employed is not, in my opinion, any evidence as to an improvement in trade, or in the position of the general body of workers, for with business so quiet as it was in 1899, and the factories carrying very light stocks, a large number of hands were often out of employment, or employed on broken time, and during the busy months work was put through at high pressure, the consequence being that a large number of hands were temporarily employed, thus increasing the total number of employees without relatively increasing the total amount of wages paid. Until the Chief Inspector is in a position to state accurately the amount of wages paid, his report can be but of small value in indicating the effect of the Act upon the workers.

That is very significant.

The great failure has been with regard to apprentices and improvers. Under the law now in force they (both male and female) have to be paid a weekly wage ranging from 5s. for the first year to 20s. for the fifth year. In the case of intelligent and industrious apprentices (alas, too few), when they arrive at the fifth year they are worth the wage, but in the majority of instances the increase in the value of their work does not keep pace with the increase in the fixed wage. There have been many cases in my experience where, after three years, some apprentices have been fully worth 7s. 6d. to 10s. per week; but, whether worth it or not, the increased wage of 15s. must be paid, and, consequently, their services are dispensed with; and, as they must not be paid less in any other factory, they are debared from earning a living at the trade or completing their education. Mr.

Ord's figures appear to bear out my contention, for in the case of male apprentices the increased numbers are shown to be 2 in the first year, 4 in the second year, 36 in the third year (10s. wage), and only 6 in the fourth and fifth years; and in the case of female apprentices, the increase was 10 in the second year, 38 in the third year (10s. wage), and a decrease of 52 in the fourth and fifth years. Perhaps Mr. Ord can give some satisfactory explanation of the falling off shown by these figures. One of the inspectors suggests that the remedy is in the hands of the employers, who should teach the apprentices properly. Unfortunately, however, factories cannot be run on philanthropic lines. Raw, untrained boys and girls, who are of very little, if any, use during the first few months are taken, not only without a premium, but, as before stated, are paid from the commencement; and it is very unfair to expect that time can be devoted to teaching them. The remedy, to some extent, lies with the apprentices. If a boy or a girl is, in the first place, adapted to the trade, and is industrious and desirous of learning, there is every opportunity to improve, and in time becoming a competent worker, able to earn good wages; but for the reasons stated, I think the provisions relating to apprentices and improvers are unsatisfactory in every way. So far as I am able to judge, and I speak from thirty years' experience, the workers in my trade are worse off now as a body, and there are more of them out of employment, than there have been for years past.

Well, anyone who will read that will admit—

MR. TURLEY: Who signs it?

The HOME SECRETARY: I mentioned the name before. It is Mr. H. Matthews, a large manufacturer in Melbourne, who, as I said, was an advocate, and is an advocate, of this particular legislation; and I think the tone of his letter is such as to convince anyone who has heard it read, or who may have read it, that he is a man who has the welfare of his employees and of employees generally very thoroughly at heart. There is a tone of sincerity about his letter, which, I think, must go home to everybody. It will be seen that if there is any truth at all in the allegations which appear, even to Mr. Ord, to have a good deal in them, and which are supported by both employers and employees, then the figures quoted by the hon. member are illusory and not reliable. Of course, the figures are reliable in the sense they are quoted correctly, and come from the records, but if the records themselves are false, as the result of false returns having been sent in by the mutual connivance and collusion of the employers and employees, what reliance can be placed on them at all? That may be a minimum wage if you know the amount, and we do not doubt that it would be the official wage that would be returned, but there are a great variety of ways by which men, if they desire for their own ends and for their mutual benefit to evade the minimum wage, can make up to the employer the amount which they have agreed shall be deducted from their wages, and thus bring the amount down below the current rate of wages. I had some figures to quote in connection with this phase of the subject, which deals with apprentices and improvers, but unfortunately I have mislaid them, and I cannot put my hands on them at the present time. I may say that they bear out entirely Mr. Matthews's contention, and that is one of the reasons why I read his letter through. I particularly regret that I seem to have lost these figures, because they show that the view which he takes about the inequitable bearing of the provision with regard to apprentices is perfectly correct. Persons are thrown between one trade and another trade. Now, I may tell the hon. member, in reply to his question as to whether this wages board will find a place in the Factories and Shops Bill which the Government intend to introduce, and which I think may be introduced this session if time permits, that it will not find a place in that legislation. I think I have excellent ground, and I have given good reasons, why at the present time at all events it should not be introduced. There is

a still more cogent reason why it is not desirable to legislate in that direction at the present time. It is admitted that the legislation in Victoria is experimental, purely experimental, and it has by no means passed the experimental stage. Until Mr. Ord, who is wrapped up in the system himself—until he, with all his sanguine expectations with regard to it, can speak in very much more confident terms of its absolute success, I think it will be undesirable to regard the system as having passed beyond the experimental stage in that colony. The correspondence which has appeared in the Melbourne Press on this subject, and the speeches which have been made by members of the various associations both of employees and employers in Victoria, show that there is a great amount of uneasiness as to the effect that federation will have in the colonies which have this legislation in force, and it would be well for us, even if we were now of opinion that it might be desirable to pass this legislation, to wait and see how Victoria is affected by federation, and the competition of the colonies which have not this legislation in operation, and we should wait and see what the effect is after federation has become an accomplished fact and the fiscal barriers between the colonies have been broken down. That, I think, is a perfectly cogent and unanswerable reason why the experiment should not be made in this colony at this particular time. I regret again that I have not had the opportunity of giving the House all the information which I desired, but, perhaps, I shall have another opportunity of doing so.

MR. BOWMAN (*Warrego*): I desire to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed; and the resumption of the debate made an Order of the Day for Thursday, 18th October.

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

SUPPLY.

MOTION TO GO INTO COMMITTEE.

The TREASURER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*): I beg to move that you do now leave the chair, and that the House be put into Committee of Supply.

MR. KIDSTON (*Rockhampton*): Before that motion is put, I wish to bring a matter before the House, and especially before the Premier; and I take this opportunity of doing that because I think it is the best time to do it. I regret that I have to come between the hon. gentleman and the making of his Financial Statement; but no great time will be taken up in discussing this matter.

The TREASURER: You can't control the House.

MR. KIDSTON: I think if the hon. gentleman will give some attention to the matter there will be very little discussion on it. I refer to His Excellency the Governor taking part in public affairs. I have nothing to do with His Excellency the Governor, and I do not blame him; but I do blame the Premier, who is responsible for advice to His Excellency. Now, what His Excellency has been doing in certain matters is undesirable. I have no doubt that if the Premier, in a courteous way, had indicated to His Excellency that such a line of conduct was likely to create dissatisfaction, either in this House or in the country, that the good sense of His Excellency—

The SPEAKER: Order! I must remind the hon. member that when the conduct of a Governor is called into question, a distinct and substantive motion should be made. That is the recognised rule, and I trust the hon. member will observe it.

Mr. KIDSTON: I did not make any direct reference to His Excellency—to himself personally or to the high position he holds—but I am dealing with what I consider has been a lapse of duty on the part of the Premier, who is the head of the Government, and who is responsible to this House for his actions.

Mr. LEAHY: He is not responsible for the Governor.

Mr. KIDSTON: But he is responsible to this House. I blame the Premier, because he seems to have a desire to wash his hands of responsibility in the matter. I think it was his duty in some way to give His Excellency to understand—

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman is not in order in referring even indirectly to His Excellency the Governor. I trust the hon. member will follow the rules of the House.

Mr. KIDSTON: Hon. gentlemen on the other side seem very pleased. I regret being forced to make a substantive motion on the subject, but I give notice of a substantive motion on Tuesday next.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Quite regular.

Mr. KIDSTON: Quite so; but hon. members on the other side have attempted to stop discussion on this matter.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who is stopping it?

Mr. KIDSTON: It only wants the slightest indication from the Premier that he will attend to the matter, and then there will be no discussion, either now or afterwards. I want the law observed.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. KIDSTON: It may be a matter of opinion, and I am entitled to my opinion on the matter. I admit that I am only one out of seventy-two members; but if hon. members think the conduct which I am drawing attention to is right—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KIDSTON: If the majority of hon. members think this is a right thing for His Excellency to do—

The SPEAKER: Order! I would point out that it is ruled by "May" perfectly clearly that—

Unless the discussion is based upon a substantive motion, drawn in proper terms, reflections must not be cast in debate upon the conduct of the Sovereign, the heir to the Throne, and the members of the Royal family,

and so forth; and His Excellency the Governor of this colony comes within that category. That is a well-known ruling which has always been upheld. I have no desire to curtail the right of discussion; but I think a discussion of this character should be made regular.

Mr. KIDSTON: I would not have contravened the ruling given, but I was unable to refrain from replying to the interjection made by the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Dalrymple. I was saying that while I think even my opinion ought to have some influence with the Premier, I admit, of course, that if it was the opinion of the majority of hon. members that this thing was a correct and proper thing and should be done, then, of course, that ought to decide it; but I do not think there is any material difference between myself and other members of the House on this matter. I do not think there is any difference between myself and the Premier on this matter—any material difference of opinion. I think we are permitting an evil because of a delicacy in dealing with the person concerned. Delicacies of the kind may be laudable in many ways, but I think they may be carried to excess; and I think that the Premier is distinctly blamable if he permits such a thing to continue.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: What thing?

Mr. KIDSTON: The hon. member for Mackay is extremely desirous of knowing what thing.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It is too mysterious as it stands.

Mr. KIDSTON: I think the hon. gentleman's ignorance is regrettable, and the very best thing I can do is to give notice of a substantive motion on Tuesday and let him understand what thing it is.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Hear, hear! You ought to have done so all along.

Mr. KIDSTON: Perhaps I ought to have done that at first. I took what I believed to be the way in which the thing could be done with the least acrimonious discussion. As I said before, the matter might have been settled out of hand in a few minutes, without any particular noticeable discussion on the matter, by a simple intimation from the Government that they would give some attention to the matter.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*): I do not know whether I am in order in replying to the hon. gentleman. He thought it wise to lecture me for some supposed speech I have never seen. I have heard the contents of it, and if I were to express my opinion, I think the Governor was quite within his rights to speak.

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*): I rise to a point of order. I ask your ruling, Mr. Speaker, as to whether the hon. gentleman has not already spoken.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Flinders is perfectly right. The hon. gentleman has already spoken. I understood it was the pleasure of the House that he should speak again.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: I have already expressed the hope that the ruling I have given on this question will be observed by hon. members on both sides.

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*): Mr. Speaker—

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The Premier!

Mr. FISHER: I did not know he wished to speak.

The PREMIER: I have no wish to speak.

Mr. FISHER: I think it is a question now whether the conduct of the Government is not such as to require the attention of the House; and a question of that kind is certainly a legitimate subject of discussion at the present time. Taking the statement made by the responsible head of the Government, I should certainly say that the Government have made a declaration not in keeping with the rule followed in all Her Majesty's dominions of upholding the strict impartiality of the Governor as against all party, and the freedom from undue influence by any high authority, of however generous a nature, and however desirous of serving the general welfare and benefiting the public. I think when the hon. member for Rockhampton moves his substantive motion he will make out an exceedingly good case after the indiscreet statement made by the Premier this afternoon.

Question put and passed; and the House went into Committee of Supply.

THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The TREASURER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) said:

Mr. Grimes.—In submitting to the Committee a statement of the financial operations of the colony for the twelve months ending on 30th June last, I am pleased to be able to state that notwithstanding adverse circumstances, some of them involving large unforeseen expense, on the whole the year has been a satisfactory one, as I think an impartial consideration of the facts and figures I am about to lay before you will prove.

REVENUE ESTIMATES FOR 1899-1900, AND RESULTS.

Reference to the Estimates for last year will show that I expected to receive from all sources £4,388,445, which estimate, however, was exceeded by £199,762; the actual cash receipts paid into the Treasury amounting to £4,588,207.

Comparing actual receipts with the Estimates, the following results will be found:—

			Increase.
Taxation—			
Received ...	...	£1,984,713	
Estimated ...	...	1,918,000	
			£66,713
Territorial—			
Received ...	...	618,743	
Estimated ...	...	578,300	
			40,443
Railways—			
Received ...	...	1,422,852	
Estimated ...	...	1,362,180	
			60,672
Other services—			
Received ...	...	331,923	
Estimated ...	...	310,000	
			21,923
Miscellaneous services—			
Received ...	...	229,976	
Estimated ...	...	219,965	
			10,011
Total ...	...	£199,762	

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: Proceeding now to a comparison of the revenue receipts during the year 1899-1900 with those of the previous year, it will be noticed that there is an increase of £414,121. The chief headings under which this pleasing development has accrued are taxation and railways, the firstnamed having been augmented to the extent of £234,302, and the latter by £100,246. Taxation under the heading of Customs is always an item of special interest. An expanding Customs revenue is a sure index of the prosperous condition of a community, for daily needs in the shape of food and clothing, besides the luxuries which contribute to social enjoyment, nearly all contribute their quota to this source of income. *Ad valorem* duties show the large increase of £50,454; spirits, wine, and beer, an additional revenue of £8,037; grain, malt, etc., £5,595; oils, chemicals, etc., £13,926; besides smaller increases. The only decrease is under the head of iron castings, wire, etc., £6,311.

Excise contributes an enlarged revenue of £4,519; the beer duty accounting for £3,049, colonial tobacco for £4,090, and the totalisator tax for £264. As a set-off against these increases, there are losses under the head of colonial spirits of £1,286; export duty on station produce—which tax has practically been abolished—of £936; and on cedar and royalty on guano of £603.

Stamp duty and dividend duty both show increases, the former of £124,612, and the latter £5,990.

Licenses show an increase of £5,419, the most noticeable being for the sale of liquor, which accounts for £4,320.

Territorial revenue shows an enlarged collection of £43,638, to which the land revenue contributes £6,472. Pastoral occupation exhibits a declension amounting to £11,338.

Mining occupation shows an increase of £48,504, mining leases and survey fees accounting for £16,130, and proceeds from the sale of specimens which were purchased for the Greater Britain

Exhibition for £33,389. There are losses under the head of escort fees and miners' rights and business licenses amounting to, jointly, £1,015.

Railways, as I have just mentioned, show a satisfactory increase of £100,246, of which the Southern division accounts for £60,235, and the Central of £33,574. There is an enlarged return from the Cairns, Cooktown, and Normanton divisions of £9,153, £227, and £1,978 respectively; but losses have occurred at Mackay of £2,494; Bowen, £489; and the Northern division, £1,937.

"Other services" have grown to the extent of £25,397, of which postage has contributed £13,763 and telegraph receipts £11,528. Harbour rates and fees exhibit a small increase. Other receipts, under the sub-head of "Fees of office," show an increase of £2,928. The Registrar of Titles is to be credited with £1,435 of this, which indicates an expansion in real property transactions. There are other minor increases.

EXPENDITURE, 1899-1900.

The total revenue for the year was ... £4,588,207
The total expenditure ... 4,540,418

Giving a surplus of ... £47,789

A cheque for this amount has been handed to the trustees of the public debt reduction fund, the proceeds of which—together with other funds in the hands of the trustees—have been applied by them in the purchase of a debenture amounting to £50,000, which has been dealt with in terms of the Audit Act Amendment Act of 1895. Under the operation of this Act—one of the wisest pieces of financial legislation ever initiated in this House—the application of the surpluses during the last six years has resulted in a reduction of the national debt by £445,720, and a saving of interest annually amounting to £15,727. Following the custom of previous years, as far as practicable every claim against the expenditure for the past year has been gathered in and paid; and a sufficient amount has been set aside, entirely exclusive of surplus, to meet cash credit payments made at the Northern ports and remote inland parts of the colony, the vouchers for which could not possibly reach the Treasury in sufficient time to be included in the Treasurer's Annual Statement.

When submitting the Estimates for 1899-1900 I allowed for an expenditure of £4,364,420. The actual expenditure, however, amounted to £4,540,418, exceeding my anticipations by £175,998. The reasons for this increase and the special services which have given rise to them will unfold themselves as I proceed.

The schedules show an increased expenditure of £10,962, accounted for by three half-yearly payments to the Central Rabbit Board having fallen in this year, as against one in the previous year. Interest on the public debt, £12,186, is accounted for by payment of interest on a debenture for £750,000 sold to the trustees of the Government Savings Bank, being portion of the 1899 loan and interest on further sales of Savings Bank stock.

Under "Executive and Legislative" there is an increase of £535 on the total vote. Decreases fall under the head of Legislative Assembly, but there is an increase under the joint department—Legislative Council and Assembly.

The Chief Secretary's Department shows an increased expenditure of £172,654; the expense of the South African contingents accounting for £147,532, and Defence Force (Land) for £3,894. The marine branch of our defence system is also responsible for an enlarged expenditure of £4,212, and there is an item, £879 expenses of Royal Commissions, whilst the increase in miscellaneous services is chiefly accounted for by the expenses of the federal referendum.

The Home Secretary's Department accounts for an increase of £8,751, which is explained by the following figures:—Expenditure during year just ended, £500,263, as against £491,512 in 1898-99. The chief increase falls under the head of charitable allowances, £6,161, the amount spent during the past year having reached £84,401. The Benevolent Asylum, Dunwich, cost £20,682, an increase over last year of £4,429. Expenses in connection with the bubonic plague visitation amounted to £6,361. Lunatic asylums show a decrease of £3,051.

The Works Department shows a net increase of £74,696, the figures standing, 1898-9, £72,847; 1899-1900, £147,543. Buildings and the purchase of land are responsible for this increase to the extent of £75,362. There are decreases under the heads of roads and bridges.

The Department of Justice shows a reduced expenditure amounting to £2,638.

The Treasury required more than for 1898-99 by £10,817, the total expenditure amounting to £272,092, as compared with £261,275 in the earlier period. The increased endowment paid to local authorities accounted for £24,149, and the Water Supply Department exceeded the previous year's expenditure by £2,654. There are decreases under the head of miscellaneous, £9,817; interest, commission, and exchange, £3,908, and smaller items.

The Lands Department spent £96,123—more by £19,143 than in 1898-99—the chief increase being under the head of survey of land, £26,245. This is really an accumulated deficit of some years, brought about by the cost of what are called “unproductive surveys”—consisting mainly of the cost of surveying roads for which no return in the shape of fees can be obtained. This practically dead money had previously been charged to loan expenditure, but it has now been transferred to and paid out of revenue. “Land agents and land commissioners” show an increase of £2,627. There are decreases under the head of miscellaneous, £3,447; and rabbit fence, £8,208.

The Department of Agriculture exceeded the previous year by £16,714, of which £14,277 fell under the head of miscellaneous services. Most of this is due to expenses connected with the taking over of the Moreton Central Mill and the Proserpine, both amounting to over £10,000. These are really advances to meet working expenses, and will eventually be refunded by the companies. Already £3,000 has been repaid by the Moreton Mill and credited to revenue. The purchase of land in William street adjoining the present offices absorbed £2,250.

Public Instruction involves an increase of £10,514, £9,035 of which is under the head of State and provisional schools.

Mr. BROWNE: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: The Mines Department spent £49,978, or £16,660 less than in 1898-99. The specimens bought last year have since been sold, and the proceeds returned to revenue.

The Railways expenditure has been very heavy this year, and unfortunately without bringing in a corresponding increased return in the shape of revenue. The increased expenditure amounts to £163,880, £78,628 of which has been incurred in the Southern division. The Northern Railway comes next with £37,774, followed by the Central system with £35,304.

The Postmaster-General's Department shows an increase of £34,445, the chief item being under the head of conveyance of mails. Three items are chiefly responsible for this—the fast mail to the North, and the Gulf and Vancouver services.

BEER EXCISE.

The proprietors of twenty-two breweries registered their establishments under the Beer Duty Act of 1897 during the year ended 30th June, 1900, as against twenty-six registered in the previous year. Fees for brewers' licenses received for the same periods were £575 and £756 respectively.

Locally brewed beer, amounting to 5,172,562 gallons, contributed to the revenue as excise £64,657 0s. 6d. The increase over the previous year in quantity was 243,927 gallons, and in excise £3,049 1s. 9d.

Customs returns show £35,640 duty was paid on 492,749 gallons of imported beer in 1899-1900, as against £33,094 on 458,258 gallons in 1898-9—an increased consumption of 34,491 gallons of foreign beer in 1899-1900.

DISTILLERIES.

The production of spirits in the colony for the twelve months ended 30th June, 1900, was 123,996 proof gallons, as against 159,205 proof gallons produced in the preceding twelve months, a decrease of 29,209 gallons.

Excise duties show a corresponding decrease—i.e., from £42,304 to £41,018.

Customs returns show that in 1898-99 26,391 liquid gallons were exported, while the quantity shipped in 1899-1900 was 32,159 gallons.

STAMP AND DIVIDEND DUTIES AND TOTALISATOR TAX.

The revenue received under the Acts administered by the Stamp Commissioners amounted to £319,029 10s. 2d., as against £188,163 5s. 3d. collected during 1898-9, and is made up as follows:—

Stamp duties	...	...	£245,425	19	9
Dividend duties	...	...	66,476	11	2
Totalisator tax	...	...	7,126	19	3
Total	...	...	£319,029	10	2

Stamp duties proper show an increase of £124,612 over the receipts for the previous year, which is chiefly attributable to the larger income derived from death duties, the latter having produced £154,187, as against £42,002 in 1898-9—one large estate alone having contributed £125,139 to the revenue.

The number of estates dealt with under the Succession and Probate Duties Act during the year was 1,084, of which 352 were exempt from duty, 438 under the value of £1,000, and 294 over that value—the figures for the previous year being 784 estates dealt with, of which 94 were exempt, 528 under £1,000, and 162 over that value.

Receipts on account of conveyances have improved by £9,846, equal to about 58 per cent. on last year's collections. Mortgages produced £2,013 more than last year, whilst an increase of over £1,000 occurs under the headings promissory notes and cheques. Most of the other items also show improvement.

The dividend duty for the year amounts to £66,476, thus exceeding expectations by £6,476; whilst the collections under the Totalisator Act have increased by £264, the receipts being £7,127, as against £6,863 last year.

TREASURY NOTES.

The circulation of Treasury notes on the 30th June, 1900, was £1,178,583, being an increase over that for the previous year of £115,335. This increase is double that reported last year, and it may be taken as an indication that Treasury notes are growing in favour with the public; increasing confidence leading to a preference for the more convenient paper as against coin currency.

On the 30th June we held—	
Coin (gold in reserve) ...	£542,750
On fixed deposit ...	250,000
Owing by banks on account of notes advanced ...	388,833
	£1,181,583
Less coin in suspense ...	3,000
	£1,178,583
Amount of notes in circulation ...	£1,178,583

Since 30th June we have placed at fixed deposit with the Royal Bank £50,000, bearing 3 per cent. interest.

GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK.

This valuable institution continues to make satisfactory progress, and furnishes a valuable gauge of the industrial condition of the people. For a series of years previous to 1893 there was a steady falling-off in the amount of deposits, which reached its lowest point in 1892, when the sum of £863,879 was received. In 1893—probably from the increased confidence of the people in the Savings Bank, in preference at that time to other monetary institutions—

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: The deposits increased by no less a sum than £223,169; and since the crisis they have been in each succeeding year on the ascending scale, reaching their highest point in the year just closed, during which the large sum of £2,039,626 was received—an amount quite unprecedented in the annals of the bank. The total transactions have also greatly increased. The withdrawals—of which I may mention about 53 per cent., exclusive of the Brisbane office, are by telegram (showing how largely the benefits of the institution are availed of by our country people)—amount to £1,677,333, leaving a net increase for the year in the amount at credit of the depositors (including accrued interest, £91,400), of £453,693, and a total sum of £3,624,740 on 30th June last to the credit of £4,796 depositors.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: If evidence were necessary to prove that the institution—so far from being illegitimately made use of by others than the classes it was founded to encourage—is really accomplishing its primary function of holding out inducements to thrift, economy, and provision for the future amongst the working classes, it may be noted that the average value of the open accounts on 30th June last was £42 14s. 11d., whilst the average of each deposit during the year was £10 9s. 2d. and of each withdrawal £17 2s. 8d. The annual cost for management was £10,797, and the total earnings from interest on investments, etc., £104,263, of which £91,400 has been distributed amongst the depositors, 3 per cent. being allowed, which is the rate at present for fixed deposits at twelve months in the ordinary banks. The cash balance to credit of profit and loss now stands at £55,313.

In the early part of last financial year, in consequence of the unexpected increase in the amount of deposits during the previous twelve months, there were Savings Bank funds requiring investment, as reported by the Auditor-General to Parliament on 12th September, 1899. The Act, very properly, restricts investments to Government securities, or, as a temporary expedient, fixed deposits in some bank. In expectation of Parliament shortly passing a Loan Act, the latter course was not deemed advisable, and in the meantime no debentures were available. To have gone to the expense of remitting the money to London for the purpose of purchasing there stock at the top prices then ruling—involving, as it must, charges for exchange, brokerage, and other expenses, as well as delay—would have been a wasteful and

altogether inadvisable expedient, and the difficulty was soon got over by an immediate investment of £750,000 in that stock when the Loan Act of 1899 was passed.

No inconvenience or detriment, however, accrued to the depositors or the public from such slight delay on this, or on any previous occasion when similar circumstances have arisen, inasmuch as it has been the practice of the Treasury for years to pay interest on the full amount of the balance of the Savings Bank moneys standing to credit in the consolidated revenue fund, and the bank is therefore in this unique position: that it never has in hand any idle money. The interest paid by the Treasury under this arrangement for the last financial year amounted to £25,334.

I may mention that early in the current financial year, as the deposits still keep coming in and accumulating, a further investment in Government debentures of £150,000 was made. The total amount of securities vested in the trustees now amounts to £2,773,880, carrying from 3 to 4 per cent. interest, purchased at a cost of £2,697,125; and as these, in the ordinary course of events, will remain in the hands of the trustees until they mature, they will then leave a margin of £76,755.

There are 106 accounts, with balances amounting in the aggregate to £137,874, which are exempt from the 2nd proviso of section 6 of the Savings Bank Act of 1896, and on which interest is allowed in full. Of these 57 are Friendly Societies accounts, with balances amounting to £36,476; 12 are societies and corporations exempted by proclamations, with balances of £65,320; and the remaining 37 are Government trust accounts, with £36,078 to credit.

Taking the population of the colony at 512,604 it is seen that 16·5 per cent. are depositors in the Savings Bank, the deposits averaging £7 1s. 5d. per head, as against a percentage of 15·4 for last year, with average deposits of £6 8s. 7d.

The branch offices have been increased by 19 during the year, and there are now 167 of these open throughout the colony. There is no doubt that, by the facilities it affords for safeguarding the savings of the people, the Savings Bank is an important factor in creating a thrifty and industrious population, and in adding materially to the prosperity of the colony generally.

I am happy once more to have the opportunity of congratulating the Committee on the successful progress of this most useful institution.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

TRUST FUNDS.

The TREASURER: A statement of balances of the several trust funds, as on 30th June, 1900, will be found in Table E. A reference to this table will also show that for the year the payments exceed the receipts by over £45,000, converting the cash balance of £21,281, mentioned in my last year's Budget Speech, into a debit of £24,361.

This overdraft is mainly attributable to payments made under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, which will be repaid from time to time as sales are made and as the instalments due are paid.

During the year three more estates have been repurchased at a cost of £68,592 15s. 6d., making a total of fifteen estates that have been acquired and made available for agricultural settlement. Table Z 6 shows that these estates have cost for purchase money, interest, etc., £369,220 14s. 10d., and the receipts to date have been £72,897 2s. 3d.; leaving a debit balance of £296,323 12s. 7d., of which £119,100 is represented by debentures and inscribed stock held by the public, and the balance of £177,223 12s. 7d. has been advanced from the Government account.

The amount required for 1900-1901—£188,263—exceeds last year's appropriation by £27,842.

The estimated cost of administration of New Guinea amounts to £30,320. The balance of accumulated contributions, together with the estimated revenue from the Possession, will fall short of this amount by £7,000. We are trying to arrange with the other contributing colonies to guarantee this sum until the Federal Government takes over the financial responsibilities of the Possession.

Provision has also been made for the necessary appropriations relating to the Pacific Islanders fund, the police superannuation fund, and the harbour dues trust fund. The Government Savings Bank, owing to the expansion in business, requires some further expenditure.

Necessary provision has been made for the various Acts relating to stock, brands, and the Meat and Dairy Produce Encouragement Act.

RAILWAYS.

For the year 1899-1900, I estimated that we should receive, on account of railway revenue, a sum of £1,362,180. The actual cash receipts were £1,422,852, thus exceeding my estimate by £60,672, and showing an increase of £100,246 over the receipts for 1898-1899.

The traffic earnings, as distinguished from cash receipts, show an increase of £82,000, divided amongst the following heads:—

Passengers, increase	£34,500
Parcels, etc., increase	14,000
Live stock, increase	66,000
	£114,500

From this, however, must be deducted a sum of £32,500 on account of the decrease in goods traffic, leaving a balance of £82,000, as above stated.

The following new lines were opened for traffic during the year:—

	Miles.
25th July, 1899, Corfield to Winton	51½
6th Nov., 1899, South to North Rockhampton, including the Alexander Bridge across the Fitzroy River	2½
Total... ..	54

There are no new lines at present under construction; but a large number of important works have been and are still being carried out by the department, which, however, I do not propose to enumerate here. The marked increase in the passenger traffic has necessitated the building of additional rolling-stock, which will have to be still very materially increased to cope with future traffic.

While the railway receipts, considering the disastrous seasons which have been experienced for some considerable time, show a satisfactory advance upon the previous gross revenue returns, the expenditure has also increased; and, I am sorry to say, in far greater proportion. The total revenue expenditure for 1898-99 was £784,811, while that for the past year has reached £948,691, or £163,880 in excess of that of the previous twelve months. For this increase the locomotive branch is mainly responsible. The following are the principal causes which have been assigned for this abnormal increase, which I fear will have to continue for some time longer:—

1. Heavy repairs to all classes of rolling-stock, the work connected with which had been accumulating from previous years, owing to the impossibility of withdrawing the stock from traffic at an earlier date;

2. Providing new boilers for a large number of locomotives;
3. Increased pay to all classes of railway employees;
4. Heavy traffic in starving stock, the receipts from which were not of a remunerative character; and
5. The carriage of large quantities of fodder at unremunerative rates.

TRADE AND COMMERCE.

IMPORTS.

During the year which ended on the 31st December last goods to the value of £6,764,097 were imported, exceeding the value of the preceding year by £756,831, showing that the imports per head of population increased from £12 3s. 11d. to £13 5s. 10d., and that the colony is maintaining a population which year by year finds the means—notwithstanding an increasing production of articles which at one time were imported—of steadily enlarging its import trade. In this connection it must be borne in mind that Queensland is only to a very limited extent a distributing centre; that its imports are nearly wholly required to meet the wants of its own population.

Turning to Table U, hon. members will see the imports of cotton, wool, silk, and linen piece goods have increased in value £75,643, and manufactured articles of the same goods—hats, haberdashery, and the like—by £113,454. In boots and shoes the imports are almost stationary in amount—a matter more for congratulation than regret, as it is some evidence that the local factories are gaining ground in public favour, and that improved methods of manufacturing and enterprise are obtaining the reward they so justly deserve. Metals, including wire, show an increase of £26,190. Manufactures of metals, machinery, hardware, etc., show the substantial increase of £184,128; flour, maize, oats, and other grain an increase of £9,102; and green fruits, vegetables, etc., of £7,445. Then, products of the soil were imported to the value of £737,818, and, although the position seems to be improving, it is still a matter of regret that so much money should be sent out of the colony for these articles. Climate and soil alike favour agriculture in Queensland, and it is to be hoped that before many years have passed farmers will be able to supply, not only our own markets, but those of the other countries.

EXPORTS.

The total value for 1899 was £11,942,858, as against £10,856,127 for 1898, an increase of £1,086,731, or an increase per head of population from £22 0s. 9d. to £23 9s. 4d. Wool still holds the premier position, the value for the year being £3,390,779—28·39 per cent. of our total exports—and showing an increase over last year of £372,681. Next in order is gold in dust, bars, and cyanide gold, being 24·40 per cent. of the total export value, and representing £2,914,990, an increase over last year of £59,209. In specie there is a decrease of £146,927; in mineral productions, such as silver, lead, and gold lead bullion, a decrease of £6,335; and in silver ore, gold ore slag, a decrease of £2,610. Copper ore, slag and melted, and tin ore, show increases, £16,121 and £49,088 respectively. Hides and skins show the large increase of £234,038, and preserved and frozen meat of £333,404. The exportable value of these three items totals the large amount of £2,193,081. The live stock export by sea and border shows an increase of £116,325. Sugar has fallen off to the extent of £166,866. Tallow, however, shows a substantial increase of £140,298.

Continuing the practice of last year, I accompany these remarks with a table showing the population and value of imports and exports for the years 1894 to 1899:—

Year.	Population on 31st December.	Total value Imports and Exports.	Amounts per head.
		£	£ s. d.
1894 ...	445,155 ...	13,132,959 ...	29 10 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
1895 ...	452,852 ...	14,331,607 ...	31 12 11 $\frac{1}{2}$
1896 ...	466,364 ...	14,596,997 ...	31 5 11 $\frac{3}{4}$
1897 ...	478,440 ...	14,520,748 ...	30 7 0
1898 ...	492,602 ...	16,863,393 ...	34 4 8
1899 ...	508,864 ...	18,706,955 ...	36 15 2

The increase in population during the five years referred to totals 63,709 persons, or 14·31 per cent.; whilst our imports and exports for the same period have increased by £5,573,996, or 42·44 per cent. Notwithstanding the disabilities, such as drought, insect and other pests, under which producers have laboured, the percentage progression of trade still largely exceeds the percentage increase in population—showing unmistakably the rapid progress the colony is making, and affording further proof of the energy and industry of the people.

A glance at Table Y will show the value of the trade at the respective ports in the colony. First on the list is Brisbane, with 36·14 per cent., followed by Townsville with 22·06 per cent., and Rockhampton with 16·53 per cent.

SHIPPING.

There has been a substantial increase in the shipping, inwards and outwards, during the statistical year which ended the 31st December last, the tonnage inwards having aggregated 730,450 tons, as against 602,006 tons in the preceding year. The improvement of our ports, in lessening the difficulties and cost of navigation, is attracting to our shores vessels sailing under various flags and of the largest tonnage.

REVENUE ESTIMATES FOR 1900-1901.

The Commonwealth of Australia, to be inaugurated in January next, has the power to take over immediately thereupon some of our revenue-producing departments. It may, however, be fairly assumed that the Federal Government will act prudently in the matter, and interfere as little as possible with the States' Treasurers during the current financial year. It would appear but reasonable that the States should continue as heretofore to collect federal revenues up to 30th June, 1901, and defray federal precepts issued against same from time to time, pending final adjustment and complete surrender of the departments to the Federal Government.

I anticipate as the revenue for the present financial year the amount of £4,594,370, or £6,164 more than the actual receipts of last year.

Taxation—which embraces Customs receipts, stamp and dividend duty—I expect to produce £1,948,500, or £36,212 less than last year. Customs are estimated to yield £38,311 more than the collections of last year; and if the July figures be taken as a basis for an average for the year, this estimate will be considerably exceeded. On the other hand, however, a large decrease in stamp duties is almost certain. The increase anticipated and realised last year was due to the receipt of death duties on a large estate, and is not expected to be maintained during the present year.

Land revenue—which includes mining occupation—is expected to yield £24,856 more than last year. A small increase is expected from auction and selection by purchase; and an

increase of £15,523 in rents under the Acts 1884 to 1892. Survey fees, formerly paid into a trust account from which the cost of surveys was partly defrayed, are now paid into revenue; and the cost of surveys becomes now a direct charge on revenue, provision for such charge having been made in the Lands Estimates. These fees, it is calculated, will add about £20,300 to the revenue. An increase under the head pastoral occupation, rent of runs, is anticipated, amounting to £22,128.

Railways show a decrease on the cash receipts of last year amounting to £26,152. Diminished receipts from the Central and Northern systems are expected this year, whilst the Southern and some of the minor Northern lines are expected to provide small increases.

“Other services”—which include the collections through the Post and Telegraph Offices—are expected to give an increase of about £14,000. Miscellaneous receipts show an estimated increase of £30,000, this being a portion of the amount to be recouped by the Imperial Government for expenses connected with the enrolment and despatch of the fourth contingent to South Africa.

PROBABLE EXPENDITURE, 1900-1901.

In framing the Estimates of Expenditure, I have endeavoured to meet in a reasonable manner the claims of all parts of the colony, and these are ever expanding—a perfectly natural thing in a colony like Queensland where the rate of progression is so vigorous and rapid. Expenditure, however, must be kept within the limits of revenue, and so long as this can be done, so long will our finances be in a healthy condition. And I see no reason, unless some very unforeseen circumstances occur, why this year, like its six predecessors, should not close with a balance on the right side of the ledger.

Before referring to some of the leading items of expenditure, I would first point out that the total estimated expenditure for this year amounts to £4,571,738, exceeding the actual cash expenditure of last year—£4,540,418—by £31,320, and that, after providing for all anticipated requirements, the estimated expenditure is less than the estimated revenue by £22,632.

Chief Secretary's Department.—The requirements this year exceed the appropriation of last year by £110,988. A new item, amounting to £40,000, appears under the head of defence, being for expenses connected with the contingents for service in South Africa. The land force, to which considerable additions are proposed to be made, requires an increased appropriation of £49,450, and the marine force an increase of £7,821. Miscellaneous services, owing to an item of £25,000, estimated cost of the contribution to federal expenditure, shows a considerable increase. Following the example of Victoria and Tasmania, we have set apart this sum as our contribution towards the expense that will necessarily be incurred in the initiation of the Commonwealth. On this basis the fund will amount to £200,000, which, it is calculated, will be sufficient to carry on the Federal Government for six months.

Home Secretary's Department.—This branch requires increased expenditure amounting to £16,096, of which the Benevolent Asylum, Dunwich, asks for £6,375 more than last year. There is a slight increase under the heads, Principal Electoral Registrar, Labour Bureau, and relief. The Registrar-General's branch also shows an increase, £6,000 of which is a proposed vote on account of the census. Police are expected to spend about the same as last year's vote.

The Works Department shows a decreased appropriation. While the staff requires more by £3,144 than last year, due to the employment of temporary draftsmen and inspectors, buildings are expected to absorb only £87,255, as against £110,155 last year.

Department of Justice.—There is very little alteration here, the appropriation being only £170 more than last year.

The Treasury requires less by £4,758 than last year, due chiefly to a reduction in the Marine Department under the head of contingencies, harbours, pilots, etc. There is a slight increase in the coastal Customs, and a decrease in the border Customs.

Public Lands.—This department exceeds last year's demand by £14,041. A new item—forestry, £1,400—appears for the first time. Survey of land requires more than last year by £22,825, partly accounted for by reverting to the old custom of paying the cost of survey fees from revenue, as I have previously explained. Miscellaneous requirements are less by £12,900 than last year. The item, destruction of prickly pear, £5,000, drops out; and marsupial netting is estimated to cost less by £4,000.

The Department of Agriculture has a diminished vote to the extent of £12,571. The college expenses are expected to be less by £2,030. State farms do not require so much by £1,611, and miscellaneous services are also on the descending scale to the amount of £9,010.

Public Instruction, ever on the ascending grade, asks for £20,457 more than last year. Of this increase State and provisional schools are expected to absorb £14,504. There are also increased grants to schools of arts and technical education.

The Department of Mines requires less than last year by £3,911, due largely to the cost of the London Mining Exhibition being included in last year's vote. Additional items are *Queensland Mining Journal*, £1,000; and school of mines, Charters Towers, £3,000.

Railways.—The total requirements are about the same as last year—£971,408. There is an increase in the general establishment amounting to £3,079, due chiefly to an enlarged staff. The total estimated cost of the Southern division is expected to give figures slightly less than last year; the same may be said of the Northern division, the Central showing an advance of £4,665.

The Postmaster-General's Department requires more by £13,210 than last year's appropriation, the estimated cost of post and telegraph offices having increased from £160,960 to £167,990. There are also increases under conveyance of mails, miscellaneous services, and meteorology.

As the post and telegraph revenue simply represents earnings, it follows that any increase of revenue must be the result of increased expenditure for the work performed; and especially is this the case when, as in this colony, the payments for services performed are on such a moderate scale, considering the distances covered and the scattered population served.

As reference was made in the last Financial Statement to the result of the reduction of the intercolonial rates between Queensland and the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria, it may be of interest to say that the lower rates, which are confined to messages of ten words, have led to a large increase of business. With New South Wales there was an increase for 1899 of 64 per cent., and the loss caused by the reduction of rate was, so far as revenue was concerned, £96; but there was, of course, the additional

expense of operating the larger business. With Victoria the increased business during the same period amounted to 52 per cent., yielding an increased revenue of £361.

The improved mail services in connection with our Northern ports have proved satisfactory, very commendable regularity having been maintained. Some inconvenience was experienced in consequence of the mail steamer leaving Townsville before the arrival of the train from Charters Towers, Hughenden, Winton, and the West. This has been removed, and the departure of the "Barcoo" has been altered from 5 p.m. to 10.30 p.m. without affecting the time of arrival in Brisbane. As these services expire in October next, tenders for a continuance on the existing lines were invited, and that of the A.U.S.N. Company, Limited, at £16,750 per annum has been accepted. On the 1st of October, almost simultaneously with the commencement of the new service, a very considerable improvement will be made in connection with the running of the trains to Gladstone. An arrangement has been made by the Commissioner with the New South Wales railway authorities, under which the trains from Sydney will arrive at the border in time to admit of the arrival of the mail train at Brisbane at 9.20 p.m., instead of, as at present, 10.45 p.m. A connection will thus be made with the Northern mail trains, which will leave at 10 p.m., and mails and passengers will be carried through from Sydney and the South without the delay of nearly twenty-four hours which has been unavoidable hitherto. It is anticipated that an impetus will thus be given to combined railway and steamer travelling, as through tickets will be issued, and a provision has been made in the new contract for differential steamer fares at a reduced rate from Gladstone as compared with those from Brisbane. It is understood that more suitable steamers will be provided by the A.U.S.N. Company in connection with this contract at an early date. A contract with the same company was entered into in January last for a regular steam service between Brisbane and the Gulf ports, leaving Brisbane once in every three weeks, at a cost of £6,000 per annum. The service has proved satisfactory, not only as supplementing the overland mail service from Cairns, but also as providing for the regular exchange of cargo and a differential freight rate in favour of Queensland ports.

The Pacific cable scheme seems nearing completion. The committee appointed by the Governments interested, including those of New South Wales and Victoria, invited tenders for the proposed cable, which were received on the 14th August. The lowest tender received amounts to £1,886,000, and the tenderers undertake to complete the laying of the cable within eighteen months. The estimated cost was £1,800,000. This Government will continue, as hitherto, to exert all its influence to carry into effect the consistent and traditional policy of the colony in connection with this great project.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

THE TREASURER: There is an increased appropriation in the Auditor-General's Department of £450.

SUMMARY.

Estimated revenue...	£4,594,370
„ expenditure ...	4,571,968
Estimated surplus ...	£12,402

LOAN FUND.

The loan cash balance on 1st July, 1899, was £1,682,974, to which may be added the repayments made during the year just closed—£159,697—to meet the expenditure for the year

1899-1900, £1,182,668. As this was bringing the loan balance rather low for the requirements of the fund, debentures issued under the provisions of the Loan Act of 1899 were sold during the year—to the trustees of the Government Savings Bank, £750,000, and to the trustees of the public debt reduction fund, £150,000; whilst with funds of the Government Savings Bank inscribed stock debentures amounting to £125,000 were taken up and destroyed. These sales were at the rate of £97 per cent. for 3 per cent. debentures, and at the close of the year ending June, 1900, I had in hand a cash balance to credit of loan fund of £1,654,253.

In fixing the rate at £97 for these sales, I was guided to some extent by the quoted price of our 3 per cent. stock on the London market, taken from the *Investors' Monthly Manual*, published in London. From this journal it appears that the average monthly quoted price for 3 per cent. stock was for the eleven months, July, 1899, to May, 1900, inclusive, £98 16s. 9d.; the highest quotation during that period being £99½ during the month of November last, and the lowest, £97, during the month of January. In view of these figures, the price at which the sales were made cannot be considered excessive.

Referring now to that portion of the loan amounting to £1,400,000, I am advised that it realised £94 0s. 1d., yielding to the investor in interest equal to a fraction below £3 8s. percent. This at first would seem disappointing, but hon. members, in common with myself, are aware that war in South Africa and in a measure the decreased output of gold from that country are causes which have operated against a better price being obtained. I am advised that West Australia issued their loan at 93½, and allowed 142 days' back interest, which was equal to £1 3s. 4d. Their loan was sold on 22nd March, averaging £93 12s. 9½d., from which must be deducted the £1 3s. 4d. above mentioned, so that the actual price realised was £92 9s. 5½d. South Australia sold their loan on 4th April at a minimum of £94 10s., but practically offering a premium of 15s. 5½d. in the way of back interest, thus realising only £93 15s. 3½d. Our loan was floated on 9th July, so that the interest accumulation is not appreciable, and it would appear that in comparison with the prices realised by West and South Australia that our flotation must be regarded as satisfactory. It will be recollected that shortly before the issue of our loan the Imperial authorities issued the celebrated Khaki Loan, and in addition to this several of the large county councils were applicants for loans, all tending to bare the market and hamper colonial borrowers, and under such conditions it became imperative to underwrite the issue in order to insure the flotation. Earnest and grave consideration was given by the Agent-General and the Bank of England in selecting the date for offering the loan, and it would, perhaps, be well to narrate here the position as it appeared at the time to the Agent-General and our financial advisers. The Agent-General says—"Towards the end of June the Bank of England advised that the road was clear and that every indication pointed to a successful sale. We reviewed the position together, that the year's balance-sheet was satisfactory, that the drought had broken up, the Transvaal war seemed to be terminating, federation was *un fait accompli*, and the Imperial Government had decided to include your stocks as trustees' investments. These were all in our favour, and I was promised a guarantee at £94, but the same day the Eastern question in China became more serious, and for some days I could get no one to accept the risk. However, as a lull came on the 2nd July, I received the necessary assurance and at once authorised the issue."

So far the account sales have not been received from the Bank of England. I am, therefore, unable to give the net returns from the loan.

A study of Table O, which gives the comparative expenditure of loan funds for the past ten years, will, I think, show hon. members that during the year just closed local works, such as railways, harbour improvements, buildings, etc., have been carried on at a moderate rate, while the various local bodies, both municipal and marine, have been assisted liberally.

LOAN EXPENDITURE, 1900-1901.

Last year the appropriation on this account amounted to £1,696,889, of which £1,182,668 was spent. This year £1,683,783 is required, portion of which consists of money appropriated last year, but not expended. Land defence accounts for an increase of £54,099. For the purchase of small arms and ammunition, £36,500 is required in excess of last year's provision. Immigration remains the same as last year. Buildings require £167,500, the amount expected to be expended "on account" in the case of some of the larger buildings and to complete smaller ones. It will be noticed that the form of presenting this Estimate has been altered; that it is now arranged in such a way as to show at a glance estimated total cost of buildings, the amount expended, the previous year's appropriation, and the estimated expenditure during the year. The estimated total cost of the buildings now contemplated, exclusive of public abattoirs, amounts to £540,799. Of this £63,809 has been spent; therefore at the end of this year there will remain £309,240 to be provided in future years. A sum of £1,800 is required to complete the Burnett River Bridge. For harbour works, £123,206 is required; £6,662 for dredging the entrance to Broadmount Harbour; and a further sum, part of which is a revote on account of the purchase of new dredges. Under the head of artesian boring and water supply a considerable increase—£24,080—is set down, provision having been made for new bores at Augathella, Bedourie, Hazlewood, Eromanga, Boulia road, and for a bore near Windorah. Although the increased expenditure for artesian water boring is somewhat large, the benefits to be derived from successful water exploration in some of the untested areas of the colony would prove most valuable, inducing closer settlement and making available large tracts of land which, owing to climatic conditions, are not now worked up to their full capabilities. Provision has been made for increased loans to local bodies to enable them to enter into development works in the shape of harbour improvements, the completion of tramways under construction, and for a projected new line from Beaudesert to Christmas Creek. Loans in aid of deep-sinking in mines and to assist co-operative settlement remain the same as last year. The unspent endowment to harbour boards, £98,255, is submitted for revote. £130,900 is required for the purchase of debentures under the authority of the Sugar Works Guarantee Act, nearly the whole of which was voted last year; but until further legislation is passed this money cannot be spent. Under the head of railways provision has been made to the extent of £516,868, as against £619,410 last year, a considerable portion of which consists of revotes. Under the head of construction, Southern division, £207,500 is required. Many of the undertakings provided for are the continuation of works now in progress—such as duplication and relaying, and deviations and reductions of grades—Brisbane to Sandgate, Ipswich to Rosewood, Main Range, Toowoomba and Gowrie Junction, and Maryborough to Gympie, and others. The extension of wharf sidings, etc., at Pinkenba requires

£7,800. The Central Station requires £22,000 to complete, and there are alterations to the station yard involving an expenditure of £6,000. The new locomotive works at Ipswich require £45,000 on account. Provision has also been made for strengthening bridges for heavier engines, amounting to £15,000. The Central division requires £39,300; the extension of the Broadmead wharf absorbing £4,000. New station buildings and additional sidings at Emerald are expected to cost £3,300, and on account of the high-level bridge over the Dawson an amount of £5,000 is wanted. £67,700 is provided for the railway wants of the Northern division. There is a duplication, Townsville to Brookhill, to cost £10,000; deviation and reduction of grades, £8,000; alteration in yard and new station at Townsville, on account, £10,000; and Charters Towers, for the same works and a deviation, £5,000. The general expenditure is about the same as last year; the chief item, rolling-stock all railways, amounts to £158,500.

Electric telegraphs, including extension of lines and material and telephones, require £45,000, the same amount as last year.

It is proposed to ask the House to approve of the necessary plans and specifications for the construction of certain lines of railway in various parts of the colony. Should the authority be given, proposals will be submitted and Supplementary Loan Estimates presented for the provision required to be made by Parliament for their construction.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PASTORAL.

The TREASURER: The year has been one of disaster for the pastoral industry over a large area of the colony. The unprecedented drought may be said to have affected nearly the whole of that portion of the colony west of the 149th meridian and south of the 21st parallel of latitude. The losses in stock in that area have, in consequence, been severe. Up to 31st December last, at which date the official returns were rendered, the decreases on the previous year were 13·2 per cent. in sheep, and 9·2 per cent. in cattle. The number of stock exported and passed through the various meatworks during the calendar year ended 31st December was 987,677 sheep and 594,839 cattle, which represents a considerable increase on the output of the previous year. Since that date most of the principal works have been in constant operation, and all but three minor establishments have been working at intervals.

In the coastal and eastern districts—which for the most part are occupied by cattle—the season has been favourable, and the price of stock, both fat and store, has reached a level in excess of any other period during the past quarter of a century. The trade in the export of horses, by the increased demand for remounts for India and South Africa, has greatly increased the value of that class of stock in Queensland and the colonies generally.

The rapid and somewhat unexpected advance in the price of wool during the past year has not been maintained; but as most of the recent offerings have not been of high-class quality, it is hoped that the recent fall in prices may be of only temporary duration.

Ticks have not yet reached our southern border, and in the Central and Northern districts their virulence seems to have expended itself. Latest official reports show that few ticks are now to be seen in the herds of the Gulf district, where the pest first appeared; and in all the Northern districts, where the disease appeared in greatest strength, the cattle are now virtually immune. The fears entertained by many that the ticks would invade the Western pastures

have not been realised, experience having shown that only under the most exceptional circumstances will ticks survive beyond the coastal districts.

The Government have endeavoured, by every legitimate means at their command—such as carrying stock by rail at merely nominal rates from the drought-stricken areas to districts where pasture was obtainable, and by conveying fodder westward at low charges—to assist the pastoral industry to tide over the serious difficulties by which it is surrounded. Some small measure of relief has been given by rains which fell recently, but much more is needed to be of general benefit.

LAND SETTLEMENT.

The occupation of the public estate by selectors has been generally speaking satisfactory, as the following statement giving particulars of the total selections for the financial years ending 30th June, 1899, and 30th June, 1900, respectively, will show:—

	1898-99.	
Total number of farms selected	...	2,138
Total number of acres selected	...	3,358,215
Total annual rental	...	£24,925 9s. 1d.
	1899-1900.	
Total number of farms selected	...	2,354
Total number of acres selected	...	3,535,434
Total annual rental	...	£31,205 19s. 8d.

It will be seen from the above that there was an increase in the total number of farms selected of 216; in the gross area of 177,219 acres; and in the total receipts of £6,280 10s. 7d.

As regards each class of selection made during 1898-99 and 1899-1900 respectively, the general particulars are as follow:—

Agricultural farms.—Total numbers, 628 and 627; total areas, 176,442 acres and 161,276 acres; thus exhibiting a small decrease of one in number of farms and 15,166 acres in total area.

Grazing farms.—Total numbers, 317 and 329; total areas, 2,432,800 acres and 2,682,982 acres; an increase in number of 12 and in area of 250,182 acres.

Grazing homesteads.—Total numbers, 44 and 37; total areas, 384,712 acres and 265,771 acres. The decrease is 7 in number and 118,941 acres in area. It will be thus seen that the condition of personal residence attached to grazing homestead selection has apparently not rendered this class of farms as much in demand as grazing farms, where the condition of occupation can be performed by a bailiff.

Unconditional selections.—Total numbers, 184 and 224; total areas, 51,183 acres and 55,040 acres; being an increase of 40 in number and 3,857 acres in area.

Agricultural homesteads.—Total numbers, 911 and 778; total areas, 214,892 acres and 176,827 acres. There is a decrease here in number of 133, and in area of 38,065 acres. No doubt this is only temporary, and is probably owing to unfavourable seasons in certain districts, as this class of selection is ordinarily much availed of, the terms being very liberal.

Scrub selections.—Total numbers, 25 and 31; total areas, 94,187 acres and 150,884 acres; there being an increase in number of 6, and in area of 56,697 acres.

The Agricultural Lands Purchase Act selections.—Total numbers, 16 and 323; total areas, 2,532 acres and 42,001 acres. The increase here is 307 in number and 39,469 acres in area. This, of course, is dependent very much upon the total area of land opened, which, as will be seen hereafter, was large during this year, there being always a good demand for these lands.

The operations under the Acts 1894 and 1897 during the year ending 30th June, 1900, were as follow :—

One estate, Lake Clarendon, Ipswich land agent's district, of a total area of 13,916 acres 2 roods 3 perches, was purchased at a total price of £27,833 0s. 9d.

Six estates, all acquired in previous financial years, except Lake Clarendon, were opened to selection during the financial year ending 30th June, 1900, with the following results up to that date :—

Glengallan No. 2, Warwick district.—Opened to selection, 8,814 acres, consisting of 83 surveyed portions, and total purchasing price for selection of £36,459. Selected : 8,305 acres, 79 portions, at a total purchasing price of £34,125.

Pinelands, Toowoomba district.—Opened to selection, 3,466 acres, consisting of 40 surveyed portions, total purchasing price for selection of £7,964. Selected : 2,764 acres ; 32 portions ; total purchasing price of £6,490.

Fitzroy Park, Rockhampton district.—Opened to selection, 5,138 acres, consisting of 64 surveyed portions ; total purchasing price, £8,600. Selected : 1,229 acres ; 17 surveyed portions ; total purchasing price, £2,097.

Clifton Nos. 2 and 3, Toowoomba district.—Opened to selection, 8,165 acres ; 72 surveyed portions ; total purchasing price, £23,628. Selected : 7,774 acres ; 69 portions ; total purchasing price, £22,863.

Lake Clarendon, Ipswich district.—Opened to selection, 12,831 acres ; 104 surveyed portions ; total purchasing price, £30,481. Selected : 11,984 acres ; 97 surveyed portions ; total purchasing price, £28,661. That is more than we gave for the whole estate.

Beauaraba, Toowoomba district.—Opened to selection, 7,945 acres ; 48 surveyed portions ; total purchasing price, £14,296. Selected : 7,945 acres ; 48 surveyed portions ; total purchasing price, £14,296. That estate has all gone.

Since these Acts came into operation, there have been purchased up to 30th June, 1900, 15 estates in all. Fourteen of these, of a gross area for selection of 127,811 acres, consisting of 1,086 surveyed portions, and total purchasing price of £342,567 15s. 9d., have been opened to selection. The only estate not yet opened to selection is the Seaforth Estate, Mackay district. This is now being surveyed, and will be thrown open shortly.

Of the gross area open there has been selected by 898 selectors 120,196 acres in 1,007 surveyed portions, at a total price of £326,683 18s.

The total value of improvements effected by the selectors on the area selected as above amounts to £82,943 9s., and consists of £22,554 18s. 6d. for an area of 26,171 acres either cultivated or ready for cultivation, £23,866 12s. 4d. for 908½ miles of fencing, and £36,521 18s. 2d. for buildings, wells, yards, etc.

There remain unselected a gross area of 7,615 acres, 79 surveyed portions, of a total purchasing price of £15,883 17s. ; but 8 of these portions have been temporarily withdrawn.

There are 142 farms in arrears for rents, principally for the year 1900, but some for 1899, the total amount being £4,020 17s. 11d. All these arrears, except in one case, are on farms in the Darling Downs, and are accounted for by the effects of an unfavourable season—I may say two unfavourable seasons—in that district. Under these circumstances, extensions of time, not exceeding twelve months in each case, were granted by Executive authority in deserving cases, and it is expected that these arrears will soon be paid.

1900—2 F

The conditions of occupation and improvement on all of the lands selected are reported on as being generally well and faithfully carried out.

AUCTION SALES.

The sales of crown lands during the financial years 1898-1899 and 1899-1900, were as follows :—

	1898-1899.	1899-1900.
	Acres.	A. R. P.
Total area sold ...	83,957	11,118 2 18
Total amount realised	£53,076 2s.	£23,552 0s. 10d.

The falling-off is altogether attributable to the decreased area of country lands offered for sale.

The quantities of town and suburban lands sold have considerably increased.

The total area sold by auction, beginning 1st January, 1860, and ending 30th June, 1900, was 2,854,779 acres 1 rood 28 perches, realising in cash £2,722,467 3s., and land-orders £142,073 4s. 10d. ; total, £2,864,540 8s. 7d.

The gross area opened to selection in each mode under the Land Act, 1897, from 1st July, 1899, to 30th June, 1900, is as follows :—

Agricultural farm ...	} 410,998 acres
Agricultural homestead ...	
Unconditional selection ...	
Agricultural farm ...	} 69,864 „
Unconditional selection ...	
Agricultural farm only ...	15,191 „
Grazing selection ...	3,836,780 „
Scrub selection ...	158,512 „
The Agricultural Lands Purchase Acts, 1894 and 1897—	
Agricultural farm ...	46,860 „
Total ...	4,537,705 acres

The total area alienated and in process of alienation on 31st December, 1899, was 16,044,294 acres. We have, therefore, 411,793,786 acres still in the hands of the Crown.

MINING.

The mining industry continues to advance steadily, and at no period of the history of the colony has greater interest been manifested in its mineral resources.

Gold.—Last year's gold yield was the largest yet recorded, aggregating nearly 1,000,000 oz.—exceeding that of the preceding year by 27,000 oz.—and the yield of the current year bids fair to eclipse that of its predecessor. On all our principal fields the mines continue to give a large and regular output, and both at Charters Towers and at Gympie the exploration of the deeper ground has been in the highest degree encouraging. Whilst Charters Towers last year produced 50,000 oz. in excess of the preceding year, Gympie shows a falling off of 16,000 oz. ; but the past year on the latter field has been one of remarkable mining activity, and already during the current year the fruits of this activity and energy are apparent in a larger yield and increased dividends.

Mount Morgan again affords an object lesson of the results that can be obtained by the application of scientific methods to the extraction and reduction of large bodies of comparatively low grade ore. Last year the mine produced 172,389 oz. of gold of a value of £703,449, the average yield per ton being a little less than 15 dwt.

The remarkable yields of some of the mines at Croydon, one of which alone has during the past twelve months produced gold of a value of £97,000, has attracted considerable attention to

that field, and strenuous efforts are being made to test the ground at a greater depth than has hitherto been attempted.

At Ravenswood also a feeling of confidence is apparent which would appear to be justified by the favourable developments in several of the mines there.

Even in what have been termed our "neglected fields" some interest has been awakened, and the Hodgkinson, Coen, and Palmer have all received attention from speculators and investors; whilst the discovery of the Hamilton—which within the short period of its existence has been credited with the production of 10,000 oz. of gold—shows that there is still scope for the prospector in the little-known watersheds of the Peninsula.

The success of dredging operations in the neighbouring colonies has caused many miles of our rivers and creeks to be appropriated with the view of testing them by this the latest method of gold-winning. Experts from the neighbouring colonies who have visited some of the proposed scenes of operations have expressed themselves favourably respecting the prospects of success, and before the close of the current year, at least three, if not more, dredges will actually be at work.

Silver.—Of minerals other than gold the actual production has been small, and gives little idea of the latent wealth of the colony. Thus the total yield of silver—145,000 oz., valued at £15,000—came from two small mines, one in the Stanthorpe and the other in the Ravenswood district. But the galena lodes of the Burketown Mineral Field are shown by the recently published report by Mr. Cameron, of the geological survey staff, to be well worthy of the trial which they will no doubt receive when reasonable means of carriage to the coast are provided.

Tin.—Thirteen hundred tons of tin, valued at £77,000, represents the year's production of that metal; but a great expansion of this industry may certainly be looked for. The tin-bearing area of Queensland is larger than that of any other of the Australian colonies, new ground is constantly being opened up, and many of the old mines have passed into the hands of those who are willing and able to work them in the only manner in which they can be worked profitably.

Copper.—Copper latterly, more than any other mineral—not even excepting gold—has attracted attention to the mining possibilities of the colony. That we possess many valuable copper mines is beyond question; and, should surprise be expressed that the production at present is so small, it may be well to remember that the opening of a copper-mine is a laborious and costly undertaking. But now at any time we may hear that the furnaces at Mount Garnet have commenced smelting, and it is confidently hoped that by the 1st of January next six furnaces will have been erected at Chillagoe, capable of treating between 3,000 and 4,000 tons of ore a week. At the Einasleigh Copper Mine the manager, who is raising 100 tons of ore a week, hopes to begin smelting operations before the end of the present year; and at the Mount Chalmers and other mines in the Rockhampton district the furnaces now being erected will soon be at work. Such development work as is being done in the mines at Olcurry confirms the belief in the richness of that district; and this is also true of the large ore bodies at Glassford Creek, in the Gladstone district, but nothing can be hoped for from either of these fields until railway communication with the coast has been established.

Coal.—Last year's production of coal was 494,000 tons, being an increase of 86,000 tons over that of the preceding year. Hitherto the consumption of our coal has been purely local; indeed, our mines have been unable to supply our requirements, the reason being the remoteness of our coal beds from water carriage. The increased demand for coal all over the world has no doubt been the cause of attention being again directed to the great stores of this article that the colony possesses, and it seems probable that an effort will be made, not only to supply all our own wants, but to look for markets outside our boundaries.

Mr. Dunstan, an officer of the geological survey staff, estimates that within the area of the Blair Athol Coal Field—about five square miles—there are 7,000,000 tons of the finest quality of Clermont coal, and about 56,000,000 tons of a slightly inferior quality in a lower seam not yet mined, irrespective of other seams that may exist at greater depths.

A remarkable discovery of anthracite coal was lately reported to have been made on the Dawson River. The seam is 11 feet thick, and the coal is very heavy and compact. As the coal country extends westerly from the Dawson for many miles, the quantity of anthracite is enormous. No other coal of the same character has been found in Australia, so that the deposit will be a very material factor in metallurgical operations within the colonies, and may become of international importance.

As to Callide Creek, situated about fifty miles in a south-westerly direction from Gladstone, so long ago as 1892 Mr. Rands, then Assistant Government Geologist, reported that over the area already proved there was sufficient coal to last for 150 years with an output equal to that of the whole colony for that year—viz., 338,334 tons. If the owners can get permission from Parliament to build a railway to deep water, I understand that an influential English syndicate is prepared to supply them with the necessary funds to construct the railway and develop the mines.

Wolfram.—Of the rarer minerals the colony appears to have a fair share. Wolfram especially is abundant and of high quality, and last year the mines of the Hodgkinson field yielded 259 tons, valued at £10,000.

Opal.—Although gems and precious stones of various kinds are known to exist in the colony, the search is practically confined to opal, which appears to be widely distributed over the Western portion of the colony. It is difficult to obtain accurate information, but it is estimated that last year the value of the stone sold was £9,000.

A review of the year's operations, necessarily brief and cursory as this is, abundantly shows that mining in Queensland is fast assuming the proportions of a great industry, with infinite possibilities of expansion; and it requires no great prescience to foretell that ere long this colony will rank first amongst the mineral producing colonies of Australia.

The attractiveness of our mineral exhibits at the Greater Britain Exhibition last year proved so great to all classes of visitors, and especially to investors, that the Government has determined to arrange for a similar display at the Glasgow Exhibition to be held next year. That this form of advertising the value of our immense mineral resources is calculated to prove beneficial to the colony is evidenced by the increasing interest manifested in our mineral fields by investors since the Earl's Court Exhibition. As a result, we have now before us several applications from wealthy people who are prepared to invest their capital, not only in developing our

mines, but also in constructing cheap and sure means of conveying the product to the sea-coast. Without the latter the mines cannot be worked at a profit, and must lie undeveloped for years. I shall not dwell upon this matter further than to ask hon. members to try and picture to themselves what a hive of busy industry the whole of our Gulf country would be if it were intersected by a network of railways—what employment the mines would give to thousands of people, and what enormous benefit would result to the colony as a whole!

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear! and laughter.

MR. McDONALD: You never introduced the working man there.

AGRICULTURE.

THE TREASURER: The progress of agriculture is entirely satisfactory, and it is spreading in directions away from the circumscribed areas that we have been accustomed to regard as the agricultural part of Queensland. Farmers from the southern colonies continue to come and bring their experience to our advantage, while the immigrants that have of late landed here are readily absorbed into the agricultural community, thus adding to the possibilities of expansion in the area cultivated. Though the farmers whose main crop is cereal suffered severely from the effects of dry weather and of frost, those who live below the Range and cultivate to a greater extent potatoes and fodders, such as lucerne, have had what may be termed a good year. The drought that has caused so much loss to the pastoral community has been to them a good harvest, the price of their commodities has been high, and the demand has been full; indeed, it may be said that at the beginning of the winter the haystacks were practically empty. Markets have been good for all classes of produce, and those who have been prepared to supply the demand have met with a ready sale. Though we have as yet been able to only touch the fringe of the mighty task of cleansing our orchards and markets of the many insect pests that diminish the supply and disfigure the fruit, the experiments that have been made have been very successful, and the inspection of fruit intended for the market has had an improving effect upon the quality. Through the want of regular communication with South Africa, such as is enjoyed by the southern colonies, it cannot be said that our farmers have directly benefited—excepting in the supply of fodder for the contingents that have been despatched there—by the opportunities that have existed for opening up an export trade. Indirectly, of course, they have, for the local markets have been relieved, no glut has been met with, and, moreover, it can be reasonably said that a portion of the produce that has been landed in South Africa during the progress of the war has been drawn from Queensland, though she has not had the credit of it.

The awards of the Greater Britain Exhibition, and the report of the judges in each section, were laid before you last session. The indirect results from the agricultural section continue from time to time to be manifest and to fully warrant the small expenditure that was involved in placing such an object-lesson of the capabilities of Queensland before the British public. It is proposed to repeat this excellent method of appealing to the sympathies and opinions of the British farmer by a Queensland Court at the Glasgow Exhibition to be held next year. The system adopted by Mr. Randall, the immigration lecturer, in travelling from one agricultural show to another, with a stall dressed with the products of Queensland, is very valuable by the effective

way in which it enables those products to be handled by the people we wish to bring here, instead of being merely talked about.

The export of fresh meat to the southern colonies and of dairy produce to places beyond the seas has been fostered by the provision of a weekly steamer to Sydney during the season, fitted with cold storage. It is yet too soon to speak definitely upon the meat trade in this respect, but with the trade in dairy produce the experiment has been attended by an increase in the exports, as will be shown by the details given later.

The educational establishments in relation to agriculture provided by the State remain as during last year, but applications for further experimental farms continue to be made—a sign that the efforts in this direction are appreciated. The Agricultural College at Gatton has received a full number of students, and for this college year, which commenced on the 12th July, it is anticipated that the number present will fully tax the capabilities of the staff and of the accommodation in the buildings. The State farms continue to meet with the appreciation of the farmers in the districts in which they are placed. This year it is intended to further the tobacco industry by the cultivation of tobacco at Texas, the efforts of the tobacco-growers, who are subscribing to the cost, warranting an advance in this direction.

The annual agricultural conference that has now been held in each of the three divisions of Queensland was this year once again held in the Southern district—at Warwick. Representatives of the different agricultural associations from Cairns in the North to the border in the South were present to the number of 117, an increase of fifty-five over the attendance at Mackay last year. The proceedings, which were of great value, are published for general information in the *Queensland Agricultural Journal*.

Wheat.—The experience of the wheat farmers last year was a varied one, and to many it was a serious year. The season for preparing and sowing was propitious and promised well. The area seeded was, according to the statistics of the Registrar-General, some 19,774 acres in excess of 1898, and there was every prospect of a record year. When the plant was in the milk stage a belated frost upon the Downs resulted in the crop of many thousands of acres being cut for wheaten hay instead of for grain. At the time the frost happened it was assumed by many that the quantity of wheaten hay for which a market would have had to be found was in the vicinity of 100,000 tons; but the actual yield was 33,891 tons from 26,047 acres, as against 2,424 tons from 2,664 acres in 1898. The frost, therefore, seriously affected some 23,500 acres, a considerable difference to the area that would have been affected had the earlier estimates been realised. The loss was not, however, complete, because owing to the demand for fodder the wheaten hay has been absorbed at fair prices. The Downs farmers were not alone in their fight with Nature, for the wheatgrowers in the Maranoa were even worse off, the crop there being practically a failure. Of the area seeded to wheat in 1899, there were 13,368 acres on which the crop failed completely, and of this area a large portion can be debited to the Maranoa.

The Central district continues to make headway in the cultivation of this grain, each year showing an increase. Though it is yet early to say so, signs are not wanting that the Downs farmers will have competitors in their brethren who have settled in the Nanango district, which is eminently suited, as regards soil and climate, to the production of wheat.

Notwithstanding the adverse circumstances of the last year, the average return was less than 2 bushels to the acre short of the return for 1898, and but 3'83 bushels below the average for the past ten years. Moreover, we held our own with the southern colonies, and greatly exceeded the average of South Australia, which had to be content with an average return of 4'64 bushels to the acre, as compared with 11'70 bushels in Queensland. The bulk of the grain is produced in the Warwick, Allora, and Toowoomba districts, in the order named, the average returns as arrived at by the Registrar-General being respectively 14'47 bushels, 11'78 bushels, and 11'03 bushels. Of the quantity of wheat required for home consumption, or its equivalent in flour, Queensland produced 22'4 per cent., as against 25'9 per cent. in 1898. The value of the imports of breadstuffs was £382,861. Though we are gradually extending our area, it will of course be many years before the local supply will equal the demand, for upon the percentage arrived at by the Registrar-General we did not in 1899 produce one-quarter of what we consumed. There were about sixteen flour-mills, employing some 180 men, engaged in grinding the crop of the year, and also about 500,000 bushels of imported wheat; the total quantity treated amounting to 1,032,563 bushels. The prospects for the coming year are at present very favourable—as favourable as they were at the corresponding period of last year—and, given good conditions from now until harvest, the crop will exceed that of any previous year in the history of Queensland. The area seeded during the past three months is greater than that of former years.

Sugar.—I regret to state statistics of the production of sugar for the season 1899 show that the moderate estimate of 150,000 tons given in the previous Financial Statement has not been realised, and the actual yield of sugar during the last year was 40,445 tons less than the quantity produced in the previous year, 1898.

Comparative Return showing Two Years' Production of Sugar.

	Acres under Cane.	Acres of Cane Crushed.	Sugar Manufactured.
			Tons.
1898 ...	111,012 ...	82,391 ...	163,734
1899 ...	110,657 ...	79,435 ...	123,289

The lessened production during 1899, when compared with the previous year's output, may be briefly stated to represent a loss to the sugar districts and the colony of £420,000.

I may state, however, that though the comparison of the two years' production has caused the adoption of a pessimistic view of the latter year's yield, yet the monetary return for the crop for 1899, at an average value of £10 10s. per ton, represents no less a sum than £1,294,534 produced from the sugar lands of the colony.

The diminished yield in 1899 may be attributed to the phenomenal and general frosts at the commencement of the crushing season, which were experienced as far north as the Herbert River, and resulted in extensive deterioration of the cane. It may be noticed, in consequence, that the yield of sugar per acre declined from 1'99 tons in 1898 to 1'55 tons per acre in 1899; and the weight of cane required to produce a ton of sugar for the same periods was 9'42 and 9'54 tons respectively.

Our exports of sugar have naturally been affected by the decreased production, Customs returns showing that the quantity leaving our ports declined from 130,943 tons in 1898-99 to 100,711 tons shipped in 1899-1900.

The following return shows the various countries which received our surplus sugars:—

	1898-99.	1899-1900.
	Tons.	Tons.
New South Wales ...	49,780 ...	36,356
Victoria ...	51,972 ...	42,022
South Australia ...	16,247 ...	5,952
Western Australia ...	4,054 ...	2,472
Tasmania ...	338 ...	717
New Zealand ...	6,150 ...	6,609
South Sea Islands ...	6 ...	8
British New Guinea ...	20 ...	19
Hong Kong ...	2,017 ...	7
Japan ...	359 ...	298
Canada ...	... ...	6,251
Total ...	130,943 ...	100,711

The prospects of the season which has now commenced have been somewhat improved by a mild and favourable winter, with a fair amount of moisture. But taking into account the dry autumn and the sharp frosts in one or two districts, it is unlikely that the sugar crop of 1900 will exceed that of 1899. For 1901 a large area has been, and is now being, planted with cane, and it is a great many years since the young crop has got such a good start as is the case this year.

Before concluding my remarks on this matter I may refer to the question of the decreasing fertility of those of our sugar lands which have been some time under cultivation. The attention of the Government was drawn to the very heavy and increasing crops that obtained in other sugar-growing countries, and as a result an able and exhaustive report on the subject was obtained from the well-known expert, Dr. Maxwell, of Honolulu. The services of this gentleman have been secured by the Government for a term of years so as to insure his extensive knowledge being at the disposal of our sugar planters and manufacturers.

Tobacco.—Although I am able financially to speak of one crop of this product, there are in reality two crops within the financial year, the first being marketed about Christmas; and the second—harvested about June—is now in the process of curing, and will come forward for sale later on. Tobacco is a crop that, when federation has become an accomplished fact, will take a far more prominent place in our agricultural statistics than it does at present. The climate and soil in different parts of Queensland are eminently favourable to the different varieties that find favour on the markets; and when we have overcome the difficulties of curing—a drawback in our education that is fast becoming surmounted under the able instruction of the tobacco expert, Mr. Nevill—the farmers will have no difficulty in finding a profitable market, and the cry that has been heard heretofore that the manufacturers will not buy will no longer be heard. The conditions have so far progressed that what may be termed a co-operative experiment farm for tobacco is now in progress of formation at Texas. The farmers provide the land, and do certain work thereon free of cost to the State, after which the Government takes charge, and if there is any profit recoup the cost to the State from the proceeds. The crop marketed at the end of the year yielded about 765,000 lb. of tobacco, and found ready sale at about 6d. per lb., which amounts to £19,125, or £24 per acre, a return that fully warrants the care that is necessary to produce a crop fit for sale. Under the present system of cultivation generally—which is an expensive one, and does not embrace the latest ideas on the subject—the cost to the farmer of a pound of tobacco ready for sale is about 3d., so that even at that price the profits considerably exceed the profits per acre

reaped by the grain farmer. Owing to the drought and other causes, the crop now harvested will be short by from 150 to 200 acres, and the yield will not, of course, show such a good average, but what has been taken off is good. The cultivation of tobacco in those districts favourable to it is thought so much of by the farmers that the industry can now be safely said to be permanently established in our midst, and the increase in the area under crop can be confidently looked forward to as an annual increasing factor of our agricultural production. The statistics of tobacco for the past four years show as follows:—

	Area under Crop.	Production (Cut Dried Leaf).
1896 ...	994 acres...	8,629 cwt.
1897 ...	755 " "	5,703 "
1898 ...	617 " "	3,276 "
1899 ...	745 " "	6,551 "

It may be stated that the most suitable land for the successful production of tobacco leaf in Queensland is that contained in the Texas and Inglewood districts, where the bulk of the tobacco-growers are now located; and an expert in Melbourne has stated that, judging from the class and quality of some Texas leaf which had come under his observation, he considered that the district would become the future Virginia of Australia.

The HOME SECRETARY: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: In order to bring under your notice the comparative consumption of Queensland-grown and imported leaf in the manufacture of tobacco, cigars, and cigarettes within our borders, I append a return from 4th August, 1894, to 31st December, 1899:—

	Queensland Tobacco Leaf. Lb.	Foreign Tobacco Leaf. Lb.
1894 (5 months to 31st December) ...	232,963	43,052
1895 ...	487,578	62,947
1896 ...	620,270	42,756
1897 ...	645,270	39,704
1898 ...	641,744	43,359
1899 ...	651,924	48,331
	3,279,749	280,149

Returns just completed show that 637,717 lb. of tobacco were manufactured in Queensland in 1899-1900, as against 560,146 lb. made in the preceding year, being an increase of 77,571 lb.

Dairying.—A few years ago it would have been out of place to include bacon and hams under the head of dairying, but with the advent of more scientific methods for the manufacture of butter and the more rigorous inspection of meat offered for sale, the keeping of pigs is passing into the hands of the cowkeeper, and the knell of the slaughter-yard pig has been sounded. Another reason for including the pig under the head of dairying is that under the factory system, as practised here, more than one of the large butter factories are closely allied to ham and bacon factories, with the natural result that to a great extent the customers to the former are the customers to the latter. The manufacture of butter is increasing in volume, and annually advances towards the position of being the foremost of our agricultural industries in value and in the methods of prosecution. The total quantity manufactured in 1898—6,437,256 lb.—was an increase of 751,269 lb. over that of 1897; but in 1899, a dry year, the production was 8,462,595 lb., an increase over 1898 of 2,025,339 lb. A comparison of these figures will give some idea of the importance this industry is to Queensland—a value that has to a great extent been fostered by the provisions of the Meat and

Dairy Produce Encouragement Act, a statute which placed in a great measure the coping stone to the teachings of the travelling dairy that, for so many years, did excellent work in the education of our farmers in this direction. A natural result of the great quantity of butter made over our requirements is increased export, and during the last year the advantages placed before the exporters have been availed of to a far greater extent than before.

In 1897 we exported 188½ tons, valued at £16,305.

In 1898 we exported 391 tons, valued at £37,586.

In 1899 we exported 511 tons, valued at £49,017.

Though my anticipations that the export for 1899 would be 1,000 tons have not been realised, it must be remembered that that year was not a favourable one for dairying, especially upon the Downs. When, however, the farmers as a whole treat their dairy cattle as money-making machines, a drought will be of smaller moment than at present, when the majority of the dairy herd have to depend for their living upon what they can gather.

The bacon and ham industry, like that of butter, continues to increase.

In 1897 we had 110,855 pigs

1898 " " 127,081 "

1899 " " 139,118 "

This steady increase is a safe sign that the industry is upon a sound footing, and may be expected to reach still larger dimensions. We have now for more than one year passed the rubicon of local supply and demand; our products are recognised constituents of the southern markets, and their fame has been sufficient to induce southern capital into competition with the factories existing prior to 1899. From the pigs held last year some 7,147,760 lb. of bacon and hams were manufactured, an increase over 1898 of 174,655 lb.

Coffee.—This product, to which I drew your attention last year, has grown somewhat, but does not yet show any great increase in area. The industry is, however, becoming one of value, especially in the North, in which part of Queensland it is apparently the tendency to lay down plantations rather than in the South. The laying out of plantations of coffee is not accomplished in a day, and though this year the increase of area is small, it is anticipated that next will show a larger development. Inquiries for coffee land from Ceylon and other parts of the East that have had to fight the leaf disease continue to come to hand, and the advice given by the instructor in coffee culture, Mr. Newport, is bearing fruit in the advent of men who understand this branch of the agricultural science. The existing plantations are arriving at the stage when machinery is required, and the crop therefrom is heard of in the Brisbane market; later it may make itself felt upon the Southern and foreign markets.

The statistics of coffee show that there were—

In 1896 ...	138 acres
" 1897 ...	311 "
" 1898 ...	432 "
" 1899 ...	495 "

—a reasonable increase in each year. The figures supplied to the Registrar-General probably do not include the area actually occupied by coffee-trees, but rather refer to the coffee plantations; the actual area, if it could be arrived at, would be considerably more. Of the area under crop in 1899, 272 acres were non-productive, so that 223 acres only were of commercial value to Queensland, with a production

of 104,961 lb. Comparing this with 1898, when 199 acres produced 56,552 lb., it will be seen that 1899 was a favourable year to our planters. In addition to the local production, which went into local consumption, we found it necessary to import 217,602 lb. to the value of £8,259—a margin yet to be filled before we close the import market.

Malting Barley.—The encouraging prospects with regard to this crop, to which reference was made last year, have been fully realised. The maltsters continue to have the good opinion of the Queensland article, and the farmers have responded by increasing the area under crop. It is hoped that this pleasing feature of our grain farming will be still further extended, for much of the money paid by the maltsters for the purposes of their trade might remain, and should remain, within our boundaries. Notwithstanding the dry weather and the frost that was experienced upon the Downs at the time when the grain crops were maturing, the malting barley compares very favourably with that of 1898, and with that of the other colonies. In 1898 some 1,953 acres were laid down for a harvest of 26,917 bushels, or an average of 13·78 bushels to the acre. In 1899 the area had increased to 6,011 acres for a yield of 100,027 bushels, or an average of 16·64 bushels to the acre. Thus in one year we have increased our area for this crop by 4,058 acres, and it can be anticipated that the area for the first year of the coming century will show an equal increase. The yield, too—given a favourable season until the harvest—will be greater than before, for the prospects at the present time are good. The population is always increasing, and under present conditions so does the demand for beer and other liquids for which malt is required; it therefore behoves the farmers to rise to the market that is here before them, and put an end to the necessity for importing a material that, according to the persons most interested—the maltsters—they can produce equal to the imported article. As an instance of the loss to the farmers in this direction, the figures of the Registrar-General show that in 1898 £46,601 was paid; and in 1899 £44,148 was spent for malt, and £10,959 for barley, all of which should in course of time be covered by our own production.

MALT.

65,752 bushels of malt are returned as the output of our malting-houses during the year ended 30th June, 1900, or 20,495 bushels over the previous year's production; so that the requirements of our brewers will soon be supplied entirely from locally manufactured malt.

Of this quantity 40,721 bushels were the produce of imported grain, and 25,031 bushels of locally grown barley.

Return of Malt made in Queensland for Four Years.

Year ended 30th June.	Malt made from Queens- land Barley. Bushels.	Malt made from Imported Barley. Bushels.	Total of Malt made. Bushels
1897 ...	4,426 ...	9,974 ...	14,400
1898 ...	13,991 ...	20,598 ...	34,589
1899 ...	24,117 ...	21,140 ...	45,257
1900 ...	25,031 ...	40,721 ...	65,752

The quantity entered for home consumption during the twelve months ended 30th June, 1900, was 124,542 bushels, yielding a duty of £28,021, as against 137,728 bushels, on which £30,988 was paid in the preceding twelve months. Decrease for year, £2,967.

It may be noted that the 65,752 bushels manufactured in the colony represent a loss of Customs revenue equal to £13,267. From these figures it will be readily seen that the burden of

taxation, as felt by the brewers with regard to the principal materials used in brewing, will soon become a thing of the past.

HARBOURS AND RIVERS.

The harbour improvements throughout the colony have been carried out with considerable activity during the past year.

Brisbane.—At Brisbane all the available plant has been fully employed in improving the conditions of the dredged cuttings, and increasing the area at the difficult turning points in the river. The navigable depth throughout the cuttings, which extend for a distance of nine miles, is now 20 feet by a width of 300 feet at low-water springs, with the exception of a small piece of the side sections in the Pelican Bank and No. 2 Cuttings. These will shortly be completed.

When the full width of 300 feet has been obtained, further deepening will be continued until at least 26 feet at low water has been obtained between the town reaches and the Bay. When the new dredges arrive the larger one will be employed on this work, and will enable the waterway to be completed to that depth in a comparatively short time. Simultaneously with this work, the deepening of the town reaches, in order to remove the difficulties which at times inconvenience some of the large vessels now visiting the port, will be proceeded with.

The removal of the obstructive points in the scheme for regulating and improving the river generally has not been overlooked; the work of excavating the surface ground above high water at Kangaroo Point having been commenced on the 10th of July, and a dredge will start in a short time to remove the portion below high water, and be kept at the work until the whole of the point is removed.

The necessity for increased depth at the wharf berths and better accommodation for the more rapid loading and discharging of vessels and the housing of cargo—in order that full advantage may be taken of the improvements I have outlined—should not be lost sight of by those owning wharfage property.

The rock-boring plant has been continuously employed, principally at the Lytton Rocks cutting, where the depth is being increased from 20 feet to 26 feet. One-fourth of this work is completed, and it is anticipated that the whole cutting will be finished in the time originally estimated. Some necessary work has also been done by this plant at the railway wharf and in the bight opposite Kangaroo Point.

The training wall at the Hamilton was completed in January, as foreshadowed in my last Statement, and a large amount of dredgings from the upper portion of the river has been deposited behind the wall for nearly the whole of its length—namely, 8,350 feet. The effect of this wall has been to regulate and establish, under normal conditions, the permanency of the cuttings in this portion of the river.

The Doughboy wall, which was commenced in January, and when completed will be 5,500 feet in length, has already been built to its full height for a distance of 1,000 feet, and partly constructed for a further distance of 500 feet. The area behind the wall has also been found convenient for depositing silt from other portions of the river instead of carrying it to the Bay, thereby relieving the hopper barges and greatly facilitating the work of harbour improvements. Immediately opposite this wall, on the Parker Island side of the river, the area of the navigable waterway has been increased fully 300 feet, thus rendering that portion of the river, once most difficult to navigate, now easy for that purpose.

A new survey of the river was completed in March last, and a chart thereof on a useful scale has been prepared.

From the monthly reports furnished on the dredges "Hercules" and "Samson," now under construction in England by Sir William Armstrong, Whitworth, and Co., for Mr. Lindon W. Bates, under contract to this Government, it appears that good progress has been made, and it is fully anticipated that they will be delivered in Brisbane by the end of October or middle of November. The large dredge is to be capable of lifting 5,000 cubic yards, and the smaller one 2,500 cubic yards per hour, and delivering silt at a distance of 800 feet from the vessel's side. The two tug boats, "Cormorant" and "Pelican," are also expected to arrive about the same time as the dredges. Additional special appliances, which are much needed for lifting the shattered rock in the cuttings, are expected shortly, and when all the new plant is available rapid progress will be made in providing an ample waterway and every facility for the easy navigation of the largest vessels that come to Australia. Even now it frequently happens that two or three vessels of from 8,000 to 9,000 tons burden are in port at the same time, and it is not uncommon for large vessels, drawing over 24 feet of water on arrival and departure, to visit the port of Brisbane.

Mary River.—The improvements in this river during the past year have been considerable, and the local board of assistance and advice, being desirous of improving and establishing a permanency in that waterway, propose to construct training walls and to prosecute dredging until a depth of 12 feet by a width of 200 feet has been obtained. The existing low-water depths throughout the Mary River cuttings are at present 10 feet.

Bundaberg.—The harbour board at this port are making good progress with their improvements, the dredge "Ceratodus" having proved very useful. The low-water depth on the bar at the present time is from 9 to 10 feet, and throughout the river cuttings 6 feet 6 inches. The board intend in the near future to continue the improvement of the river and establishing its permanency by building extensive training walls. A patent slip, capable of carrying vessels of 300 tons, has recently been completed, which should prove a great acquisition to the port.

Gladstone.—The Government jetty at Auckland Point is much frequented, and is found very useful by mail steamers and other vessels calling for horses for shipment to India. The necessary towers for the leading lights for the South Channel into Gladstone have been erected.

Rockhampton.—Dredging and other improvements have been successfully carried out by the Rockhampton Harbour Board, and there is at present a low-water depth of 10 feet in the Fitzroy River. Training walls are in course of construction with a view to regulate and establish the permanency of the dredged cuttings. The new suction dredger, ordered by the harbour board from Mr. Lindon Bates, capable of dealing with 2,500 cubic yards per hour and delivering 800 feet from the vessel's side, is under construction, and will, it is expected, be delivered by the end of the year.

The Railway Wharf at Broadmount, 500 feet in length by 100 feet in width, was finished during the latter part of last year. There is a depth of 22 feet alongside the wharf, and the middle channel leading thereto has been dredged to a depth of 17 feet at low water by a minimum width of 300 feet. The wharf is easy of approach, and several vessels of large tonnage have berthed

there direct from sea without the assistance of a tug. The area of deep water at Broadmount Harbour is very extensive, and there is a frontage available for additional wharves for over half-a-mile, alongside which a depth of 22 feet to 24 feet at low water can be obtained. Broadmount Harbour is the terminus of the Central Railway, and may now be considered one of the most convenient harbours in Australia.

St. Lawrence.—The meatworks which have recently been established here are fully occupied, and regular steamer communication between that port and Rockhampton has been established, calling for the necessity of wharfage accommodation, which will shortly be provided.

Mackay.—The depth in the Eline Channel, formed by the storm of that name, remains fairly permanent, but considerable alterations have occurred at the sandy points on each side of the channel, showing the need for the protective works which are now being pushed on by the local harbour board.

Bowen.—The berths on the north-east and south-west side of the jetty have been extended fully 150 feet inwards, and dredged to 17 and 22 feet, respectively, below low water. The jetty head is also being extended and widened, which when completed will offer great advantages to the large vessels which now frequently visit the port. The railway runs the whole length of the jetty, giving great facility for the discharge and delivery of cargo, cattle, etc.

Townsville.—Considerable energy has been displayed by the harbour board in providing accommodation for vessels of large tonnage. When the wharf at the Eastern Breakwater, at present under construction, is completed there will be 1,800 feet of continuous wharfage in the Outer Harbour, with berths alongside carrying 26 feet at low water. The entrance channel has a low-water depth of 15 feet.

Cairns.—The bar cutting silted up considerably during the early part of last year, and the "Platypus" was sent up to clear the channel out to 13 feet at low water. This work has been finished, and the dredge, which has just arrived in Brisbane, will commence work at Kangaroo Point.

Port Douglas.—Considerable improvements have been effected here by the "Tridacna" dredging a berth and swinging basin at the new tramway wharf, and also in deepening and extending the berths at the other wharves in the inlet. The bar cutting, which has also silted up, is being cleaned out. Owing to the export of sugar from the Mosman, the trade of Port Douglas has been considerably increased.

Cooktown.—In October last the "Platypus" was sent to Cooktown, and deepened the entrance channel to 15 feet by a width of 200 feet. The wharf berths and swinging basin were also dredged to 17 and 18 feet below low water. This port at the present time offers greater facilities for shipping than it has hitherto possessed.

Pipon Island.—A new light tower is now ready for erection on this island, to be in place of the Channel Rock lightship, and it is expected the light will be ready for exhibition in November. It will be far superior, and visible at a greater distance, than that shown from the lightship. Several small lights have also been erected during the year to assist in the navigation of our ports.

Normanton.—The smaller new Lindon Bates dredge will be sent to the Northern portion of the colony, and will commence operations, according to promise, at Normanton bar.

WATER SUPPLY.

Under this head inspections and investigations relating to the necessities of many districts have been made, advice has been given to local governing authorities, and new schemes involving considerable expenditure have been formulated. Among the reports that have been prepared may be mentioned those in respect of (a) proposed extension of the Toowoomba Waterworks; (b) on obtaining a gravitation supply from Mount Eliot or some other source for Townsville; and (c) on bringing in the waters of the Fletcher River to Charters Towers. The principal works now on hand are the construction of the Gympie and the Bundaberg waterworks, and of an inverted syphon, 10 inches in diameter, across the Brisbane River at Goodna.

Flood mitigation.—On the invitation of Government, Colonel Pennycuik, R.E., visited the colony in connection with proposals for the abatement of floods in the Brisbane River. He investigated the various proposals made for effecting this purpose, examined and approved of the site selected for a "regulating" reservoir on the river, and submitted a skeleton report, with a sketch design for a dam and estimate of its cost, amounting to some £1,300,000, leaving the determination of the exact character of the dam and its details until Government has decided to proceed with such a scheme.

Flood warnings.—The system of flood warnings, commenced in the year 1894, has been further extended. Telephone lines have been constructed between Goondiwindi and Tallwood, at a cost of some £2,206, and between Kenilworth and Nambour, at a cost of about £974.

Artesian bores.—Government expenditure in connection with boring has been confined to the following:—

1. *Adavale.*—The depth of this bore was on the 30th ultimo, 2,759 feet, with a reported daily flow of 9,000 gallons. Contract depth, 3,000 feet.
2. *Dalby.*—Contract entered into on the 19th June, 1900; operations will probably be commenced during the current month. The contract depth is 2,500 feet.
3. *Roma (new).*—This bore reached a depth of 3,223 feet on the 30th ultimo, with a reputed daily flow of about 186,483 gallons. Contract depth, 3,500 feet.
4. *Wallumbilla.*—The contract provides for putting down a bore to a depth of 2,500 feet if necessary. This will be commenced as soon as the Roma bore is completed.
5. *Wooroorooka.*—The depth of this bore was 141 feet at the end of last month. Contract depth, 2,000 feet.

General.—Although the amount of boring carried on in Western Queensland has increased, especially in the neighbourhood of Richmond, yet the area proved to be artesian has not been proportionally extended; the additional drillings being mostly in country previously tested and found to be artesian water bearing. Large areas of virgin country to the west of Charleville, north-west of Thargomindah, and south-east of Roma still remain unexplored, and a few borings distributed in these directions would be of great value in improving waterless country and opening up roads to our railway termini in these localities. They would also induce enterprise on the part of runholders, who would doubtless follow up the successes that are anticipated from the trial bores in the districts referred to. You will be invited to vote on the Loan Estimates a sufficient sum to give these districts a trial.

FINANCIAL TABLES.

Referring now to the tables accompanying this Statement, I wish to ask the attention of hon. members while I briefly review them, so far as they refer to the position of the colony in their relation to its works and industries; also their bearing on the financial position in connection with matters not previously mentioned.

Table S shows the financial position so far as it relates to the cost of railways. Under the head revenue and expenditure it will be seen that the net revenue, after paying working expenses for all railways, amounted to £474,161, leaving a deficiency of £327,488 to make up the amount required to pay the annual interest charge. The return on the capital invested amounted to £2 4s. 8d. per cent., as against £2 12s. 2d. per cent. for last year. The best paying line is the Northern or Townsville Railway, yielding an interest on capital invested of £6 2s. 9d. per cent.—a falling off, however, as the return for 1898-99 was £8 18s. 5d. per cent. The Central Railway returned £3 14s. 2d. per cent., and the Southern £1 19s. 7d. per cent.

Taking Table T—which shows first of all the annual interest charge on loans, followed by the return in the shape of revenue received from railways, interest received from local bodies, and interest received from banks on the public balances—it will be observed that the year just closed has not been so favourable as the previous year, the charge on revenue having sprung from £639,026 to £722,165; in other words, the percentage of actual charge on revenue has increased from 15 to 16 per cent. This is due to the fact that the net return from railways has decreased; also the interest paid by local bodies. This latter decrease is partly accounted for by the reduction of the rate of interest now charged to these bodies—from 5 per cent. to 4 per cent.—which came into operation on the 1st July, 1899. Notwithstanding this check—which I regard as merely temporary, and, so far as the railways are concerned, is due to circumstances already referred to—there has been a distinct and very favourable advance during the ten years period covered by the table, the charge on revenue having decreased from 23 per cent. to 16 per cent.

Table W, which is based on the published returns of the various banking institutions trading in the colony, gives an outside view of our general prosperity. This table shows the assets and liabilities of the various banks for the December quarter in each of the past five years, with the details of summaries. From this it will be seen that the debts and advances due to the banks by the Queensland public in 1895 were £4,347,908, or at the rate of £9 8s. 10d. per head of population in excess of the deposits per head; whilst on 31st December, 1896, this excess amounted to £4,602,320, or at the rate of £9 15s. per head. This heavy advance, however, gradually reduced until 31st December, 1899, when the tide turned. On that date, we have the assurance of our banking institutions, the deposits exceeded the advances by £64,624, or at the rate of 2s. 6d. per head, a result which I feel sure will be gratifying to every hon. member present. It shows that the finances of the business public are in a satisfactory condition, and leaves little room for doubt as to the improving stability of the colony.

With regard to the Queensland National Bank, under the provisions of the Queensland National Bank Act of 1896, an agreement was made whereby the amount of £1,374,994 10s. was to be repayable in five equal annual instalments of £274,998 18s. each, commencing 1st July, 1917, unless previously prepaid, at the option of the bank, and bearing interest at the rate of 3½ per cent. per annum.

The balance—£458,331 10s.—which was not to bear interest, was to be paid by 25 per cent. of profits half-yearly, or on 1st July, 1921, at the latest.

Thus we had on extended deposit—

Bearing interest ...	£1,374,994 10s.
Not bearing interest ...	458,331 10s.

Total ... £1,833,326 0s.

exclusive of amount £90,491, released under the Public Depositors' Relief Act, still remaining due for payment.

The bank has paid the interest duly each half-year, and has elected to pay off, on account of the instalment due 1st July, 1917, three sums amounting in all to £56,250. Out of half-yearly profits the bank has paid, on account of the £458,331 10s., due not later than 1st July, 1921, the sum of £33,750, in all £90,000.

In view of the many interests involved in the success of this institution, the payment of these claims in advance of their due date is additional evidence of the progressive condition of the colony and the stability and capacity of the bank to work out its financial salvation. It may also be mentioned that the bank's accounts and transactions are subjected to scrutiny and report by the Auditor-General—an independent guarantee of their accuracy.

Table Z records a decrease of 9·2 per cent. in the number of cattle, and Z1 a decrease of 13·2 per cent. in sheep.

Table Z5 shows that the manufacture of articles of food and produce is superseding the imported article. Large increases in the production will be noticed.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, I think we may look forward with reasonable hope to a continuation of the prosperity which we have recently enjoyed. Although the effects of the drought will doubtless be felt more keenly in the current financial year than during the twelve months under review, the enhanced value of pastoral produce, together with the expansion of our mining, agricultural, and other industries, will largely counterbalance this evil, so far as it will be felt by the general community. The rapidity with which we have recovered from the great disasters of 1893 is strong evidence of the wonderful recuperative powers we possess. Our trade and commerce are steadily increasing in volume; the real property market is becoming active; the building trade is in full swing; other industries are flourishing, and the consumption of articles, which may fairly be classed as luxuries, is growing rapidly. Of course, the main factors required to bring about a still larger measure of prosperity than we at present enjoy are population and capital. But without opening up the country we cannot expect population to settle among us, and therefore we ought to make full use of every opportunity and every means that present themselves to aid in that work. I am pleased to observe that the economic fact that the harmonious working together of capital and labour is essential to the well-being and advancement of both is steadily impressing itself on the minds of the great bulk of the people; and with wise legislation, and honest, capable administration we need have no fear for the future.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: The fact that we have almost completed the fortieth year of our existence as a separate colony leads me to think that a short review of the progress which we have made during that period would be of general interest. On the separation of Queensland from New South Wales our population

numbered 28,056; according to the latest estimate of the Registrar-General, the number of our people has now increased to 512,604. Our combined imports and exports for the first year of our existence were valued at £1,265,500, as against £18,706,955 for the year 1899. The revenue of the colony has increased from £178,589 to £4,588,207, and the public debt from nil to £37,000,000—with the aid of which we have built 2,800 miles of railway, at a cost of £20,815,874, and 10,202 miles of telegraph at a cost of £963,395. On immigration we have expended a sum of £3,201,428, which has enabled us to secure an accession to our population of 211,327 souls. We have incurred, in improving our harbours and rivers and in lighting and buoying our seaboard, a total expenditure of £2,056,220; while in providing for the defence of our shores against foreign aggression we have spent over £1,000,000. It can be fairly claimed that our public buildings, on which about £2,000,000 has been expended, would do credit to much older communities—a remark which applies with equal force to our roads and bridges, which have cost the State about £1,000,000 sterling. Finally, I may mention that the average daily attendance at our public schools has risen from 306 to 75,251. To sum up—I may express my conviction that no hon. member can point to any other country in the world in which—in a similar period of time and with such a small population—so much material and social progress has been made, and in which so much has been done to develop natural resources as in this fair territory of Queensland. And when I add that our mineral wealth is practically inexhaustible, and that we have sufficient pastoral and agricultural land to support, in comfort, a population fifty times greater than our present number, I think it will be admitted that we can now fearlessly join in the long-desired union of the Australian States which is about to be consummated, and together assist in forming a nation which will take its place in the foremost rank of the enlightened, peaceable, and prosperous countries of the civilised world.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: I now beg to move—

That there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1900-1901, a sum not exceeding £300, to defray the salary of the aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): I beg to move that this debate be now adjourned.

The TREASURER: I think it is usual to adjourn to the first sitting day in the week, Tuesday; but in this case, as the Home Secretary is anxious to finish the Health Bill, I will adjourn the debate until next Wednesday, and we will sit up on Tuesday night until the Health Bill is finished.

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

HEALTH BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

Question stated—That clause 43 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. STEPHENS (*Brisbane South*) said he had a clause to propose to follow clause 42, with regard to houses built on low-lying ground. The object of the clause was to prevent people building houses in low-lying and unhealthy places. The clause read—

It shall not be lawful for any person, upon land which is so situated as not to admit of being drained by gravitation into an existing sewer, to erect any building to be used wholly or in part as a dwelling-house, or to

adapt any building to be used wholly or in part as a dwelling-house, except with the permission of the local authority, and subject to and in accordance with such by-laws as the local authority may from time to time prescribe with reference to the erection of buildings on such land.

The local authority may, by such by-laws—

- (i.) Prohibit the erection of dwelling-houses or the adaptation of any buildings for use as dwelling-houses on such land, or any defined area or areas of such land;
- (ii.) Regulate the erection of dwelling-houses or the adaptation of buildings for use as dwelling-houses on such land, or any defined area or areas of such land;
- (iii.) Prescribe the level at which the under side of the lowest floor of any permitted building shall be placed on such land, or any defined area or areas of such land, and as to the provision to be made and maintained by the owner for securing efficient and proper drainage of the buildings.

The clause was practically one that should be inserted in the Building Act; but they had not got that Act, and as it might not be brought forward for some time, he thought it would be better to insert it in the Bill before the Committee.

The HOME SECRETARY said the clause was rather a strong one but it was also a good one. No doubt the proper place to insert it would be in the Building Act; still it was strictly applicable to the scope of a Health Bill, and it covered a good deal of the ground which some hon. members on the other side last night wished to be covered. The clause would, to a large extent, practically prevent the cutting up of areas and building on low-lying swamp ground if within a proclaimed area. He thought it was a step in the right direction.

New clause put and passed.

Mr. STEPHENS said he had another clause to propose, which dealt with storm water in places where there were no drains or sewers. The object was to prevent people from obstructing the natural flow of water so as to cause a nuisance. The clause read—

It shall not be lawful for a local authority to deal with any highway or any land under its control, or for any owner or occupier of any land to deal with the same, in such a manner that the free flow of storm water along any natural channel through or across such highway or land is so impeded or interfered with as to cause or be likely to cause any collection or pool of stagnant or offensive water or liquid.

Any local authority or person offending against the provisions of this section shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding ten pounds and to a daily penalty not exceeding forty shillings.

The HOME SECRETARY thought the clause was a fair one, as it would put local authorities on the same level with private owners in the matter of obstructing the natural flow of water. The private owner would have to make provision for the flow of water through the natural channels. This clause would also prevent private owners from being liable under any other section of the Bill.

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*): If the amendment were allowed to pass in its present form [9:30 p.m.] it would seriously affect the mining industry in many places where it was necessary for those engaged in the industry to put dams across the watercourses for the purpose of having a supply of water. Stagnant water was still water, and the water in those dams was still water, that was stagnant water, and under the amendment they would not be allowed. Before the amendment was accepted some provision should be added to protect the rights of the miners.

The HOME SECRETARY: This would not apply to the construction of a dam for industrial or pastoral purposes, and it would be ridiculous to suppose that nobody would be allowed to

throw a dam across a watercourse in a pastoral or a mining district. This would only come into force in certain specified districts when proclaimed.

Mr. GIVENS: Gympie might be proclaimed.

The HOME SECRETARY: If the water did not become stagnant or offensive it would not come under the amendment.

Mr. GIVENS: Stagnant water is simply still water.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member would find that stagnant water was something more than still water. It must become offensive and injurious to health to come within the meaning of the clause, and if it was allowed to become so, it certainly ought to come under the provisions of the clause.

Mr. GIVENS said this was a very serious matter, because it did not matter what the Committee understood to be the meaning or intention of the amendment, the interpretation in a court of law would depend on the wording of the clause, and there should be a small amendment to the effect that nothing in the section should apply to dams constructed for mining or other industrial purposes.

Mr. STEPHENS: Provided they are not offensive.

Mr. GIVENS: Exactly. Considering that the interests of a large number of people were at stake, it would be well to have it made so clear that there could be no possible mistake; and he hoped the Home Secretary would accept such an amendment as he had suggested.

At twenty-two minutes to 10 o'clock,

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. GIVENS: The amendment he would suggest was the addition of the following words after the first paragraph of the amendment:—“Nothing in this section shall apply to dams constructed for mining or other industrial purposes, unless offensive matter is allowed to accumulate therein.”

The HOME SECRETARY quite recognised that what the hon. member wanted was reasonable, but the question was whether it was necessary. If the word “and” was substituted for “or” between “stagnant” and “offensive,” so that it would provide that the water should be both “stagnant and offensive,” it would meet the hon. member's views. The hon. member need not have the slightest fear that the dams to which he referred would come within the operation of the clause unless they became offensive, because they were constructed under statutory authority.

Mr. GIVENS said that on looking up the meaning of “stagnant” he found he was absolutely correct. The word “stagnant” was defined as meaning, “Not flowing; not running in a current or stream; standing.” He suggested his amendment in the interests of a large portion of the industrial community.

The HOME SECRETARY: If the clause reads “stagnant and offensive” it will meet your views exactly.

Mr. GIVENS: Stagnant water of any kind, even if not offensive, might be a menace to the public health, so that it might be necessary to provide for “stagnant or offensive water.” According to the hon. gentleman, it was necessary for water to be both stagnant and offensive before it could become a nuisance, but it was very desirable that a local authority should have the power to prohibit stagnant water accumulating, although it was not offensive.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are arguing against your own amendment now.

Mr. GIVENS : He was not. He was pointing out that, although the amendment moved by the hon. member for South Brisbane was a good one, still, if passed in its present form, it was likely to interfere with the operations of a large section of the industrial community. If the Home Secretary would accept his amendment, he could draft it in any way he liked.

The HOME SECRETARY understood that the hon. member had not put his amendment in writing, and he wanted to see it before giving an opinion upon it. The hon. member had not complied with the Standing Orders, to begin with, which was very necessary.

Mr. RYLAND thought the Home Secretary might very well accept the amendment suggested by the hon. member for Cairns. All that the hon. member asked was that dams that were used for mining and other industrial purposes should be exempted from the clause. There were many dams in the municipality of Gympie to conserve water for mining purposes, and they should not be interfered with. He presumed the amendment of the hon. member for South Brisbane was suggested by the Local Authorities' Association, the object being to prevent anyone obstructing a natural getaway, but it was never intended to interfere with dams for the conservation of water for industrial purposes.

Mr. HIGGS : While that matter was being considered, he desired to call attention to the fact that the new clause proposed by the hon. member for South Brisbane was likely to clash with the new clause to follow clause 42, which the hon. member had succeeded in inserting in the Bill the previous night—

Where any land situated within three hundred feet of any sewer is so low-lying as not to admit of being drained by gravitation into such sewer, the local authority may give notice to the owner or occupier or both of such persons to fill up such land within a time limited by the notice, so that the same may be so drained.

Hon. members would remember that during the discussion last night they had under consideration a quantity of low-lying land in Fortitude Valley through which a sewer ran. Under the clause passed last night the local authority could call upon the owner of that low-lying land to fill it up to the level of the sewer, and yet under the new clause now proposed the local authority would be under a penalty for running a sewer across low-lying land where the natural fall might not be more than a foot in half-a-mile.

Mr. STEPHENS : You are barking up the wrong tree again.

Mr. HIGGS : That was a very elegant interjection. He submitted that the clause now proposed would be inconsistent with the clause they had passed last night. However, he did not expect to have the matter amended in any way, because since the coalition between the Home Secretary and the hon. member for South Brisbane, no notice would be taken of any objections from his side.

The HOME SECRETARY : The hon. member might have spared himself that, seeing that he was busy at the table trying to draft a proposed amendment for the hon. member for Cairns.

Mr. GIVENS : Hear, hear !

Mr. HIGGS : Well, I withdraw it.

The HOME SECRETARY : The hon. member said those things in order to get them into *Hansard*, but the readers of *Hansard* could not see what was going on in the Chamber and it was most unfair. Could not the hon. member fight fair? Had he no idea of fighting fair?

Mr. HIGGS : People never read *Hansard*, so you need not bother.

Mr. GIVENS thought it unnecessary to introduce any heat into the matter. He proposed to assist in getting the Bill through. He was

entirely with the hon. member for South Brisbane in his amendment, but he wanted miners to be protected against being prevented under it from building dams essential to the proper carrying on of their work. He therefore proposed that the new clause should be amended by the addition of the following proviso :—

Nothing in this section shall apply to dams constructed for mining or other industrial purposes, provided that no offensive matter is allowed to accumulate in such dams.

The Home Secretary suggested that if the word "and" were substituted for the word "or," between the words "stagnant" and "offensive," in the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Brisbane South, the difficulty would be met. But stagnant water might be objectionable without being offensive. He agreed with the proposed new clause, but dams constructed by miners in connection with their work should be excepted, and in order to get on with the business he asked the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill to accept the amendment he suggested.

The HOME SECRETARY : With the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his amendment.

Amendment withdrawn.

Mr. STEPHENS hoped it was clearly understood that he had not the slightest desire to interfere with the necessary operations of miners. He understood generally what the hon. member for Cairns was aiming at, and was willing to assist him when it was clear what was the best way. He did not want to interfere with dams for mining purposes provided they were not allowed to become offensive.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. HIGGS asked whether the Home Secretary had considered the matter to which he directed attention, showing the inconsistency between that clause and the clause they had passed last night?

The HOME SECRETARY was not sure that he understood what sort of case the hon. member tried to illustrate. Did the hon. member assume that where there were a number of allotments along a natural watercourse the local authority would call upon the owner of the lowest to fill up his land, and thus throw the water back on to the next? He could scarcely understand a local authority in such a case giving a notice to one owner and not to all, and if they gave notice to all to fill up there would be no natural watercourse left, and no damming would be necessary.

Mr. HIGGS : He was speaking of land through which there was no natural channel except the wide channel consisting of the width of the land itself. The storm water would flow across that land although there might be little incline.

The HOME SECRETARY : This only relates to a natural channel.

Mr. RYLAND : The local authority could not compel the owner to fill up a piece of low-lying land of that description because it had itself offended by making a course for the water above the level of the land.

Mr. JENKINSON noticed that the penalty provided by the clause was £10, with a daily penalty of 40s. In clause 44 there was a similar penalty, with a daily penalty of 20s. For the sake of uniformity, would it not be better to make both penalties alike?

The CHAIRMAN : I would point out to the hon. member that we cannot go back to that part of the clause, having passed an amendment subsequent to it.

The HOME SECRETARY : The penalties provided by the Bill varied according to the offence. The hon. member would see that there were different penalties provided by different clauses.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 43 passed as printed.

On clause 44—"Injurious matter not to pass into sewers"—

Mr. RYLAND thought an amendment would come in after the word "therewith," on line 26. He would suggest the insertion of the words "or natural getaway." He had known several cases in which people obstructed the free flow of water and caused a nuisance to the local authority.

The HOME SECRETARY was afraid the expression which the hon. member used would not do, because there was nothing in the Bill to say what a natural getaway was. The amendment would not do because it related to any natural watercourse, and that part of the Bill applied only to sewers and drains. It did not apply to open watercourses. The clause was meant to prevent persons from blocking up sewers with rubbish of all sorts. There were other parts of the Bill which related to the broad lands of the colony, and which were not included within special areas.

Mr. RYLAND: Are you going to pick out special parts of a municipality to apply this measure to?

The HOME SECRETARY: It was quite likely. It was done now with some of the provisions of the Health Act.

Mr. RYLAND said he was merely suggesting the insertion of words which were on the list of amendments sent to members by the Local Authorities' Association.

The HOME SECRETARY: I hope the hon. member is not going to move all the amendments suggested by the Local Authorities' Association.

Mr. RYLAND said he had the list of amendments which were sent to him, and he had taken a note of those which he considered most desirable. From his experience he was of opinion that the suggested amendment was very necessary. He knew of several cases where a nuisance had been caused by persons obstructing a natural watercourse.

The HOME SECRETARY: This clause does not deal with natural watercourses at all.

Mr. RYLAND: The amendment proposed by the hon. member for South Brisbane bore on the same matter, and stated that even local authorities were not to obstruct natural watercourses; and it would simplify matters very much if they inserted an amendment in that clause preventing people blocking natural watercourses.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why not say "natural watercourse," instead of "natural getaway"?

Mr. RYLAND: He would do so.

The HOME SECRETARY: Then I object to it.

Mr. RYLAND: If the hon. gentleman would not accept the amendment, he did not suppose he could carry it through.

The HOME SECRETARY: If the clause were amended as suggested by the hon. member, then any man who threw old boots into a little bit of a stream would be liable to be prosecuted. That was not what was intended at all, and the hon. member was carrying the matter too far. The clause related to sewers and drains, and not to natural watercourses.

Mr. RYLAND: It related to any person who obstructed a sewer or drain, and he wanted to insert the words "natural watercourse," because it was desirable that they should not be obstructed. He moved that the words "or any natural watercourse" be inserted after the word "therewith."

The HOME SECRETARY would ask the hon. member to seriously consider his amendment. The object in including drain in the clause was so that an obstruction should not flow through a drain and get into a sewer and obstruct it. What the hon. member proposed was to provide that the same penalty should

attach to the act of putting any obstruction in a natural watercourse, whether it communicated with a sewer or not, as attached to the obstruction of a sewer which was constructed at great expense, and which could not be cleared, except at considerable expense. The *raison d'être* of the clause was to keep clear a sewer underground, and he hoped the hon. member would withdraw his amendment, and let them get on with the business.

Mr. RYLAND: If a natural watercourse was blocked it would injure the sewer.

The HOME SECRETARY: What sewer?

Mr. RYLAND: The sewer they wanted to protect.

The HOME SECRETARY: Under your amendment I should be liable to a prosecution if I threw a bunch of lantana into the stream which runs through my garden.

Mr. RYLAND: Where the water from a sewer was taken away by a natural watercourse, an obstruction of that watercourse would destroy the effectiveness of the sewer, and that was the object of the amendment.

Amendment negatived; and clause put and passed.

Clauses 45 to 47, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 48—"Communication of sewers with sewers of adjoining areas"—

Mr. STEPHENS asked the Home Secretary if an arrangement were already made between two local authorities, this clause would confirm it in any way? He did not think this was a retrospective clause. He knew of a case in point in which an arrangement had been made between two local authorities, and he did not know whether it was legal or not.

The HOME SECRETARY said that was provided for by clause 6.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 49 to 51, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 52—"Building houses without sanitary conveniences"—

Mr. RYLAND moved that after the word "same" the words "and to dispose of the faecal and refuse matter of such house in such manner as the local authority directs," be inserted. He thought that this was very necessary. Where no sanitary conveniences were provided, the local authority should have power to compel the owner to provide them. There was no provision by which people could be made to keep their places clean, and he thought it was necessary that this amendment should be inserted to remedy the omission.

The HOME SECRETARY said he did not want to raise the discussion that they had on the previous evening; but this was practically the same thing.

Mr. RYLAND: No, it is not.

The HOME SECRETARY: As far as he could see, the only difference was that the other was drainage and this was faecal matter. He could not accept it. He held that the local authority had no right to ask the owner to do any municipal work of any kind off his own property, except within very strict limits, such as, for instance, sweeping the pathway immediately in front of his house, making a drain to connect with a sewer, which necessarily the local authority was unable to carry zigzag across the street from door to door. These were instances which came within well-defined limits; but the hon. member proposed that the local authority should be at liberty to give directions that the owners of property should do work which the local authority was formed for the purpose of doing—namely, carrying away sanitary, or insanitary, refuse as they might call it.

Mr. RYLAND said the principal objection to his amendment on the previous occasion was that the owner would have to pay twice over.

The HOME SECRETARY : He would have to pay the rates and do the work himself.

Mr. RYLAND said that this referred to districts where they had not got sanitary arrangements. He did not see why any local authority should not have power outside a sanitary area to compel householders to keep their premises clean.

The HOME SECRETARY : To make them keep their places clean is a different thing to compelling them to do the contractor's work.

Mr. RYLAND : There were no contractors in this case. How far did their contractors go outside of the towns?

Mr. STEPHENS pointed out that the hon. member would not get what he wanted by his amendment, because it would only apply to people who had been ordered to put up one of these houses. It did not apply to every house in the district. If he carried his amendment it would only apply to people who had not conveniences, and were forced to provide them.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 53 to 60, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 61—"Certain nuisances on premises"—

Mr. STEPHENS moved the insertion after the word "person," of the words [10.30 p.m.] "whether the occupier or owner of the premises."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. STEPHENS : Also on line 51, after the word "keeps," he wished to amend the clause by adding the words "or suffers to be kept."

This amendment was agreed to, as also a consequential amendment in line 52.

Mr. RYLAND proposed to further amend the clause by inserting on line 15, after the word "occupier," the words "or owner."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. RYLAND proposed to still further amend the clause by inserting after the word "exists," on line 15, the words "or from which it arises or emanates."

Amendment negatived; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 62 to 65, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 66—"By-laws"—

Mr. STEPHENS proposed that on line 48, after the word "cesspit," the words "or water-closet" be added.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. STEPHENS also proposed that after the word "used," on line 49, the following words be inserted:—"The construction and situation of sanitary provisions on any premises."

The HOME SECRETARY : That would be a new subsection—subsection 9.

Mr. STEPHENS : Yes; to follow subsection 8.

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 67—"Houses unfit for occupation"—

Mr. CURTIS (*Rockhampton*) said he understood that the clause applied to houses which had been condemned by the local authority as unfit for use, and which were a menace to the public health. He wished to know whether it also applied to sheds. The point was important, because he knew of vacant sheds having been condemned by the local authority in Rockhampton under the present law, but they could not be removed without the consent of the owner, and that could not be obtained. In order that there might be no ambiguity about the matter it might be advisable to insert, after the word "house," the words "or other buildings."

The HOME SECRETARY : "Or other structure."

Mr. CURTIS moved the insertion, after the word "house," on line 8, of the words "or other structure."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. STEPHENS moved the insertion, after the word "construction," on line 10, of the words "or by reason of its being infected with infectious disease."

Amendment agreed to; and clause passed with verbal and consequential amendments.

Clause 68 put and passed.

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

The House adjourned at five minutes to 11 o'clock.